Campus comes to life

Official: Enrollment down an estimated 4 percent from last fall

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APRILS – Thousands of students replaced their backpacks and flip-flops for textbooks and backpacks Monday, the first day of the fall semester at Cabrillo College, where enrollment has fallen an estimated 4 percent since last year.

Jesus Hernandez and Monique Alarcon, both first-year students, stood in the Enrollment Services building in the late morning, along with dozens of others who needed help adding and dropping classes or filling out financial aid forms.

Until just recently, Alarcon, 19, did not know whether to enroll at Cabrillo or Gavilan Community College in Gilroy, where she studied last year. But she ultimately decided she liked the Cabrillo campus better and enrolled here, saying she’s considering a career in journalism. At $40 per unit, she’ll be paying about

SEEN CARRIBLO ON A2

BY THE NUMBERS
Cabrillo College 2012-13

- Estimated budget: $76 million
- Number of students: 16,233
- Number of courses: 1,125
- Number of staff: 580
- Number of staff: 19

SOURCE: Cabrillo College

CABRILLO

Continued from A1

$522 for a full load, or 12 units.

"I really wanted to take some classes, but it was closed for some reason," she said, adding that she still had a relatively easy time just registering for her other classes.

At the Veterans Welcome Center near the front of cam- pus, a handful of older students sat behind computer terminals, looking into such services as transferring into college life, employment and social services, and education counseling. With the drawdown of troops from Iraq and Afghanistan, more veterans are taking advantage of the GI Bill at community colleges across the country, with an estimated 100 veterans or their dependents enrolled for Cabrillo’s fall semester, according to Army reservist Nicole Loften.

"We just got this office this semester, so we’re looking to get some more people in here now that we have a place for them to go," she said.

Administrators and trust- ees anticipated fewer students enrolling this semester and factored that into the 2012-13 budget, which will be final-

ized and adopted at the Sept. 17 Board of Trustees meeting. The preliminary budget is $8 million, and administrators are still working to trim about $1 million, possibly through concessions with faculty and staff on pay and benefits.

Other cuts have come in the form of course offerings. For example, only 1,059 courses are being offered this semester, compared with 1,366 last fall, according to spokeswoman Kristin Fabos. She did not have a firm number of enrolled students Monday, but said enrollment is down about 4 percent from last fall. Based on that number, 14,233 were enrolled as of Monday.

Back in the mid-2000s, enrollment was as high as 17,000. Fabos said, but “it’s been declining relatively con- stantly due to budget cuts from the state. That reduces the amount of course offer- ings, which in turn reduces the number of students.”

As for staff, part-time full-time faculty have been cut by a combined total of about 30 percent. Classified staff have been reduced by 13 percent, and administration by 15 per- cent, according to figures pro- vided by Fabos.