

LTCC has momentum to alter tuition rates

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Community College officials have one week to come up with ideas that would satisfy the state Senate Committee on Education's concerns regarding the college's quest to allow some Nevada students to pay tuition at California rates.

The first hearing before the senate committee was April 24, with a return trip to Sacramento planned for May 1.

"I am encouraged that the Senate Committee on Education is willing to work with me on this important issue and will look forward to exploring legislative and non-legislative options for extending in-state tuition costs to all Lake Tahoe Community College District students in the Lake Tahoe Basin," state Sen. Ted Gaines, R-Rocklin, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "I will do all I can to work on a bipartisan basis to satisfy my colleagues' concerns when Senate Bill 329 is up for a vote next week."



Lake Tahoe Community College would like to create a good neighbor tuition policy for Nevadans at Lake Tahoe.
Photo/LTN file

Gaines authored the legislation.

This all came about when in June 2011 Nevada's board of regents rescinded the good neighbor policy that allowed some California students not to pay out of state tuition. They did this because it was determined it was costing Nevada \$6 million a year.

California then said no discounts for Nevada students.

A full-time student at LTCC pays about \$1,370 a year, while a non-California resident pays \$7,600 for that same education. While it's normal for all institutions to charge more for out-of-state or foreign students, the problem comes when colleges are in border towns like South Lake Tahoe.

The state line is 3.2 miles from LTCC and Whittell High School in Zephyr Cove is about eight miles away. For an area that keeps touting itself as one community, one economy, the varied education expenses for the local college contradict those beliefs.

"They understand Tahoe is a unique community and we want to educate our citizenry," LTCC President Kindred Murillo said of the lawmakers. "We want fairness."

Only Nevada students living inside the Lake Tahoe Basin would be allowed the discounted rates. And the legislation is specific to LTCC.

Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News* she hopes to get SB329 through the Legislature so on July 1 the college would have new rates for some Nevada students.