



Published on *News-Gazette.com* (<http://www.news-gazette.com>)

UI rehires Catholicism prof, ends funding from Newman Center

By *Paul Wood*

Created 07/29/2010 - 2:40pm

CHAMPAIGN – Kenneth Howell has his job back teaching Catholicism, but from now on the University of Illinois will pay his salary.

And the university will dissolve its relationship with the local Newman Center, which for decades has been paying instructors to teach Catholicism under the UI's religion studies department.

This fall, the Urbana campus will pay Howell \$10,000 a semester to teach Catholic thought.

His status continues to be that of an adjunct professor, hired on a year-to-year basis, said Robin Kaler, the chief spokeswoman for the Urbana campus.

Howell could not be reached immediately for comment.

He was told in May that he would not be returning in the fall. A student had complained in an e-mail to campus officials that Howell had written an e-mail about natural law and homosexuality.

Kaler declined to say whether the rehiring was related to publicity about Howell.

"The university values academic freedom. As the fall semester was fast approaching, the decision was made to contract with Professor Howell to teach Catholic studies, while the committee continues to look into the matter," she said.

The UI will pay the salary of instructors teaching any Catholic studies courses taught for university credit, rather than St. John's Catholic Newman Center as in the past.

A press release said "the university values its relationship with the Newman Center and plans to continue offering courses in Catholic studies."

The move comes with the recommendation this morning of the Faculty Senate's General University Policy committee. The committee called for dissolution of the arrangement whereby St. John's Catholic Newman Center funds instructors for credit-bearing UI courses in Catholic studies.

"This offer of appointment does not affect the process or outcome of a review by the Faculty Senate Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure," the release said.

Source URL: <http://www.news-gazette.com/news/religion/2010-07-29/ui-rehires-catholicism-prof-ends-funding-newman-center.html>

High-price aide cannot be justified

If **University of Illinois** President Michael Hogan can command such an outrageous salary, why does he need an assistant? This is getting very ridiculous.

HARRY BRANDON
Mahomet

Thought university accepted views of all

Dr. Howell taught a course on Catholicism. A student at the University of Illinois accused Howell of engaging in hate speech. The student hates what he said.

Let me understand this. We live in a tolerant, pluralistic culture, but we don't tolerate those who think incorrectly. Terminate the hate speaker. Isn't termination intolerant? What about the intolerance of the offended student?

If I tell you what I believe, it's hate because you disagree? You're enlightened and have the truth? Who determines these things? My beliefs are not like yours, so I am an intolerant, ignorant, unenlightened and an idiot because I don't believe like you.

Help. This reasoning is insane. In a pluralistic society, aren't we supposed to recognize we are different — that we tolerate difference? We don't all think alike and forced conformity and uniformity are truly intolerant.

If you disagree with me, then you agree with me that we need to be tolerant of all, or else tolerant of none. If we fire one teacher for teaching anything, regardless of content, we must fire them all for daring to be one-sided in their teaching. Or is there no right or wrong?

So, am I tolerant or intolerant? Is what I am thinking hate? I don't know. I just know that if I don't want to hear what

EDITORIALS

Effort to weaken FOIA doesn't serve public interest

Gov Pat Quinn's amendatory veto of a bill exempting performance evaluations from public disclosure is a marginal improvement, but the effort to weaken the state's new FOIA will continue.

Gov. Pat Quinn used an amendatory veto this week to soften a measure that would have exempted performance evaluations of all public employees from disclosure under the state's Freedom of Information Act.

Quinn amended House Bill 5154 to exempt only the performance evaluations of state and local law enforcement personnel from disclosure, joining public school teachers and principals who had been exempted earlier.

We would have preferred an outright veto of the bill, but his changes at least allow for performance evaluations of some public employees to be made public — for now. But the effort to gut the state's new FOIA continues.

Among other provisions, the new FOIA carries a presumption of openness with public records, shortens the period of compliance with requests and establishes the Illinois attorney general's office as the final arbiter in the event of a dispute, and for the first time imposes civil penalties for governments that willingly violate it.

The new Freedom of Information law was barely two weeks old when legislators amended it the first time in January, repealing a provision that made evaluations of public school employees available. Several other measures were introduced aimed at various FOIA provisions. The Legislature then passed House Bill 5154 in the spring session, which amended the state's Personnel Records Review Act to exempt all performance evaluations of public employees from disclosure under FOIA.

