



Santiago Canyon College

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Orange Education Center

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Dear Board of Governors:

I voice the concerns of inmates enrolled in Substance Abuse and Effective Parenting classes in the Orange County jails. Should the recommendations of the Student Success Task Force result in the elimination of noncredit courses in Health and Safety and Parent Education, the classes that Santiago Canyon College provides inmates in Substance Abuse and Effective Parenting would cease.

Community Colleges are about more than degrees and certificates. The community college system has historically played a vital role in the health and well-being of California and its people by being the college of the community as the provider of needed educational services. Let the decision of what courses each college offers continue to be made at the local level, where elected Board members guide the curriculum and the budget.

In the Orange County Jails, the courts as well as other county departments have accepted certification of completion of Substance Abuse and Effective Parenting classes by incarcerated individuals in fulfillment of court orders.

Moreover, classes in Substance Abuse and Effective Parenting have positively impacted the families and the community. As stated by an Orange County inmate, Mr. Milledge, "The effects of drug and alcohol abuse not only applies to the individual but to families, employees and the health community as a whole...these programs are vital and a starting point in educating us on healthier solutions to live our lives without drugs or alcohol, to help reduce recidivism and to heal our communities and families that are affected".

Other inmates share the effect that participation in these classes has on their lives. Ms. Lockridge stated, "Classes are invaluable to many inmates suffering from drug and alcohol addiction and the resulting wreckage associated with these diseases". Ms. West writes, "Jail is a place where us criminals can use our time in a wasted manner and some up with more ways to commit crimes, but with the educational programs we use time to become better citizens".

Attached to this letter are personal letters written by incarcerated men and women enrolled in these classes in the Orange County jails. For your convenience, I have attached a few pages of excerpts from those letters where inmates share how their participation in these classes has affected their lives and the lives of their families.

I urge you to seriously consider the negative impact that the elimination of programs such as Health and Safety and Parent Education will have at the local level and statewide and to leave the decision to offer these programs at the local level.

Sincerely,

Lori Fasbinder, Ed.D.

Dean of Instruction and Student Services

PRESIDENT: Juan A. Vázquez

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