Cabrillo College

Bookstore takeover

Cabrillo students, classified employees react to college’s deal with Barnes and Noble

By KIMBERLY WHITE
kwhite@santacruzsentinel.com

APTOS — News of a pending deal for B&N College to take over operations of the bookstore at Cabrillo College took Emily Steiner, 23, by surprise, since she’d always assumed the bookstore, like those at the other colleges she’d attended, was privately owned and operated.

After attending several colleges, she obtained a bachelor’s degree, and is now working to obtain a certificate in early childhood education. She’s enrolled in three courses this semester and decided to purchase her textbooks through Amazon.com, which offered them at about half of what college bookstore was charging.

But if she’d known Cabrillo owned the bookstore, she might have had second thoughts about her purchase without help to support the school. Under the five-year partnership with B&N College, Cabrillo will receive a steady revenue stream, and students will have new options — including either purchasing or renting books in digital format — that will save them money.

“If it’s making the school money, and costs are brought down for students, she said Thursday, “I can see that as beneficial.”

The initial transition will begin during spring break and will be fully implemented by the start of the fall semester. The Board of Trustees approved the deal at a meeting last month, and talks to nail down specifics of the contract will continue over the next several weeks, according to Michael Robbins, Cabrillo’s director of purchasing, contracts and risk management, and Russell Markman, vice president of campus relations for B&N College.

“‘If it’s making the school money ... I can see that as beneficial.’

EMILY STEINER, Cabrillo student

Transition to be fully implemented by start of fall semester

CABRILLO

Continued from B1

contracts have been cut in recent years. At the Dec. 18 meeting, B&N College agreed to give existing staff priority if and when those cuts are restored, Northcutt and Robins said.

“We don’t want people who are there to lose opportunities,” Northcutt said. “They’ve earned them, they’re in the seniority structure, and we don’t want them to lose that. And we don’t want people who have been eliminated or laid off” to lose the opportunity to be rehired if the opportunity arises.

Follow Sentinel reporter Kimberly White at Twitter.com/kwhite95066

Stuart Echus, a Cabrillo College student, descends the stairs from the library toward the bookstore Thursday.

Jon Closer, a Cabrillo College math student, walks in front of the campus bookstore Thursday afternoon.

News of the deal also took Cabrillly classified employees by surprise. The board originally was set to vote on the deal at the regularly scheduled Dec. 10 meeting, but the item was pulled for further analysis and expected to come to a vote at the Jan. 14 meeting. Instead, the board called a special meeting Dec. 18, and union president Alta Northcutt said she only found out about it by chance hours before it started.

“I feel the special meeting was not appropriate because of the lack of notice,” she said. “Once I heard about it, I was able to find a person to be our voice” and attend the meeting.

As part of the deal, B&N College has agreed to retain current staffing levels and hours. Five union employees now work there — down from a peak of about 10, Northcutt said — and their hours and...