In announcing his changes, Quinn wrote that the bill was "a departure from the groundbreaking legislation that I approved just last year, making our State's open information laws among the most robust in the entire country."

But he said public safety officials need to have their evaluations exempt from disclosure. "If disclosed, these evaluations could be used by criminal suspects or defendants to undermine a police investigation or attack the credibility and integrity of a police officer," Quinn wrote.

But in reality, the legislation contradicts the new FOIA, which states that information that bears on the public duties of public employees should be open and accessible to the public. Taxpayers should have the right to information about how public employees do their jobs, no matter what jobs they hold.

And concern over possible misuse of performance reviews may be more imagined than real. Cara Smith, public access counselor in the Illinois Attorney General's office, said that of the several thousand FOIA requests her office has reviewed this year, only about 25 involved performance reviews.

Quinn's changes go back to the Legislature for action in the fall veto session in November, where legislators can approve the changes or override them with a three-fifths vote in each chamber. It's a safe bet that legislators will be under considerable pressure to override the changes since House Bill 5154 was one of the top priorities for public employee unions and the Illinois Municipal League last spring.

Regardless of the outcome on H.B. 5154, there are powerful forces lined up in opposition to the tone of government transparency the FOIA tries to establish. At a time when government in Illinois desperately needs transparency, death by a thousand cuts of FOIA can be expected to continue.

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

Williams College's annual report to the U.S. Department of Education reveals that of 1,017 total employees, 720, or over 70 percent, are doing something other than teaching. Among them are 84 coaches, 73 fund-raisers, a 42-member information-technology crew and a staff of 29 at its art museum. The college also has a "baby-sitting coordinator," a "spouse/partner employment counselor" and a "queer life coordinator." ...

The administrative overload at Williams mirrors a national trend. In 1976, for every 1,000 full-time students, there were 42 professional administrative staff members, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. By 2008, the most recent year available, there were 84. At the same time, the number of full-time faculty members for every 1,000 students has declined, from 65 to 55, due to the greater use of adjuncts and teaching assistants.

While fewer undergraduates are being taught by full-time professors, the number of administrators keeps growing.

Andrew Hacker, Claudia Dreifus
The New York Times

KirksvilleDailyExpress.com

Students sign on

How colleges use technology in the classroom

By Erika Enigk

GateHouse News Service

Posted Jul 28, 2010 @ 02:07 PM

As technology advances at lightning speed, colleges are working to help students learn in a new way. College students are already active users of new technology and expect to see it in the classroom, said Vanna Pianfetti, the assistant dean of learning technologies for the College of Education at the [University of Illinois](#). Check out a few ways that colleges are incorporating technology in the classroom:

Podcasts

Some professors record downloadable audio programs for students to listen to outside of normal class time, which gives more time for questions during class.

"The classes could become ... more of a flow of conversation," Pianfetti said.

Other times, a professor will ask students to download a podcast of something like a congressional trial, for example, to add to the readings and other resources they use.

Vide Conferencing/Skype

Scheduling a guest speaker can be cost-prohibitive or hard to fit into busy schedules. But with videoconferencing technology, a professor can invite a noted colleague or, perhaps, an author whose works the students have been reading, to speak to the class.

"These are students that are already Skypeing to their friends that are at other colleges, that are studying abroad," Pianfetti said.

While the technology doesn't wow them, it does give them an opportunity to see it used in a professional setting and to use it as more than a social tool.

Online courses

Many colleges are not only incorporating online elements into live classes (such as posting a syllabus and homework assignments on the Internet), but creating entire degree programs that students complete online. Working professionals can earn their master's degrees without having to quit their jobs.

A convenient way to get a degree, this type of program also provides technology training for the students, Pianfetti said. By taking a course online, students have access to technology they can someday take into the professional world, and training resources to help them use it.

GateHouse News Service

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Posted on Thu, Jul. 29, 2010

SIUE hoping to avoid furloughs; 'We need to be ... ready for further cuts'

Carbondale campus could face some cutbacks

BY ELIZABETH DONALD
News-Democrat

While the Southern Illinois University president has asked the campuses to consider furloughs next year, SIUE will probably not have to implement them.

SIU legislative liaison Dave Gross confirmed that President Glenn Poshard has asked all campuses of the SIU system to put together a furlough plan on paper, and to see if they will be able to balance next year's budget without furloughs or layoffs.

For Edwardsville, the answer is, "probably." For Carbondale, it's "probably not."

