COLLEGE BOARD APPROVES DEAL

Barnes & Noble affiliate to take over Cabrillo bookstore

By KIMBERLY WHITE
kwhite@santacruzsentinel.com

APTOS — Under a recently approved contract, the academic subsidiary of bookstore giant Barnes & Noble, B&N College, is poised to lease and take over daily operations of the bookstore at Cabrillo College.

The Board of Trustees unanimously approved the five-year contract, with one five-year option to renew, at a special meeting held last month.

The item was briefly discussed at the Board’s regularly scheduled meeting Dec. 10, but it needed more time to read over the terms, and approved it at the Dec. 18 meeting to get a jumpstart on the transition process, said Michael Robins, director of purchasing, contracts and risk management.

The search for a vendor began in the fall, and by voting on the contract at the special meeting, rather than waiting for Monday’s regularly scheduled meeting, “I think the board was really just honoring the work the (search) committee had already done,” he said.

Robins will meet with company officials next week to hammer out more details, with a contract expected to be signed in the coming weeks.

“My suggestion will be that full implementation take place during spring break,” he added.

The deal was approved with the caveat that the facility retain the Cabrillo College Bookstore name, and that current staff, hours and salaries also stay the same.

Cabrillo officials hail the deal as a win-win situation, with students receiving steep discounts on textbooks. Meanwhile, Barnes & Noble will pay Cabrillo a $150,000 signing fee and hundreds of thousands of dollars in commissions over the term of the contract. The bulk of the sales, however, will remain with B&N College. The company also will make financial contributions to the student senate and support campus-related events, according to information provided in the board packet.

The deal follows years of struggles by the bookstore to remain afloat as students turn to other sources for less expensive textbooks. In late 2011, the bookstore formed a temporary partnership with Bookshop Santa Cruz, hoping to tap into the expertise of the still-popular, independently owned bookstore for ideas on how to remain solvent.

Follow Sentinel reporter Kimberly White on Twitter at Twitter.com/kwhite95066