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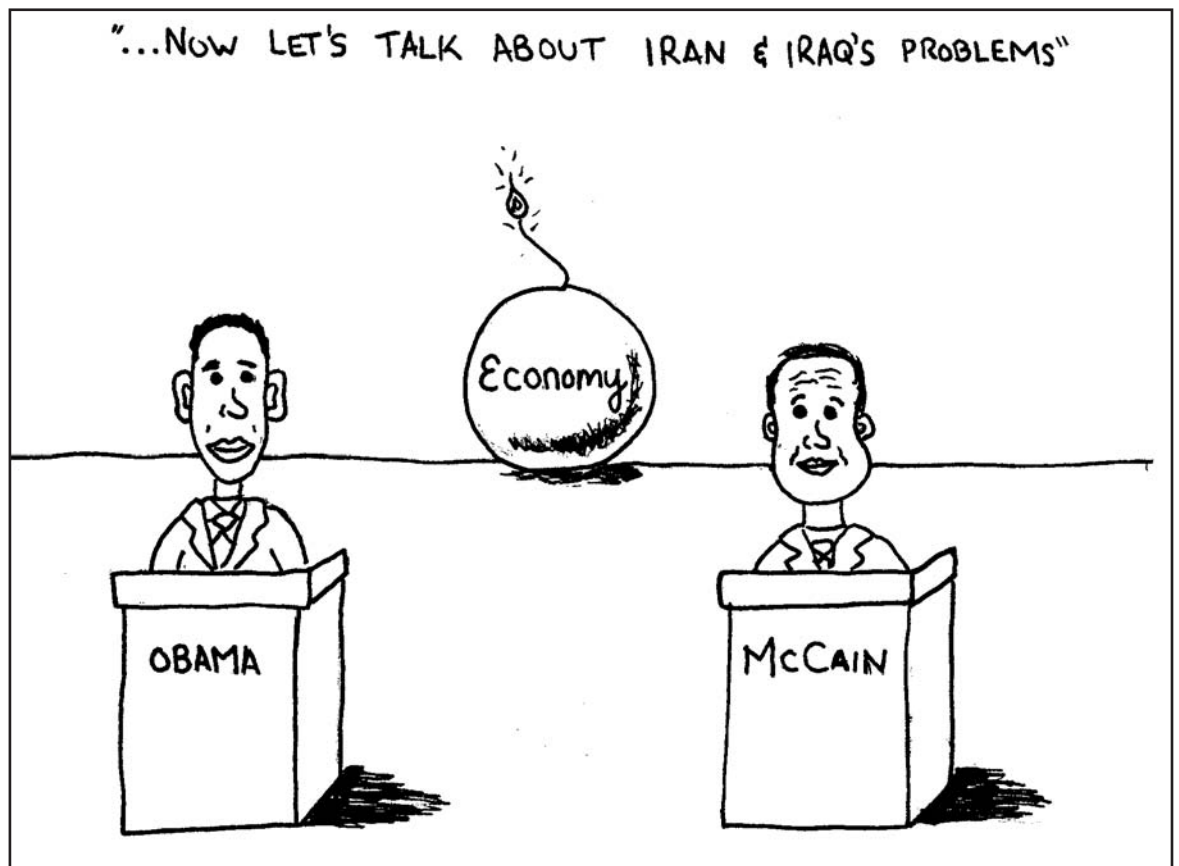


Offices are located in Room 5310 on campus, 43600 Mission Blvd., Fremont 94539-5884. Call (510) 659-6075. Fax: (510) 659-6076. E-mail: monitor@ohlone.cc.ca.us

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OPINION

Teachers, Brunton debate Board election issues

DEAR EDITOR:

My name is Jeff O'Connell. I am an Associate Professor of Mathematics at Ohlone College. I was hired as a part-time instructor in 1995 and was hired full-time in 1996. I consider myself to be a very involved faculty member: I have served on many campus committees, including Faculty Senate, and am currently the co-chair of the Technology Committee.

The following are documented facts about Bob Brunton, member of the Ohlone Board of Trustees:

- Brunton has made remarks during board meetings that made light of the early Ohlone Indians by suggesting that the school put casinos on the college land.

- Brunton sought personal addresses of Faculty Senate members "in an overt attempt to discredit their opinion, since some may have (moved) outside the voting district." This is quoted from an open letter written to the board by fellow board member Garrett Yee on Sept. 23, 2006.

