

LTCC enrollment drops; impact of state budget unknown

By Kathryn Reed

With Gov. Jerry Brown proposing massive cuts to the California Community College system, it's possible even more key courses will be eliminated from Lake Tahoe Community College's schedule.



The need to increase the minimum class size from eight to 12 students in recent years meant the second of a three-segment computer class being cut this quarter. Most community colleges in the state have a minimum class size of 19.

In the past the South Lake Tahoe two-year school could make exceptions for a transfer class that didn't meet the required number of students. Not so anymore.

Officials didn't know if students wanting to take this course will have to wait a year for it to be offered again or if it might be available spring quarter.

Just how slashing \$400 million from the state Community College system and \$500 million from both the UC and CSU systems will impact students locally and throughout the state remains to be seen.

It's becoming normal for whoever is governor to come out with something in January that doesn't necessarily resemble what is eventually passed by the Legislature. A crystal ball would be needed to know what lawmakers will actually come up with to deal with the \$25 billion deficit.

"We appreciate the honesty with which the governor approaches

the budget. However, while community colleges are prepared for their fair share of cuts, we will vigorously resist the census accounting gimmick tied to the \$400 million reduction. This will have the effect of reducing math and science classes, particularly at our colleges serving the most vulnerable students," Scott Lay, president/CEO of the Community College League of California, told his constituents. "Further, while it may be fair to ask our students to share the pain of this overall budget problem, the fact that funding for their classes and services is being cut by \$370 and their fees are being used to enroll more students simply doesn't make sense."

For now, students at LTCC are contending with fewer class choices as one of the results of previous budget snafus. Still, enrollment was up in fall quarter compared to 2009. Fall enrollment had a total of 2,950 students – 878 fulltime.

However, the numbers have dropped for winter quarter, with 2,036 total, of which 759 are fulltime.

The college historically sees a dip in winter quarter numbers. Part of this is attributed to more jobs opening up and students wanting to be on the ski slopes.