

COALITION OBTAINS E-MAIL SHOWING LACCD OFFICIALS KNEW THEY WERE MISREPRESENTING THE FACTS ABOUT VAN DE KAMPS

It was just over a year ago that officials of the Los Angeles Community College District announced that Los Angeles City College "could not open the Van de Kamps Satellite Campus of Los Angeles City College" due in part because adjoining community college districts would not give letters of support for the new satellite campus. LACCD officials claimed in meetings with Northeast community organizations that the District could not obtain "Center Status" for Van de Kamps which would provide a source of administrative funding for the site. They publicly blamed this in part on what Los Angeles City College President Jamillah Moore had claimed was the inability to get letters of support from officials at the nearby community colleges.

New records obtained by the Van de Kamps Coalition from the LACCD pursuant to its obligation to provide records in a pending environmental law case now reveal that LACCD Board member Sylvia Scott-Hayes knew that the claims of Dr. Moore to the public about Center Status support letters were false. Below is a copy of an e-mail sent by Sylvia Scott-Hayes to Dr. Jamillah Moore on May 7, 2009 after Dr. Moore sent an e-mail to both LACCD Board of Trustees members Sylvia Scott-Hayes and Mona Field thanking them for "coming out last night to the town hall. The faculty and staff of LACC [Los Angeles City College] greatly appreciate the support and assistance of the district in the operations of the Northeast Center [at the Van de Kamps Bakery]. Thank you!!!" The bracketed material is inserted by the Van de Kamps Coalition to help readers understand the e-mail.

Here is Trustee Scott-Hayes' response to Dr. Moore, copied to Mona Field:

"May 7, 2009

Re:Bakery [The transfer of the Van de Kamps Bakery to LACCD Administration]

Jamillah, [Dr. Jamillah Moore, President of Los Angeles City College]

Hope all is well. I have a few comments regarding bakery site. I know you will be handing this problem off soon, but because you are still seen as the main person in the presentations that are taking place [to the community groups in Northeast LA], I think you still need to take the lead for now.

Given recent L.A. Times article, I think we need to rethink the message the presentation you and the LACCD team are sending. I think team needs to re-focus so that it is clear we are putting a satellite there, it's just going to be an LACCD site [District Administration run] instead of an LACC site [Los Angeles City College run]. We should rethink adding a few transfer classes, I'm sure ELAC [East Los Angeles Community College] will be interested. I suggest we regroup and set up a meeting with all before you guys go out and do another presentation [to the Northeast Community].

I know for a fact there are a group of disgruntled individuals who already have a game plan as to how to discredit what we are doing at bakery site--especially those who have issues with charter school. This can quickly turn into a nightmare if we don't address this in a smart way. [Scott-Hayes fears and disparages the Van de Kamps Coalition]

I also have heard from PCC [Pasadena Community College] board members, they want to know who refused to provide a support letter for us acquiring center status [at Van de Kamps] because they said they do NOT have any problem providing us with a letter of support. I also spoke with Glendale [Community College District] board member who thought we could sit down and work something out. If these colleges [Pasadena and Glendale Community Colleges] start getting calls from a legislator and they hear something different from them than what you stated at the community meeting it can be a real problem. I only tell you this because we need to get a strong handle on this project before it blows up in our faces.

Sylvia [Sylvia Scott-Hayes, Trustee on the Los Angeles Community College Board of Trustees]"

ANALYSIS:

The Van de Kamps Coalition notes that after this e-mail, neither Trustee Scott-Hayes nor Trustee Mona Field did anything to change direction to try to hand off the Van de Kamps campus buildings to outside programs supported by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa: 50% of the campus was leased to the Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools and the other 50% was proposed to be leased to three favorite unemployment programs funded by the Mayor's office through the Workforce Investment Board. These two trustees knew their staff was lying to the public about the reasons Van de Kamps was about to be transferred to District Administration. These trustees supported Los Angeles City College abdicating its responsibilities to program the Van de Kamps campus with both profit-making classes (to cover operating costs) and traditional credit courses (to offer educational opportunity to transit dependent young adults in Northeast Los Angeles).

This is shameful revelations that now take responsibility for misconduct involving Van de Kamps to members of the Board of Trustees of the Los Angeles Community College District.