Gross called it a "contingency plan" in case of further budget cuts. It is unrelated to the cash-flow issues with the state's failure to make its payments, he said -- those issues were largely resolved with the new ability to borrow against future tax receipts.

But in the current budget proposals, the university will see a 7 percent cut in its state appropriations, or about \$14 million. Of that, Edwardsville's campus will lose \$4.2 million.

"With the state's fiscal situation, we need to be prepared and ready for further cuts," Gross said.

However, SIUE is unlikely to actually need the furloughs, Gross said. While Carbondale has had decreasing enrollment for several years, SIUE's enrollment has continued to rise each year. "Any furlough action will probably wait until they see what the enrollment numbers are in the fall," Gross said.

Carbondale is already negotiating with its various unions for furloughs, Gross said. Edwardsville's budget committees will meet in August to develop a plan. "At this point, Edwardsville is not planning to implement a furlough plan," Gross said.

From a legal standpoint, Gross said, it is easier to lay off employees than to furlough them. Other state universities have already had furloughs: at the University of Illinois, he said, classes were canceled when professors were forced to take furloughs. Exactly how the plan would be implemented at SIU has yet to be determined, he said.

"We have contemplated the idea of holiday weekends being extended by a day or two, so there would be less disruption," Gross said. "That's one of the significant problems for furloughing faculty; they need to be in the classroom."

The SIU board of trustees will meet to vote on the new budget in September, at which time the furlough plans will be completed, Gross said. Contact reporter Elizabeth Donald at edonald@bnd.com or 239-2501.

Bloomberg Businessweek

Available on the iPad

B-SCHOOL NEWS July 26, 2010, 4:40PM EST

B-Schools All A-Twitter Over Social Media

With interest in social media growing, B-schools are adding courses to teach students what it means for business

By Sommer Saadi

(Corrects name of Columbia Business School in first paragraph.)

[Harvard Business School](#) ([Harvard Full-Time MBA Profile](#)) and [Columbia Business School](#) ([Columbia Full-Time MBA Profile](#)) have joined a growing list of business schools that are adding courses on social media to their MBA curricula, addressing the corporate demand for social-network-savvy employees. The two schools are among at least six that have added courses in the past year that allow students to learn about Internet marketing and social media strategy, according to course syllabi and faculty associated with the classes.

With Twitter's social networking site claiming 190 million users tweeting 65 million times a day and Facebook reporting 500 million active members, companies including Sears Holdings ([SHLD](#)), Panasonic ([PC](#)), Citigroup ([C](#)), and AT&T ([T](#)) have begun hiring social media directors to develop and manage marketing strategies that address the nuances of the online world. Business schools in the last three years have seen a drop in graduate placement rates—to an average of 84 percent in 2009 among *Bloomberg Businessweek's* top 30 full-time MBA programs, from 96 percent in 2007. Social media classes are one way of preparing students for careers in a promising field, says John Gallagher, associate professor of information systems at [Boston College's Carroll School of Management](#) ([Carroll Full-Time MBA Profile](#)), where "Social Media & Web 2.0 for Managers" is being offered in the fall.

"In the realm of technology it's possible for us to teach our students a tool that their bosses don't have, and they can provide that added value from day one," Gallagher says. "Social media skills are the ones that can set them apart. Those are the skills that employers are looking for."

COURSE OFFERINGS

Columbia, in New York, offers four Internet marketing courses. Two of them, "Social Media," taught by Rachel Sterne, chief executive officer of GroundReport.com, a global citizen news platform, and "Media and Technology," taught by *New York Times* technology columnist David Pogue, will be offered for the first time next spring, according to professor Rajeev Kohli, chair of the Columbia marketing division. At Harvard, in Boston, professor Mikolaj Jan Piskorski last fall introduced a second-year elective course, "Competing with Social Networks," and 172 students enrolled—three for every available seat. "Students know these tools are too hard to ignore," Piskorski says.

Other MBA programs that have added courses that explore social media include [London Business School](#) ([LBS Full-Time MBA Profile](#)), [INSEAD](#) ([INSEAD Full-Time MBA Profile](#)), the international business school based in Fontainebleau, France, and the [École des Hautes Études Commerciales](#), known as HEC Paris ([HEC Full-Time MBA Profile](#)), according to faculty at the respective schools.

