

Community colleges looking at ways to trim budgets

Publisher's note: A spokeswoman for Lake Tahoe Community College in South Lake Tahoe said the elimination of summer school is not being considered as a way to deal with a shrinking budget.

By Richard Bammer, Vacaville Reporter

Seeking to relieve some fiscal pressure before the start of fall classes, Solano Community College leaders canceled the summer session at its four campuses, shaving \$1 million from the 2012-13 budget.

"It's painful to have to do this," Jowel Laguerre, the Fairfield-based college's superintendent-president, said shortly after issuing a press release.

Alluding to the prospect of getting rosier financial reports from the state Department of Finance, he said, "The thinking was it's going to get better and it hasn't."

The decision, which top college staff members made late Thursday before making it public Friday, accomplishes several things, Laguerre noted.

Besides the budget reduction, it will allow the college to keep a mostly full schedule of classes in the fall and spring semesters; protect more faculty and staff jobs; provide a financial cushion if voters reject Gov. Jerry Brown's November tax initiative; and brings expenses and revenues into a closer balance, he said.

"We have run classes for 500 to 600 more students than the state pays us for," Laguerre said. He noted the decision not to offer summer classes gives SCC "a more secure financial

base.”

Expressing a note of caution, he said that if Brown’s tax initiative – the Schools and Local Public Safety Protection Act of 2012 – fails, then the college faces an additional \$2.2 million cut in January, he said.

“We have to plan in a way that the potential for the revenues not to be there is real,” said Laguerre, who oversees 9,100 students, and 160 full-time and 400 part-time faculty.

Read the whole story