



Local 1610

College of  
MARIN

## UPM's Tuesday Debriefing

November 6, 2007

### College of Marin Trustee Election\*

We watched with interest the recent broadcast of the League of Women Voters sponsored debates of the candidates for College of Marin Board of Trustees. (We invite you to watch too: [http://calchannel.com/MEDIA/lwv\\_11.aspx](http://calchannel.com/MEDIA/lwv_11.aspx)) As long time observers of the College and the Board, we were surprised that only two challenge candidates emerged from the Marin community.

We were also surprised to hear many false representations by the incumbent candidates go unchallenged by the questioners or the challengers. From incumbents, several themes emerged that should, we think, be red flags to Marin County voters. Misstatements regarding financial security, shared governance, restoring programs and classes, partnerships, increased enrollment and modernization call for careful scrutiny by Marin's residents.

- **Financial stability:** All of the incumbents claimed success in the area of finances, yet not one mentioned the fact that during present negotiations with the college's unions, the current offers to staff and faculty do not include any salary increases, not even cost of living adjustments. And though they have big plans to "build green," that is, to tear down buildings, disrupt the environment, dispose of thousands of tons of waste material, buy new materials for new buildings and pay millions of dollars in consultant fees, the District's leaders have no idea as to how they will be able to afford maintenance of the new, "green" campus facilities.
- **Shared governance:** It's nice to talk the talk, but when it comes right down to it, the incumbents have not engaged in shared decision making with faculty, staff and students. Though a governance structure is in place, the Board and administration have circumvented it in regard to many important decisions. After experiencing frustration on Modernization committees, several lead faculty have resigned from the committee work because they felt they were not being listened to. Plans for buildings have gone forward with little or no input from some of the faculty members who will teach in those buildings. Administrative decisions regarding programs and class offerings have ignored the expertise of the faculty. If a Marin resident were to canvas the campus and ask faculty whether they have been included in decisions regarding their classes and programs, he or she would begin to hear the frustration that exists on campus. Go ask veterans from the English Department whether they have been included in the administration's sweeping changes in their program, one that has proven to be successful for transfer students.

- **Restoring classes and programs:** Incumbents claim that they have put students first by increasing classes, but the reality is that many classes are arbitrarily canceled on a regular basis. Additionally, if the college is to offer the classes that students need, it will need to fill many full time vacancies in various areas due to retirements in recent years. Among other areas at the college, faculty in Modern Languages, Behavioral Science, Sociology, Psychology and Anthropology have been depleted, and no attempt has been made to hire new instructors. In fact, the Board's recent decision to raise the reserves to 17% (the State requires 5%) all but ensures that no new faculty will be hired in these or in any other areas. Without the instructors, the college cannot offer the appropriate classes and students will suffer.
- **Partnerships:** Perhaps the Board has information that it is not fully sharing. Partnerships with SF State and Dominican sound good on paper, but students enrolled in these partnership classes have been few.
- **Enrollment:** Though incumbents allege that enrollment has turned around, the Board's outreach efforts have produced little if any change in the student population. In some cases, the strategy has been to move a class previously offered in Kentfield to IVC and then to count the "new" IVC students as an increase. And even if one accepts this strategy, increases are reported in percentages, which can be very misleading. What, for example, is 30% of ten? On the surface, 30% sounds promising, but if the actual total increase is only 3 students, one wonders how the District can put out pricey informational brochures claiming enrollment has "skyrocketed."
- **Modernization:** Along with the above mentioned frustration resulting from being all but excluded from Modernization processes, faculty and staff have seen little if any improvement to the environments in which they serve students. Costly billboards that once stood on both campuses announcing the "coming soon," Fall '06 Modernization have been removed. If numbers were made public (As a Marin taxpayer, your attempts to get these figures would, no doubt, be met with the same refusals many of us have experienced), you would be shocked at how much has been spent on consultants with no tangible results.

Marin County voters and taxpayers should be aware of the empty claims that incumbents are making. This Board and this administration are running what was once referred to as "the little UC Berkeley" into the ground.

Have a good week!

UPM Executive Council

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\*We sent a condensed version of this letter to the IJ, The Novato Advance and the Pacific Sun.  
UPM Exec.