Hancock College doing more with less

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You may have read that full-time faculty do not receive longevity the way administrators do, and that is true. Instead, our full-time faculty enjoy a pay scale that affords them a more than 3-percent step increase every year for up to 12 years, and every other year after that up to year 24. In fact, the average daily rate of pay for our full-time faculty is $442, while the average daily rate of pay for our administrators, inclusive of the president's salary, is $426. Each of the five members of the board of trustees, for their job of overseeing a multimillion-dollar business, receives a $240 monthly stipend, mileage and covered health insurance, should we choose to take it. And yes, the college is a business, and one taxpayers have entrusted us to run effectively and efficiently. Despite having its state funding slashed, Hancock is operating in the black and we are doing all we can to maintain access for our students.

Another point of discussion continues to be our perceived high budget reserve level. The reserve percentage has gone up, but the dollar amount of the reserve, approximately $3.6 million, has not because our total budget has been reduced.

Our employee unions argue that the extra money in the reserve is taking away from students and employees. It is true no employee group has received cost-of-living increases for nearly five years. However, in our efforts to ensure the college continues operating in the black with no layoffs, the board has been adamant about holding those dollars available in the event of more state funding cuts. At present, the reserve would only cover about one month's payroll. It is in the future that the board would like to increase this reserve to 10 percent.

Keep in mind the college has experienced reduced state funding of more than $6 million. This requires us to reduce class offerings. But, we have chosen to keep the number of classes higher than what the state provides funding for. We offer opportunity to our students and this community. However, we are a state-funded institution and, by law, we must maintain a balanced budget — even when the state reduces its funding to us in the middle of a budget year.

The college administration and trustees are here to serve students. Our job is to continue to lead Hancock College on its path of excellence. I am thankful to all of our employees for their dedication and commitment to this service.

BeeJay Jones is president of the Allan Hancock College Board of Trustees.

After recent letters to the editor from Allan Hancock College faculty members, and articles focus on a conservative approach to our budget reserve by the board of trustees, it is time to respond.

Allegations have been made that question the motivation and intentions of the administration and board. These have been unkind and distorted representations.

As president of the board, I remind our community that Hancock was selected one of the top five community colleges in California last year, and the only community college in our region not being challenged on its accreditation status. Hancock has been lauded as "the best-run" community college on the Central Coast. In the face of layoffs and cutbacks elsewhere, Hancock College will again not invoke layoff notices to regular faculty. Plus, we have not laid off classified staff. In fact, even in the midst of this recession, all employee groups have received an annual step, column or longevity increase according to their contracts, over $337,000 total.