One of the earliest pioneers of Internet marketing courses, Elaine Young, an associate professor of marketing at Champlain College, where social media has been part of the MBA curriculum since 2000, says understanding digital tools is critical for business students. Students who master such tools can add to a company's bottom line, and improve their chances of getting a job.

"Companies want students to know this stuff," Young says. "But it's not just about having a Facebook page. Students have to ask themselves: 'Do I know how to set up an official Facebook page and run it and engage people on it?' "

LEARNING FROM CUSTOMERS

Companies want to recruit MBAs with social media skills because tapping into online networks can be a powerful way to learn brand sentiment, identify new opportunities, and improve customer service, according to Dorian Benkoil, founder of New York-based consulting firm Teeming Media. "It offers business an opportunity to converse with customers and learn from them."

At INSEAD, professor Andrew Stephen says he created the course "Advertising and Social Media Strategy" shortly after joining the faculty in June 2009 to address what he saw as a need to train MBAs in nontraditional marketing techniques. The two-month course made its debut in January of this year. "My feeling was that all the B-schools were lagging behind in preparing MBA students for dealing with the new media landscape," he says.

The INSEAD class lectures focus on thinking broadly about social media, not just Facebook and Twitter, Stephen says. Topics include the underlying psychological and sociological foundations of social media and the metrics and measurement tools for gauging the effectiveness of social media campaigns. Students are required to participate in social media marketing projects for big brands including Coca-Cola ([KO](#)), Nokia ([NOK](#)), Hermès ([RMS:FP](#)), and BMW ([BMW:GR](#)). According to Stephen, a typical project involves developing a detailed social media marketing strategy for the client.

"One of the key lessons from the whole course is that what we're dealing with is social interactions between people and approaches companies can take to get involved in their conversations," Stephen says. In less than six months, he says, attendance in the course more than tripled, from 27 students in January to 45 in March and 93 in May.

At London Business School, the "Internet Marketing" course also stresses hands-on learning, according to the course's online syllabus. Students participate in the Google ([GOOG](#)) Online Marketing Challenge, running an online advertising campaign that will benefit a real business, the syllabus says. Student teams taking part in the challenge develop a strategy, assess the results of the campaign, and make recommendations for the company, according to the Google website.

Saadi is an intern for Bloomberg Businessweek in New York.



News

A Consultancy Within

July 29, 2010

SAN FRANCISCO -- The list of problems (and opportunities) facing most colleges is long -- figuring out how to do more with less, setting priorities for investing time and money -- and some of those same challenges make it harder for institutions to solve them. As staffs and budgets stagnate or shrink, day-to-day demands often push aside the sort of strategic thinking and analysis that might pay dividends in the long term -- work for which institutions often turn to outside consultants for help.

Business officers looking for advice about how to find that strategic assistance in difficult times crowded into a meeting room this week at the annual meeting of the National Association of College and University Business Officers. There, a group of administrators at George Washington University described the institution's creation, nearly a decade ago, of its **Business Management and Analysis Group**, which was established to provide accounting help to the controller's office but has evolved into what is essentially an in-house consulting group for the entire university.

As the group has expanded from a focus on financial analysis to managing roughly two dozen projects a year for a wide range of campus departments, from the Board of Regents to the registrar to the academic services office, its full-time staff has grown to a dozen and expanded to include experts in business processes and technology as well as financial analysts. While the composition varies depending on the project, members of the in-house consulting group typically lead teams of senior and rank-and-file staff and faculty members who come at the challenge at hand (conducting a National Collegiate Athletic Association audit, developing an electronic billing process) from different perspectives.

While the university still leans on outside consultants for certain forms of expertise, including real estate and investments, the internal group has a level of institutional knowledge and memory, a web of existing relationships, and a tendency to take the long view that an outside consultant would be hard-pressed to replicate, said Dave Lawlor, the senior associate vice president for finance to whom the business management group reports.

The business management group charges a fee to departments for which it does projects, less to meet the office's costs than to keep departments from overusing its services.

The group's newest major project is providing analytical support for GW's **Innovation Task Force**, which is charged with finding, over five years, enough savings from current operations that -- when combined with some additional fund raising -- the university can invest an additional \$60 million a year in academic and research programs. "It's one thing if you're forced to cut \$60 million to balance the budget," said Lawlor. "Telling people you're going to invest an additional \$60 million in academic affairs is an easy sell -- there's no shortage of answers to how people would spend \$60 million if they could -- and it gives license to a focus on making the institution more efficient."

