

May 11, 2013

Dear Editor,

“An Open Letter to PCC Trustees” (*Star News*, 5/2/13) by “Citizens for a Better College” was admittedly a paid advertisement. Still, even as advertising, it exceeds normal expectations of faulty logic and inaccurate facts. I keep wondering why so many upstanding community members who signed that letter can’t calculate a simple percentage: in March 2013 188 PCC faculty (out of 204 valid ballots) cast votes of no confidence in President Rocha’s leadership abilities. Is that a “small clique”? I get 92%. Much worse, however, is the writers’ claim that increasing class sizes at PCC is a responsible policy and that faculty who oppose it refuse to “put students first.” The PCC President’s and the Board’s proposal to replace many traditional classes with online sections and to dramatically increase class sizes by 20-50% puts revenue-raising first, not students. A Feb. 18th *New York Times* editorial argues that community college students are “significantly more likely to fail” online courses than their university counterparts where, in some huge online classes, the attrition rate is “around 90%.” An in-house statistical analysis of 4400 PCC students further reveals that students fail at a *higher rate* in traditional classes as class size increases. In a course of 55 students, only 56% succeed; however, in a class of 35, 70% succeed. Because of the reduced faculty-student interaction, *almost twice as many students fail* in classes of 55 as compared with classes of 35 students.

It is PCC faculty, exposing the President’s and the Trustees’ irresponsible policies and opposing such calloused, revenue-driven “remedies,” who are battling on the side of the students.

Sincerely,
Dr. Jill O’Hora
Professor of English, Pasadena City College