

SOLANO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
GOVERNING BOARD

UNADOPTED MINUTES
March 18, 2009

APPENDIX A

5. COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Board President Young recognized Ms. Keziah Pagtakhan, a seventeen-year old senior at Hogan High School, who requested to comment on the Solano College Theater Program.

Ms. Pagtakhan began by commenting that she is a dedicated member of Solano Youth Theater and is currently in her fifth production, **The Music Man**. “Solano Youth Theater (SYT) has helped me in many more ways than one.

I am a person who has very little to boast when it comes to athletics, and for others like me there is not a wide range of opportunities to be in a confidence-boosting and character-building activity that comes from being in a team that works towards a common goal. However, theater arts are an avenue by which kids like me are given this opportunity. While the majority of elementary, middle and high schools in Solano County and neighboring cities, for a variety of reasons, do not offer a theater arts program, Solano Youth Theater bridges this gap. SYT is a program that is run on a professional standard, an opportunity that a lot of kids, including myself, would not have without Solano Theater. We learn not only to act, dance and sing, but more importantly, we learn to work and collaborate with all kinds of people coming from different schools, cultures and backgrounds to achieve a common goal. It has taught me to be tolerant of all kinds of people and accepting of everyone I have met there. I have made so many friends and consider them my ‘other’ family.

Solano Youth Theater helped me learn how to speak confidently in front of a group of people. My SYT training with memorization and projection has significantly helped me at the Regional Academic Decathlon Competition held on this very campus last January, when I brought home a prestigious gold medal in Prepared and Impromptu Speech. The confidence and ability to present myself to others have helped me successfully speak to an advisory committee of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission attended by a number of city officials and committee members. Being a senior in high school, SYT has also prepared me for a number of college scholarship interviews by teaching me to make strong decisions and pull from my experience on the spot. The skills gained from the training given by our wonderful, passionate instructors are invaluable. I would not be where I am now without the training and discipline learned at SYT.

I know that so many people would be disappointed to see SYT’s program halted because we know the benefit it can be to current and future generations. The experience that can be found nowhere else but in dramatic theater, especially one as high caliber as SYT, is so rarely found. Solano County has a wealth of talents found in SYT. To take out the program is metaphorically akin to removing the gem cutter out of a mound of raw diamonds. I am heading off to college in a few months, and I would be disheartened to see the next generation of actors in

Solano not have the opportunity to continue with the program that has been there for me and has helped me and so many others to grow, learn and succeed.

I implore you to please do everything in your power to keep the SYT program enriching and empowering the youth of Solano County.”

Ms. Pagtakhan distributed to the Board a signed petition with approximately 300 signatures in support of the SYT from residents in Vallejo and Benicia.

Board President Young thanked Ms. Pagtakhan for her comments.

Board President Young recognized Mr. Tony Wade, a freelance writer for the *Daily Republic* in Fairfield, who requested to comment about saving the theater program at Solano College.

Mr. Wade began by stating, “For the past three years, I have done freelance writing for the *Daily Republic* Newspaper reviewing among other things local theatrical productions.

I thought long and hard about what I would say tonight and decided to share with you snippets from a few of my SCT reviews.

From **Noises Off** – ‘The two-story set of Solano College Theater’s production of **Noises Off** features four different doors on the top floor and three on the bottom. Designed by Jackie S. Hill, the set dominates the stage, and the constant entering and exiting and running up and down the stairs by the cast is central to the uproarious and entertaining farce.’

From **Assassins** – ‘The special effects were well executed; especially the barn where Booth is hiding that is set on fire at the start of the show. The set was nicely done and features 10-foot-tall movable columns with newspaper articles detailing assassinations or attempted assassinations. The lighting, costumes and sound design all worked effectively to create a mood of menace, reflecting the skewed perspective on the American dream the killers possessed.’

From **The Comedy of Errors** – ‘The costumes were spectacular. The colors, fabrics and attention to accessorized detail made them seem authentic and natural. The sound design was truly excellent. Like many people, I always associated Shakespeare with high falutin’, snooty, snobbish stuff. So imagine my surprise when the Antipholuses were beating their respective Dromios, and the punches and nose smacks were synchronized with the honks and clangs made famous by *The Three Stooges*. It was more Homer Simpson than Homer’s Iliad.’

From **Intimate Apparent** – ‘The ease at which the audience becomes engrossed in a play always involves the work of many people and high praise goes to Director Robin Stanton. The set design, costumes, lighting, and sound design all worked together to make it a glorious theater experience. Heck, even the cookie I bought at intermission was delicious.’

The point I make is that behind the actors and directors, there are a ton of people from the community who contribute to making productions as wonderful as they are.

Look, I’m just a regular Fairfield citizen who has lived here for 33 years. I’m not particularly educated or have a background in theater. I’m just some guy--*Joe Six Pack of Diet Coke*. But like thousands of Solano County residents, I know the goods when I see them, and SCT is the goods. The ripple effects of losing the local jewel that is SCT would definitely be devastating to all involved in putting on the shows and to the community at large.”

Board President Young thanked Mr. Wade for his comments.

Board President Young recognized Ms. Monica Brown, a member of the public, who requested to comment on the upcoming State Budget Initiatives on the May 19, 2009, Special Election Ballot.

Ms. Brown distributed to the Board copies of summaries of Proposition 1A (Rainy Day Budget Stabilization Fund); Proposition 1B (Protect Education Funding-Prop 98 Maintenance Factor); Proposition 1C (Lottery Modernization Act); Proposition D (Children's Services Funding); Proposition E (Mental Health Funding Budget); and Proposition 1F (Restricts Elected Officials' Salaries). Ms. Brown stated that the schools in the county need to get on board in supporting these propositions. Ms. Brown commented if any of them do not pass, budget cuts in the future will be worse. Legal analysis infers that even if all of the propositions pass, we will still be \$8 billion dollars in the hole. Ms. Brown offered to make a PowerPoint presentation to the Board at a future meeting if there was interest in more information.

Board President Young thanked Ms. Brown for her comments.

Trustee Keith commented that the whole discussion of budgets and possible cuts has brought to light just how fabulous the Solano Theater Program is. Trustee Keith complimented Ms. Pagtakhan for her demeanor and for coming before the Board to share her thoughts on how wonderful the program is. Trustee Keith stated further it will be heartbreaking to think we might have to cut the program, but that she enjoys hearing from the students and community members their stories about the theater.