The internal consulting group provides added benefits from a work force perspective, GW officials said. It has provided a new career path for talented employees who might have skills that they're not using to full advantage in their current jobs, or who have done the same job for a long time and might leave the university if it does not provide new challenges. And when a school or department within GW loses a finance officer, the university has a ready pool of savvy people to step in and fill the job on an interim basis without missing a beat, said Richard Cosentino, assistant dean for administration at George Washington's School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, who moderated the discussion as what he called a "client" of the consulting group.

A Replicable Model?

Many of the CFOs and others in the audience here were probably salivating over the prospect of having a large team of financial and strategic planning types to call on to help their institutions meet their business and other goals -- and most likely seeing the idea as utterly unattainable. (Lawlor declined to say how much GW spends on its internal consulting team.)

Perhaps recognizing the gold-plated nature of its operation, Lawlor laid out a path that other colleges and universities might follow to experiment with such a group. Identify a problem or project that matters deeply to the president or another senior official at the institution (he called these "insomnia topics"), one that is achievable in a relatively short time period and that "you think you can knock out of the park."

Find a half-dozen or so of the most talented and capable people at your institution, and get them to commit 10 to 20 percent of their time to the project. And commit to the project's patron that you'll solve it without asking for money.

"If you can put together this SWAT team, tiger team, identify a clear and compelling objective, and knock it out of the park, you can start to gain wins and build over time," Lawlor said.

"If you can solve your boss's boss's problems, you're working on the right things."

— Doug Lederman

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News

Priced Out of the Market?

July 29, 2010



Average tuition and fees for overseas undergraduates studying classroom-based subjects at British universities have broken the £10,000 (\$15,591) barrier for the first time, prompting warnings that the country could be risking its position in the lucrative market for international students.

New figures for 2010-11 suggest that institutions will charge undergraduates from outside the European Union an average of £10,463 a year in classroom-based subjects, up 5.6 percent on 2009-10. That rises to £11,435 for overseas undergraduates in laboratory-based subjects, an increase of 6.1 percent. Inflation in the UK as measured by the consumer price index stood at 3.2 percent in June.

There were similar rises in fees for overseas postgraduates on one-year taught master's courses, where the average is £10,938 in classroom-based subjects (up 5.2 percent) and £12,487 in lab-based subjects (up 6.1 percent). Imperial College London charges the most: its overseas undergraduates face annual fees of up to £26,250 in lab-based subjects. The fees data are gathered annually via a survey of institutions by Mike Reddin, a former London School of Economics academic.

The release of the figures prompted warnings that universities must judge carefully the point at which higher fees may act as a deterrent in a competitive international market. Institutions are not subject to a cap on the fees they charge to overseas students of all levels, or to domestic and EU postgraduates, all of whom represent increasingly important sources of income.

The average fee for UK students on one-year taught master's courses rose to £5,214, up 16 per cent on the previous year. However, Reddin said that some of this rise can be attributed to a change in the way the figures are recorded.

The key comparison when considering overseas undergraduate fees is with the home undergraduate rate. Fees paid by home and EU undergraduates are capped at £3,290 for 2010-11.

Subsidies from the Higher Education Funding Council for England bring the total money received by universities to about £6,290 for each home/EU student in classroom-based subjects and about £9,290 in lab-based courses. Dominic Scott, chief executive of the UK Council for International Student Affairs, said the increase in fees was a "bitter pill" for foreign students to swallow.

"With all the press coverage of cuts to higher education budgets in the overseas press, there is real concern at whether the UK will be able to continue to offer the best value for money compared with competitor countries," he said.

He added that "with these sort of increases, institutions are going to have to invest even more [in improving the student experience] to continue to attract good numbers."

Bahram Bekhradnia, director of the Higher Education Policy Institute, said it was "interesting that home fees [for postgraduates] have risen more than those for overseas students." He said that international numbers had continued to grow despite rising costs, but added that "there must come a point at which our prices start to be a deterrent."

Fees for overseas students at Imperial are similar to those at top U.S. universities. Harvard University typically charges overseas students about £22,500, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology charges about £25,000.

But prices are far lower in continental Europe, where opposition to tuition fees remains fierce. Overseas students are charged about

£250 a year at the École Normale Supérieure de Lyon and nothing at the Free University of Berlin. Countries such as Finland and Sweden have in the past not charged overseas students; however, this is set to change.

