CABRILLO

Leaders rank school’s programs

Journalism, real estate drop; radiology shines

By SHANNA MCCORD

APTOS — If Cabrillo College resorts to cutting academic programs to close its $2.5 million budget gap, the first ones likely to go are welding, real estate and journalism.

A group of faculty leaders ranked the community college’s departments through a survey last year based on various factors — cost, number of students, number of classes that transfer to a four-year college, student success and community support — to determine their overall value to the school.

Welding, real estate and journalism landed at the bottom. Radiology technology, accounting and digital media took the top spots.

The results, which were reviewed at a recent faculty senate meeting, will be passed along to Cabrillo’s board of directors as they consider how to confront ongoing budget deficits.

“This was one way to at least start the conversation, if it’s going to go that direction of program reductions or discontinuance,” said Michael Mangin, a history professor and president of the faculty senate. “It’s possible we could suspend a program in the next year or two. We’ve hoped we’ll get through this crisis remaining as whole of a college that we’ve been.”

Cabrillo faces a $5.6 million deficit going into 2012-13, but administrators hope to bring that down to $2.5 million by dipping into reserves, tapping other funds and eliminating positions.

Brad Kava, who heads the Cabrillo journalism department, said it would be a major loss to the students who aspire to become news reporters and photographers if the program were scrapped.

Kava praised the department for giving Latino kids from Watsonville exposure and skills to a career they might not have come across on their own.

The department offers four classes...