

Letter to Editor of the Star News

Recently a full-page ad appeared in the Star News (May 2); it was called “An Open Letter to the PCC Board of Trustees.” The letter was paid for by a group called Citizens for ABC, A Better College. The letter makes a number of statements, mostly misstatements, but its primary purpose is to blame the union at the College for the “chaos” at Pasadena City College and to give a vote of confidence to the Board and President Rocha.

No matter what you think about unions, the “chaos” at the College is not the result of “a small clique of faculty union leaders” who wish, as the letter asserts, “to usurp the authority of the Board of Trustees, sap the power of the President, limit class opportunities of the students, and silence disagreement . . . among faculty members.”

Indeed, if you ask anyone who works at the College, you’ll find that there is widespread discontent with the administration throughout the entire campus among faculty, staff, students, and even management. We aren’t talking about just a few people. In recent votes of no- confidence by the faculty at large, by the Academic Senate (representing all faculty on campus), and by the Associated Students, the overwhelming majority voted no confidence in the president.

So why are so many at the College so unhappy? Again, if you ask people who work at the College, they all express variations on the same theme: they have no say about the direction of the College. PCC has a long tradition of college governance called collegial consultation (required by AB 1725) in which each of the constituent groups on campus, especially faculty, but also including management, staff, and students has a voice in the decision making at the College. This system of governance has broken down under the current president, causing a widespread loss of trust in his ability to effectively lead the College. Many faculty, classified staff, and managers at the College are also unhappy about the numerous terminations, administrative leaves of absence, and forced retirements that have occurred during this president’s term of office.

Why then does the Board of Trustees still support the President? The answer is that the Board finds itself in a difficult position. Only a few years ago, the Board had to find a way to remove an earlier president Paulette Perfumo, in whom it had lost confidence. She resigned and the Board paid

for the remaining time on her contract. Now the Board faces a similar situation and is understandably reluctant to remove the current president.

The open letter that appeared in the Star News gives the community a false impression about the causes of the chaos on the PCC campus. As long time employees of PCC, we want to set the record straight. We hope that the chaos at the College will soon be resolved, so that the College will again deserve the outstanding reputation that it once had.

This letter is supported by the board of the PCC Retirees Association.

Signed _____
Dorothy Burns, President, PCC Retirees Association