- In 2002, during a meeting with an Ohlone contingent visiting from China, Brunton served his own financial interests by making a sales pitch for his company. This along with other issues is detailed in an article from the *Oakland Tribune*

on Oct. 15, 2006. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4176/is_20061015/ai_n16784528.

- The position of Board President rotates through members, and Brunton is the only board member to be removed from that position by his fellow board members. He has been removed from that position twice, both times he has held the position.

- The Board voted unanimously to have an attorney investigate Brunton for unethical behavior. There were no findings because policy and procedures were not in place at that time. Since then, the Board now has policies and procedure on ethics violations.

- On Feb. 14, 2008, Brunton came to campus to solicit information about the college from students, faculty, and staff. According to Page 166 of the Community College League of California (CCLC) Trustee Handbook for 2008, "A cardinal rule of effective trusteeship is that no individual trustee directs or becomes involved in staff activities...When directly approached by individual staff, boards and trustees listen, but do not take action on employee requests. Employee concerns should be directed to internal lines of authority and should not be addressed by individual trustees or the board."

Brunton has a copy of the trustee handbook, yet his unwillingness to follow it has clearly led to at least

one of the four recommendations that the accrediting commission gave Ohlone: *The Board of Trustees cease involvement in college and district operations and delegate all non-policy issues and policy implementation at the district level to the president.*

- On Feb. 27, 2002, Brunton voted in favor of giving medical benefits to domestic partners of members of the Board of Trustees. On April 10, 2002 Bob Brunton voted against giving the same benefits to domestic partners of faculty. He made similar votes against giving these same benefits to the other two employee groups – CSEA on June 26, 2002 and SIEU on Sept. 25, 2002.

- The Faculty Senate gave Brunton a vote of "no confidence" and asked him to resign after comments he made to the media. These comments were his personal opinion but he made the comments representing the Board of Trustees. See the *Oakland Tribune* article: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4176/is_20061015/ai_n16743751 as well as the *Ohlone Monitor* article: <http://www.ohlone.edu/org/monitor/20062007/20060928/page1.pdf>.

On Nov. 4, 2008 Brunton is up for reelection. Is this the type of person you want on the Board of Trustees of Ohlone College?

Jeff O'Connell
Associate Professor, Mathematics

DEAR EDITOR:

The article "A look at your future Board" in the Oct. 2 issue of the *Monitor* referred to Bob Brunton as a "Fremont resident." This is incorrect. While he may have lived in Fremont at the beginning of his time on the Board and he may still own a home in Fremont, it is my understanding that his primary residence, along with his family, is now in Southern California. I encourage you to explore this further – how effectively can a candidate represent the Ohlone community when they don't even live in the Bay Area?

Rob Smedjfeld
Associate Professor, Mathematics

Editor's note: Bob Brunton submitted the following response to these letters:

DEAR EDITOR:

I am Bob Brunton, Ohlone Board of Trustees member. It is an honor to serve you, and to be part of our vibrant college of our community. Ohlone is blessed to have outstanding faculty and staff who love to teach and to provide a supportive and safe environment to our students.

I am a part-time elected public servant with a full-time love of Ohlone. Assuring student success is my top goal. I have been a con-

sistent advocate for the students (our customers), and taxpayers and citizens of the district (our owners) and the under-represented assets of our college. I make decisions based on the information that I have with the intent of what is in the best long-term interests of the district as a whole. Working with my fellow trustees, I have made a positive difference for Ohlone College.

I decided to seek re-election because next term Ohlone will be facing its most challenging combination of financial and educational issues in its history. I have the experience, dedication, courage, creativity and connection that will best help Ohlone meet these challenges.

The Board has taken decisive action in satisfactorily addressing the issues raised in the recent accreditation report. All members of the Board, me included, have gone through additional training and education on the proper roles and effective trusteeship.

The future has already arrived with the recent hiring of Dr. Gari Browning. The Board and the CEO are committed to working together and communicating effectively. The Board has adopted the Learning Board modes and its focus is on its proper role of policy development compliance and not on narrow issues.

Bob Brunton
Member, Board of Trustees

CAMPUS COMMENT >>

Are we heading into a depression?



Chelsea Nichols
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
"Oh, yes."



Kim Lyell
PSYCHOLOGY
"We're heading that way; we have the potential to turn around."



Samie Vallo
SPEECH AND COMM. STUDIES
"Oh, yes. I think we're in the depression."



Nonda Kozas
CIVIL ENGINEERING
"We're in a recession, not a depression."



Beverly Panopio
UNDECLARED
"No, I don't think so, because this is as bad as it's going to get."