Official: Cabrillo College's enrollment higher than fall
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APTOS -- An estimated 14,200 students are enrolled at Cabrillo College this semester, about 600 more than in the fall but a roughly 3 percent drop from last spring, officials said.

Cabrillo spokeswoman Kristin Fabos provided the enrollment update Monday after the college's Board of Trustees first meeting of the spring semester. Monday also was the first day of classes for students enrolled at its campuses in Aptos, Watsonville and Scotts Valley.

The newly hired interim president sat in on his first board meeting, following a flurry of meetings with faculty, staff and student groups to better familiarize himself with the inner workings of the campus.

John Hendrickson will serve in his role for up to six months, as board members continue searching for a permanent replacement.

Alan Smith, one of several board members who sits on the search committee, said a brochure outlining specific qualities and qualifications for the new president will be completed this week, with applications available by April. Interviews with select candidates will be held the following month, with hopes of bringing the new president on board by July or August.

Details of the state budget are still being worked out, but Gov. Jerry Brown has proposed spending millions more on higher education in 2013-14. Hendrickson expressed optimism for the future, saying after the meeting that the community college system could be reaching "a golden age."

Paul Harvell, president of the Cabrillo College Federation of Teachers, made a similar observation during the meeting, saying faculty feel as if they are "a world away from where we were a semester ago, where they were looking at huge budget cuts and a reduction in students."

Now, he said, they're "looking at more financial stability and financial restorations and growth. The mood is no longer in crisis (mode) but how to move forward."

Board members also listened to results of an audit conducted on its 2011-12 financial and bond measure reports, and received an update on the facilities master plan, set to be discussed next month in further detail.

Consultant Lori O'Keefe presented preliminary figures that showed relatively slow growth during the next several years. In the fall census, for example, 14,457 students were enrolled at Cabrillo's three campuses, and that number is expected to rise by only several hundred by 2015-16. But O'Keefe's figures showed greater growth through 2025.

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