

# Grant: 'Create a tourism, hospitality and recreation program'

*Publisher's note: Lake Tahoe News asked the two Lake Tahoe Community College District 5 candidates a series of questions. The responses are being run in the order LTN received them.*



**Name:** Robert "Bob" Grant

**Profession/work experience:** Educator, professional director and conductor. I have taught 25 years with Lake Tahoe Unified School District at the high school and elementary levels. I was a co-writer of the grants for STHS. I taught as adjunct faculty at both Lake Tahoe Community College and Western Nevada College. I was also the director and conductor of "Ebenezer Scrooge" at Harrah's for 23 years as well as directing over 100 theatre productions in the region.

**Age:** 54

**What organizations, committees or groups are you or have you been involved with?:** I am a founding member of the Performing Arts Boosters Association (PABA) and worked on the committees for both the Measure A and Measure G bonds. I have served as the choir director of Lake Tahoe Community Presbyterian Church

since I was 17. I have also been involved with the AB86 Adult Education Project in conjunction with LTCC and currently serve as president of the STHS Site Council. I am a curriculum writer for the University of California Curriculum Integration Project and have written collaborative career/core curriculum that is used statewide. I also serve on visiting committees for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges accrediting and learning about schools in other areas.

**What is your educational background?:** I have my bachelor's degree from Sacramento State University and advanced credentials in elementary and secondary education from Sierra Nevada College. I also hold a certification in arts, media and entertainment.

**Why do you want to serve on the college board?:** Since I was in high school, I was interested in elected office, especially school boards. I was the student representative to the Lake Tahoe Unified Schools board for two years. I also ran for that office in the general election when I was 18. I am interested in increasing the collaboration with both the school and college districts. I believe my experiences in both institutions provide a unique perspective that would add to the effectiveness of the board. I believe it is crucial to keep student-centered and make decisions that are in the students' best interests.

**Why should people vote for you over the other candidate?:** I believe my many years as a South Lake Tahoe resident and my experiences as both a student and instructor at LTCC provide an understanding of the college and community partnership. My experiences in dealing with education funding and policy at both at the local, county and state levels will allow me begin to be an effective board member immediately.

**What do you think is the most pressing issue facing Lake Tahoe Community College and how will you deal with it?:** Enrollment seems to be a concern at the college. New legislation that

limits repeatability of classes has changed the demographics of the LTCC student. The college provides a world-class education and we need to increase our marketing efforts and connections with prospective students to keep the enrollment growing.

**How will you be voting for the bond the college has on the ballot and why?:** As a supporter of both Measure A and Measure G, and a grant writer for some of the projects at the high school, I have seen both the economic and prestige benefits of the infrastructure spending. Dignitaries, educators and political leaders have all come to see not only the facilities at STHS, but I have seen the changes in learning and innovative curriculum that the bond inspired. I believe the college and the community would benefit in the same ways. There were jobs created by the construction and upgrading, and even when the contracts could not be fulfilled by locals, the economic benefits of housing, food and restaurants, building supplies and other collateral extras were realized.

**What is working well at the college and what isn't; and how would you go about changing what isn't working?:** There are many programs that are working well at the college. Dr. [Kindred] Murillo is a strong leader and is very adept at moving the college's vision forward. The EMT and fire science career programs are very strong and very much in demand. The core academic programs are exemplary and prepare students for the rigors of four-year colleges and beyond. The fine and performing arts create a cultural anchor for the students, staff and community. I believe that programs should be reviewed regularly and assessed for viability. Programs that are not as strong may undergo revision and possible integration with other pathways. Sharing appropriate resources with the community and possibly the unified school district would help to eliminate waste and redundancy.

**What programs are not offered that should be?:** Although the college has pieces of this curriculum, I believe the college

should create a focused tourism, hospitality and recreation program that is centered on the needs of the South Lake Tahoe workforce and encourage entrepreneurship and sound management techniques. The program should focus on guest services, but also provide the infrastructure needed to sustain business, the environment, and our way of life.

**What classes have you taken at LTCC?:** I began taking classes at LTCC after I graduated high school (when the school was next to Taco Bell) and received an A.A. degree before moving on to Sacramento State. Since that time I have been in many theater productions and have taken the full gambit of Spanish courses they have to offer.

**What other involvement have you had with LTCC?:** As I stated earlier, I am currently part of the AB86 Adult Education program and have worked with the LTCC staff on the SB1070 Career Pathways Program ensuring there are clear connections for students that encourage them to continue their education throughout their lives.

**What should be the role of higher education in South Lake Tahoe?:** The role of the college is threefold: To prepare students for higher education and training experiences, to improve the quality of life in our community through education, and to be a hub of culture and enlightenment.

**What do you believe should be the financial priorities of the college?:** The priority has been and should remain the students of the college. Funds should be allocated as close to the student as possible to maintain academic excellence. This means investing in and acquiring the best faculty and staff available and providing funds for infrastructure, marketing and growth. The college should always be looking for redundancy and overlap in operations and program, and redirect funds towards the students.

**Being on the board requires working with four others. Give**

**readers an example of how you work well others in difficult situations with differing opinions:** I have been on many committees and boards that work well together. I believe I have a problem-solving type of personality and often try to coalesce ideas and strategies to make them palatable and effective for everyone. I would not hesitate, however to vote in the negative if I believed the decision was not in the best interests of the students or the college.

**How much time can you commit to carry out trustee duties?:** I believe I have ample time to devote to the board and the college. My children are grown, my wife is very supportive of the time commitment and serving as trustee would be an honor not a "time-burden." I am willing to devote all the time it takes to be an effective trustee.

**What do you think is the most important mission of LTCC?:** Student success. Whether that means training for a job or career, acquiring basic-skills, getting ready to move to a four-year university, or developing a better life for yourself and your family. LTCC is a place where that can happen and does happen everyday.

**Tell the voters something about yourself that they may not know:** I was honored by a proclamation from the governor of Nevada for my work in the arts. And, if I may, I am proud of the fact that all my children and now my granddaughter have attended LTCC.