Nicola Dandridge, chief executive of Universities UK, insisted that the UK "clearly remains competitive" internationally, with the number of students from outside the EU rising by 9.4 per cent to 251,310 last year. However, Drummond Bone, former vice chancellor of the University of Liverpool, suggested that demand was being propped up by other factors. "The real comparison is not just fees but total living costs. At the moment the low value of the pound is helping, but not as much as it did even last year."

Don Olcott, chief executive of the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, said overseas students felt that the reputation of UK - higher education gave added value, which allowed universities "greater flexibility for pushing the upper boundaries of tuition fees." But he warned: "Does this mean there is no reasonable upper limit on fees? No. Today, students have more choices from more providers than at any time in history."

Olcott added that a key issue was what would happen if the gap between fee levels at top-tier and less prestigious institutions grew. This could lead overseas students to give more weight to factors such as employment opportunities and the student experience, and shun high-cost universities.

For 2010-11, the Russell Group of large research-intensive universities will charge average fees of £12,162 for overseas undergraduates in classroom-based subjects and £14,987 in lab-based subjects. Averages for the 1994 Group of smaller research-intensive universities are £10,678 and £13,012: for the Million+ group of post-1992 universities, they are £9,059 and £9,489.

Average postgraduate fees for home students are higher at Scottish universities (£5,123) than English ones (£4,989).

Universities were criticized in light of the data. Aaron Porter, president of the National Union of Students, said: "Institutions are able to raise postgraduate fees without restriction and they are clearly using that freedom to ask postgraduates to fill gaps in their funding left by cuts."

Reddin began collating the figures in 2002 in response to a "growing disparity between fees for home/EU and overseas students." He also wanted to see if universities were "admitting international students who they wouldn't normally admit were it not for the fact that they come with this exciting price premium."

Reddin pointed out that the figures do not show how many students take up courses under the rates quoted. They provide evidence of what universities believe to be the market rate, but not of how many students accept it.

— John Morgan for Times Higher Education

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News

Adding Classes While Others Cut

July 29, 2010



This coming academic year, when nearly all of California's 72 community college districts are either cutting classes or keeping their numbers level despite unprecedented demand, one district is bucking the trend and adding classes. But it is taking a significant risk in doing so with one-time money — without knowing whether it will be able to maintain the funding to make the additions permanent.

Last week, the San Diego Community College District announced that it was adding about 1,150 classes for the academic year that starts Aug. 23. Most of the classes will be in high-demand general education transfer subjects, remedial sections and work force development programs. This reverses a two-year trend of cuts in which the district's three colleges — City College, Mesa College and Miramar College — trimmed nearly 1,900 classes.

Richard Dittbenner, director of public information and government relations, noted that the district is using reserve funds and scraping together the remaining balance from its operating budget to pay for the additional classes. He acknowledged that the district cannot make a habit of spending what is essentially money from its rainy day fund to maintain the increase indefinitely.

"We're banking that the state of California will provide us with at least a 2 percent budget increase for growth in each of the next two years," said Dittbenner, referring to what some say is the general consensus in Sacramento on higher education funding as the 2011-12 state budget undergoes debate. "For this year, it's one-time money, but we hope we're going to be able to catch up on the balance sheet. We can sweep the reserves again next year and float these classes again. But, after two years, if the state doesn't fund growth of classes — oh my goodness — then the future of the classes we added is inconclusive."

The district's move follows a disruptive 2009-10 academic year, when the state's community college budget was cut by 8 percent and, as a result, classes were cut by more than 6 percent statewide. Students were turned away from community colleges around the state in record numbers, unable to get a seat in at least one class. About 10,000 students were turned away from the San Diego Community College District — which already serves around 100,000 students.

Amid prior instability, the California Legislature has yet to formally approve a budget for the current fiscal year, which began July 1.

Dittbenner said he hopes his district's move will send a message to lawmakers in Sacramento to rethink how higher education is funded in the state. He argued that the state law requiring that community college districts spend at least 50 percent of their general fund revenue on classroom instruction — essentially just faculty salaries — forced his district to take this financial risk.

"That 50 percent doesn't include counselors, librarians, IT support, etc.," Dittbenner said. "Presumably these are things which enhance instruction. If expenses on the wrong side of that equation exceed money spent on instruction, then you're fined by the state. Well, because of the state budget problem here in California, the chancellor's office agreed to a workload reduction, which downsized most of the community colleges in the state. That put many districts, including us, on the wrong side of that equation. To get back on the right side, we either had to increase instructional expenses or drastically reduce non-instruction expenses by \$4 million."

