COLLEGE COMMITMENT

Education collective names director

Cabrillo instructor to head county group

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APTOS — The countywide educational collaborative has, up until now, operated on something of an ad hoc basis, with no formal structure or center of gravity.

But that changed Thursday, when Cabrillo College announced Ray Kaupp’s appointment as executive director of the Santa Cruz County College Commitment.

Kaupp has served previously on the group’s steering committee and, as his first official duty as executive director, led Wednesday’s meeting.

Members of the collaborative include area elementary, middle and high schools, as well as Cabrillo, UC Santa Cruz, Cal State Monterey Bay and San Jose State.

The group’s goal is to ensure students are ready to enter either college or the work force, and to help community college students succeed and move on to the CSU or UC systems.

Kaupp will receive an annual salary of $68,000, which is funded from grants and will not come out of Cabrillo’s general fund, according to Cabrillo spokeswoman Kristin Fobos.

Kaupp spent about 20 years working in the high-tech field before coming to Cabrillo in 2005. He started out as a business instructor, and has worked most recently as head of the grant-funded Workforce Development 2.0 project, which aims to

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strengthen ties between the college and the local business community, governmental agencies and nonprofits.

He’ll stay involved with that project, at least peripherally, since it’s where he and others involved in the so-called “SC4” program glean information on what educational gaps need to be bridged so students can move up to the next level.

“We get anecdotal feedback from the business community that students aren’t prepared for 21st century work,” he said.

“We want to find where those gaps are so we can do a better job of educating the students in the county to meet those requirements going forward. And we can’t do that without engaging with businesses.”

Among the collaborative’s biggest accomplishments was last month’s Sampson Fourth Grade Experience, when students from around the county got a taste of college life by attending a half-day of classes at Cabrillo. Next year, those same students will have that same experience at Cal State Monterey Bay, then at UC Santa Cruz in 2014.

A similar event, this one geared toward middle-school students, launches in mid-July, with the start of a pilot summer camp program at Cabrillo. During a three-week period, college instructors will teach five or six week-long camps, with themes including engineering to culinary arts, giving those students the chance to peer a little more closely down those potential career paths.

“A student who’s already on a pathway to something does better in school,” Kaupp noted, so members of the collaborative are “investing a fair amount of energy trying to get students onto pathways and doing that as early as we can.”

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