

LTCC mapping out a way to offer community education

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Community College hopes to return to its roots a bit this fall by offering community education.

While the state mandates the dollars it doles out to two-year institutions be largely spent on courses geared toward students who will transfer to four-year colleges and for remedial purposes, it hasn't always been that way.



Tom Greene

When LTCC opened in 1975 it had a true community education component. This was in large part funded by a 5-cent assessment placed on properties statewide. A local 72-cent property tax was in place to fund LTCC.

At that time community colleges also set their own fees.

When voters passed Proposition 13 in 1978 it changed how property taxes to this day are collected in California as well as the funding structure for education and other entities.

One reason LTCC is reintroducing community education is because of how the state reimburses the school for classes. In recent years more elective type courses are not being reimbursed. Many of these, like physical education, are popular in South Lake Tahoe. But the college is losing money

without the state reimbursement.

Tom Greene, vice president of Academic Affairs and Student Services, spoke to the LTCC board March 22 about the need to hire a part-time community education coordinator.

After the meeting he told *Lake Tahoe News* he expects in the next month or so to have more structure to the program. Bringing back community education was a component of the February strategic planning session.

“It will give us a great deal of flexibility,” Greene told the board. “It will be an alternative revenue stream and it meets the unmet needs of the community.”

Although the program per state law is not supposed to make money, instead break even, it’s possible to incorporate into the fee structure the wear and tear of the facility and utility costs. This is where the college may reap a savings of sorts.

“I imagine if it’s not self-supporting, it will not be long lived,” Greene said.

Specific courses that might be offered are far from being finalized. But there was discussion about bringing back Kids College, offering culinary classes, having a mini version of the Spanish institute, or weekend seminars.

Part of the flexibility Greene spoke of was timing of classes – this could be for a day, hours or a weekend. Plus, the requirements for instructors are not the same as regular LTCC classes.

Cynthea Preston, dean of Instruction, said, “We have a lot of vocational classes that would be better in community education.”