Board welcomes new president

By BONNIE HORGOS
bhorgos@santacruzsentinel.com

WATSONVILLE — The Cabrillo College board held its first meeting with Laurel Jones, the college's new president and superintendent, at the Watsonville campus Monday.

With nine new faculty positions and $700,000 in restoration funding from the state thanks to Proposition 30, Jones said she was excited for the fall term to kick off Sept. 3.

"I feel wonderful being here," she said. "I'm so excited."

Before starting her new post, Jones served as president of Santa Clara's Mission College. Since July 15, Jones has met with various people in Santa Cruz County to become acquainted with the area, she said.

"Thank you to the village it has taken to get me started, who have taken the time to make sure that I'm warmly welcomed, to get my feet on the ground," Jones said.

"I have to tell you that it has been one of the most easy opportunities to meet and greet people."

Jones, who replaced interim president John Hendrickson on July 15, is the first female president in Cabrillo's 54-year history. Hendrickson stepped in for former president Brian King, who left after nine years to serve as chancellor of Los Rios Community College District in Sacramento.

Watsonville Mayor Lowell Hurst welcomed Jones on Monday evening.

"I just want to say hello and welcome," Hurst said. "I hope it'll be long and fruitful."

Hurst also discussed the downtown Watsonville campus, and its relation to the college's additional facilities in Scotts Valley and Aptos, the main campus.

"Watsonville is very appreciative of the work of Cabrillo College, and we're here to assist in whatever way we can," Hurst said. "I know that funding is always going to be an issue, but the need doesn't go away."

Board appointee Margaretta Cortez, director of Loaves and Fishes, also acknowledged the college's presence in Watsonville.

"It's a very important partnership between the college and the city," Cortez said. "The potential for people to make it on their own and do something for their families is very wonderful."

In addition to welcoming the new leader, the board received word that the Cabrillo Classified Employee Union ratified an agreement with the college for a four-percent increase in total compensation for classified employees. This increase will cost the college $135,000 in ongoing general fund allocation and a one-time expenditure of $390,000 through 2015, according to a report.

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