

The benefits of the community college option

By JAMIE LAM
Staff writer

What benefits do attending community college include? That's a question many students are asking in the wake of economic hardship. Can they reach the same level of achievement and accomplishment without paying outrageous amounts annually at bigger, more established universities?

The Obama administration created a \$2.5 billion fund for community colleges in 2009 to ensure more graduates and to encourage those who seek higher education to do it.

"Many students here at Ohlone are motivated to do great things," said Nishant Kalonia, 17, who attends UC Berkeley after spending three years at Ohlone College.

The American Association of Community Colleges said community colleges "serve a wide variety of needs."

Kalonia attests to this point. After studying at Ohlone College for three years, he successfully applied to his desired college and was accepted. "I chose Ohlone so I could have a variety of classes to choose from," said Kalonia.



Photo by Sophia Vaughn

Some of the youngest Ohlone students come from the early college program that is connected to Alston Montessori, includes Isaac Daviet, Samantha Mejia, Michiko Zerda and Rohit Vinjamuri.

Ambitious high school students can also benefit from attending community colleges. As a 15-year-old, Brittany Lau attends the early college program at Alston Montessori, doing biology, music theory, musicianship and pre-calculus courses her

first semester at Ohlone.

"At Ohlone, one is guaranteed to learn extensively due to numerous divisions of each subject."

"The large campus is pleasant, especially at Newark, where eco-friendly techniques have been implemented. In

addition, the teachers are interactive and helpful, each having their own unique way of teaching, and the resources Ohlone offers are top-notch," said Lau.

Rohit Vinjamuri, 16, a sophomore at Alston's early college program, chose Ohlone to challenge himself.

"My high school didn't offer any higher math classes, and Ohlone was the closest educational facility that would provide for my math class. Since I was taking classes here at Ohlone anyway, I decided that I would enroll in several other classes that would perhaps further my education."

Both feel further prepared for life at college. "Dealing with college professors and handling a tougher curriculum is different, but something I have come to appreciate due to the benefits I'll reap later in life," Vinjamuri said.

Community colleges don't just appeal to a younger crowd. Dennis Smith, 60, said he has already achieved a great deal at Ohlone.

He does not see any limits to what he can do in the future.

"Ohlone does not make a college education easy, but it makes education possible, and perhaps most important, Ohlone makes a college education desirable."

Fresh out of high school, Eric Chen, 18, plans to go far with the associate degree he is working towards at Ohlone College.

"I know what I'm working towards and I'm saving my parents and me a lot of money by going this route." The costs for attending community college are exponentially less than those who choose to attend larger universities.

Students from out of state also have to pay varying costs, especially those from overseas nations. Students may not be able to get into the classes they need to graduate, even while the costs are rising.

While many community college students are grateful at their chance for education, some still would prefer alternatives.

History professor Kirshner to retire

By ASHLEY LAM
Staff writer

Professor Alan Kirshner has earned the respect of many students and faculty during his teaching career at Ohlone and his retirement for later this semester.

"I respect Kirshner's intellect and his ability to make an impression on his students. Many times his students have talked to me about Alan. They usually say they learned a lot in his classes, despite his continual expounding about himself, his views of the world, his children, and his degree," said Bill Parks, the former adviser for the Monitor.

Parks spoke about his first impression of Kirshner as a teacher.

"I have known Kirshner since I started advising the Monitor in 1992. Kirshner was involved in the faculty senate and the teacher's union."

"He was a good news source, always informed, outspoken and honest."

"He was often frustrated by our journalistic shortcomings, but he always respected our efforts and he supported our freedom of speech," Parks said.

Kirshner's style of teaching has also been unique.

"I prefer an indirect approach to teaching." I force students to think about the material--critical thinking. I never viewed teaching as parroting the instructor or the textbook," said Kirshner.

Kirshner is also active in serving the Fremont commu-

nity in his own time.

He volunteered his time, and became a part of the Board of Directors in organizations such as the Tri-City Democrats, public school Site Councils, among many other administrations.

It is clear that if Kirshner decides to retire, he will be greatly missed not only by students, but greatly by faculty members as well.

"I feel that with Kirshner's retirement, Ohlone will lose one of its best, most distinctive teachers and characters. It seems like we used to have more interesting characters hanging around the quad."

"DeWitt, Halland, Katona, Harlan. Not easy-smiling corporate types. I'm talking about more bright, memorable people."

"Noisy, opinionated, funny, observant, outspoken, energetic. Kirshner is one of those. I will miss him," said Parks.

Over the years, Kirshner mentioned that a number of people have asked him when he was to retire, right after returning from his emergency operation in 2007.

In response to this, Jim Wright, Ohlone's Vice President of Academic Affairs wrote, "Your recent evaluation documents are a testament to a lifetime of positive and meaningful influence."

"You must be honored when you think about the thousands of past Ohlone students who owe some of their awareness of themselves and some of their ability to think in the world to you and your teaching."

Faculty member of the month Janel Tomblin-Brown dances in

By JAMIE LAM
Staff writer

Janel Tomblin-Brown, Associate Professor and Director of Dance in the Theater and Dance Department at Ohlone College, was recently granted the honor of Faculty Of The Month for December.

"I love being here," said Tomblin-Brown. "I'm so passionate about my students and their experiences – not just the veteran dancers who've returned to learn with me, but the new students who discover dancing is something they want to do – they're lots of fun."

When the Smith Center first opened, Tomblin-Brown was teaching dance at Ohlone College, Evergreen College and San Jose State University.

As the dance program expanded, Tomblin-Brown joined the national search for a dance director. She was appointed as the director in 2001.

Teaching jazz, tap, choreography, production and contemporary dance styles, Tomblin-Brown also directs the dance shows at Ohlone.

With various showcases throughout the academic year, Tomblin-Brown assists the huge production in spring and the smaller showcase in the fall.

"The Ohlone Dance Popu-

lation is quite far-reaching. Our program has become so large and so full of dancers," said Tomblin-Brown.

She has established dance company Bliss with Cassie Begley, which put on a controversial production this past September called "Fashion Provoked." With Sergio Suarez, Tomblin-Brown also started dance company Fresh Dynamics.

This past year, she accomplished a cultural exchange through her dance companies in both international settings, such as China, to local high schools, like Independence High School and James Logan, as well as local elementary school James Leitch.

"Dance breaks language barriers," said Tomblin-Brown.

"We shared dance," said Tomblin-Brown.

Perhaps the best part of the award would be the honorary parking spot the Faculty of the Month receives, but Wayne Yuen, head of the subcommittee who determined the Faculty of the Month, has reported he has heard complaints from faculty winners who say they have not been able to park in the spot during their allotted month.

"I've sent out numerous announcements in the past about how it is reserved."

"People, sometimes other



Janel Tomblin-Brown

faculty, still park there," said Yuen. This inconveniences the winners, who expect to be able to have the spot only to find it taken. They might have to hunt down another parking spot and be late for their appointments.

"I think that just shows a lack of collegiality," said Yuen. Yuen already sent out an email to everyone on the announcement list and still did not see positive improvements to the problem.

"To be fair, a few people who have parked in the spot have complained that the sign that indicates the spot is for the employee for the month isn't clear as to which spot it was marking since it was straight," said Yuen.

While someone could spray-paint the spot, Yuen says he is thinking about moving the spot to behind the motorcycling parking, to the upper level of lot W.