The district's decision not to fire full-time contract staff, Dittbenner explained, was informed by Chancellor Constance Carroll's belief that these individuals are "as essential to the well-being and integrity of the academic program" as professors. Laying off full-time staff, he continued, would only further hurt the district. Given the alternatives, he said, the district will hire back some of the same adjunct

instructors it had to lay off during the past two years to teach the courses it is adding with one-time funds, with the understanding that their stay may not last longer than two years.

Dittbenner acknowledged that it could be somewhat problematic policy for both students and faculty to offer a slew of new courses without the guarantee that the district would be able to maintain them beyond two years. But the district, he said, is "caught between a rock and a hard place."

"We were forced to spend or we'd be fined for not meeting the 50 percent rule," Dittbenner said. "We think the 50 percent rule should change, and we would be supportive of efforts to change it so that, at a bare minimum, it included counselors and librarians and related expenses."

Faculty leaders at the district's three colleges, by and large, applaud the move to add more classes but admit they would also be hesitant to make such a move if times were better financially.

Cynthia Rico Bravo, Academic Senate president and a counselor/professor at San Diego Mesa College, called the decision to use one-time money to fund additional classes "a noble move."

"It's a great step that the district has decided not to decimate the non-instructional end," Rico Bravo said. "All research shows that students can only meet their goals with the help of student support services. It's also a win-win that it'll allow more students to fulfill their classroom requirement right now."

In the short term, Rico Bravo explained, the extra sections will help the many local students who are just a few credits shy of graduating and have had to postpone completion due to the budget crisis. Beyond the immediate completion push, she added, the move appeals to faculty members because it provides more access to incoming students.

"Are we fooling students by offering this many sections for right now if we can't be sure we can keep it up?" Rico Bravo said. "I see that point, but I don't think so. We have faith that we'll be able to somehow fund what we have now. We're lobbying as hard as we can. But access is important to us. Right now, this is a good opportunity, especially when you come to the first week of classes and there are tons of students coming to you begging for classes."

Acknowledging the role that the 50 percent law played in her district's decision to add classes, she said that she believes the rule needs to change to accommodate other student service expenses. Still, she noted that her perspective is not typical of all faculty members, given that she is both a counselor and a professor, and it is rare to see a person in a faculty leadership position who straddles this divide.

Jim Mahler, president of the local branch of the American Federation of Teachers' union that covers most of the district's faculty, takes a different perspective on the 50 percent rule.

"It did force the district's hand to add more instructional costs back into the budget, there's no doubt about it," Mahler said. "Is there something wrong with the 50 percent rule? Not necessarily. If anything, this just shows how way out of whack [the district] was on the 50 percent law."

Mahler does not think that adding counselors and librarians to this count would have mattered much in case of his district's decision. While he applauded the move to add more courses, he said he would have preferred for the college to add full-time faculty instead of adjuncts.

"Hiring full-timers would help the district get back in line with the 50 percent rule faster," Mahler noted. "At this point in time, when you need to spend \$4.8 million, why not hire all full-timers? If things turn around, then that's great. But, if not, you can just reduce sections but at least you'll have the faculty there."

Statewide academic observers are taking note of the San Diego district's decision and its relative risk.

Jane Patton, president of the Academic Senate of California Community Colleges, said that faculty and administrators often have no guarantees that they will be able to maintain a certain number of class sections from semester to semester. The term-by-term fluctuation, however, is typically much smaller than the 1,150 sections being added at San Diego's three colleges.

Though Patton acknowledged that her organization has been approached many times about altering the 50 percent law, she believes the much larger issue is not how much should be spent on faculty salaries, but how much the state should be spending on community

colleges.

"The academic senate is willing to discuss the 50 percent law to include counselors and librarians," Patton said. "But the only blame is really a lack of funding from the state. We have no idea what's going to happen in Sacramento."

As for how the rest of the state will receive the news that one of its largest community college districts is adding a ton of classes this coming year, Dittbenner said reaction would be mixed.

"Some people will see this and say, 'Things are so bad and they added all these classes. Now why can't our district do the same?' " he said. "Still, there are slightly different challenges in budgeting from district to district. We've made a move consistent with our values, and our district enjoys a good fiscal reputation.... Still, to use a west coast metaphor, we're riding the wave, but we could wipe out."

— David Moltz

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