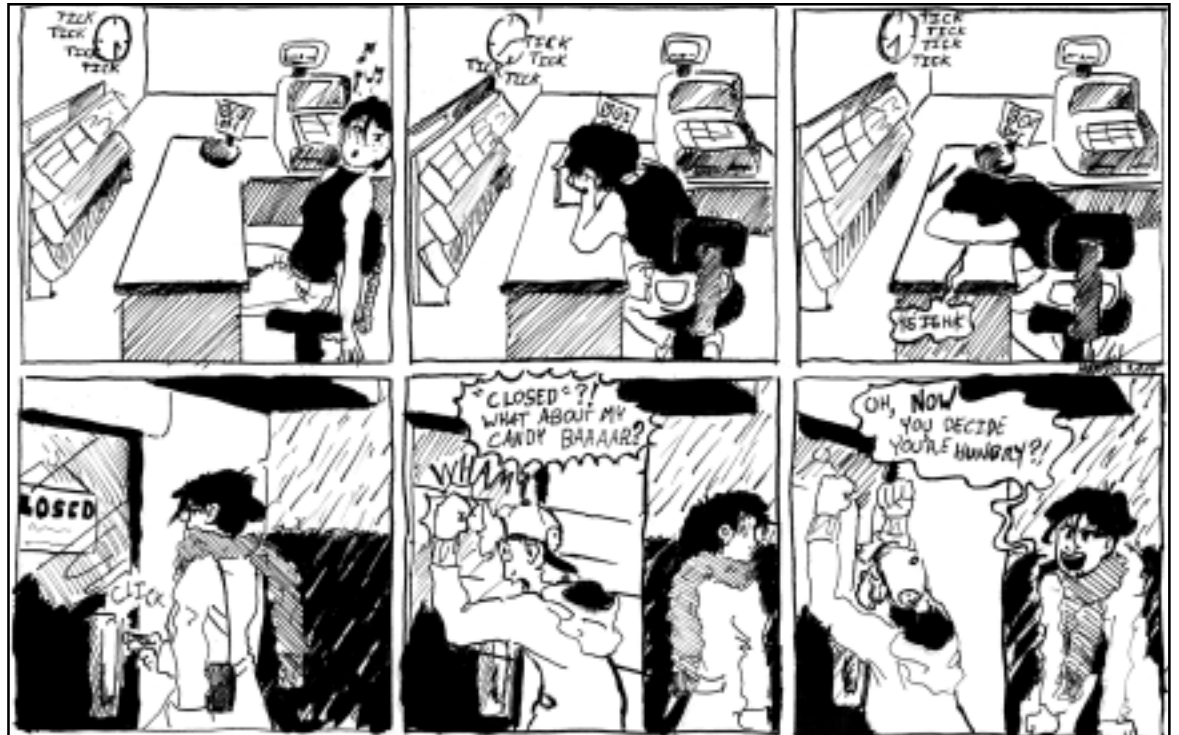




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Bill would increase funding for Ohlone Health Center

EDITOR:

This is a huge thing. I am looking for anyone who would be willing to help us convince our legislators to allow the California Community Colleges to charge those students who receive BOG waivers financial aid to pay the measly \$13 student health fee.

The bill in question is AB982.

Currently, if students even show \$1 of need, they do not have to pay the student health fee, but have full access to the health center services.

Throughout the years I have surveyed many students who are on financial aid and none of them would have any problem paying

the fee for the amount of service they receive.

In fact, more often than not, they are the students who need our services the most because they have no other access to affordable health care.

Without us they would either ignore their health issues, which could lead to more serious problems, or go to the ER, which could run into hundreds of dollars. Sixty percent of our students do not have any health insurance and do not qualify for Medi-Cal under California guidelines. They either have to have children, be over 65, have kidney failure, or be on kidney dialysis to qualify.

The bill, AB982, that all of the community colleges have been struggling to get passed is finally on the roster and the more people we have respond to the issue, the more likely it will pass and the health services will be able to continue.

The Ohlone Student Health Center is in dire budget straits, with the lower enrollment, the end to a huge grant, and tuition increase which qualifies more students for financial aid. With the lack of funds, I am having to cut my part time nurse practitioner, our health educator, our HIV tester, and all health education programs.

We are totally supported by the

student health fee, so we truly need all we can get. From that health fee we pay all salaries, utilities, supplies, equipment repair, physician consultation, over-the-counter medications, condoms, and all promotional material for the health center and educational activities.

So please, let me know if you are willing to help in any way. I am planning on putting a packet together and visiting State Sen. Liz Figueroa and Rep. Pete Stark, 13th District. This issue has come and gone on the radar at the Chancellor's office for years, so while we have the chance we need to jump.

My goal is to keep our students as healthy and productive as I can

so that they may learn prevention as well and self care so they may complete their education and become contributing members of society.

Remember, for every student we don't see who goes to the ER or urgent care, eventually the cost is passed on to us whether it is through a state program or a write-off for that institution. They just raise the fees so the rest of us pick up the tab with higher premiums or in our taxes.

Thanks for reading this.

SALLY BRATTON
Director, Student Health Center

OHLONE COLLEGE WORLD FORUM

AFGHANISTAN, IRAQ & THE U.S. WAR ON TERROR

Thursday, February 24th, 12 noon

SPEAKER: **Dr. Stephen Zunes**
PROFESSOR OF MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Members of the Ohlone College Speech and Forensics team will participate with Dr. Zunes in a question and answer session.

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