

From: johnfclemson@aol.com
To: [CCC Board of Education](#)
Cc: [Melinda Wilde](#)
Subject: Fw: Elimination of CCC Automotive classes
Date: Wednesday, June 18, 2025 12:05:25 PM

Dear Clackamas Community College Board of Directors and Budget Committee staff,

I am a student at Clackamas Community College and recently graduated with an Associates of Applied Science degree in Auto Body/Collision Repair and Refinishing Technology. I had the distinction and honor to be called out in the graduation ceremony program as a 70-year-old graduate, of course not by name but I would have been thrilled to have been. I certainly was not the 17-year-old graduate (a great accomplishment).

Why did I enroll in the daytime auto body program? I was a weekend and evening student in the Auto Body 101 and 105 classes beginning in 2000 and off and on through 2005. I was then employed out of town and retired in 2023. When I retired I decided to take the 101 and 105 courses again. I enjoyed them so much that I wanted more; more instruction on auto body and paint practices from the professionals teaching the daytime program. The instructors in this instruction were excellent, adding to the knowledge I gained from working with the 101 and 105 instructors. My desire was not to seek gainful employment, but I wanted to put what I had learned to the task on my personal automobile restoration projects. Now, unfortunately, I can't as the evening and weekend classes have been scuttled. The small engine repair and learn about your car classes have as well.

They were canceled unilaterally by the Dean of the automotive programs as too many of the participants were seniors who were tuition exempt as allowed by ORS 341.518 statute. Another reason for their cancellation was that these classes are not part of a program that led to degrees.

On May 14, the Budget Committee asked that Budget sub-committees consult with department heads, faculty and affected students before making the budget proposals. We know this did not happen. From all accounts, Dean Burney unilaterally decided to cut these courses and implemented the cuts before the budget proposal was even presented to the Budget committee. That is why so many students are voicing their unhappiness about having NO voice in the room - as Jeff Shaffer referred to the budget sub-

committee process on May 14.

Burney cut out the voice of students and faculty. Notably, Burney has only been an administrator with CCC for approximately 3 years. She unilaterally terminated Pat Nesbitt's position he has held as a teacher at CCC for 30 years, Fred Davis who has been teaching for 25 years, as well as Andrew Daniek, and the other Automotive instructors. She has decided to terminate courses that have been offered for multiple decades. There was not even a thank you note recognizing the faculty's contributions to CCC for so many years. This is an appalling lack of respect and recognition for faculty and students.

A few thoughts on both of these topics. You're going to find out what it means to discriminate against seniors. The students plan to bring legal action for unlawful age discrimination and will seek an injunction prohibiting CCC from terminating these classes unless they are reinstated before then. I might also add that the word "community" in community college means just that. The college should be open to the community at large, not just those seeking degrees. One of the purposes of the community college system is to also provide courses not pursuant to a degree, but that are topics of general interest to the community. The many people taking the automotive courses is proof that there is community interest for those types of courses, even though the attendees are not all pursuing a degree. I will note that some high school students do receive credit.

I urge the Budget Committee to go back and scrutinize the budget. Find gaps and waste. Look at hiring practices since Covid and determine why many faculty positions were let go while staff sizes increased. CCC has known the federal Covid money was temporary, yet the money was used to hire administrators while 54 teachers were fired.

With the elimination of the automotive classes, the college is essentially firing five more instructors; those who do not receive PERS health benefits or cola increases while the top-heavy administrators receive six-digit salaries and all of the aforementioned benefits. The admin hires are completely unsustainable once the COVID money ends next year.

I saw confusion as well as good questions by board members at the May 21 Budget Committee Meeting. Board Member Kathy Hyzy asked what the makeup of the \$158,000 savings as offered by Dean Burney. She didn't know or hadn't received it. It still has

not been presented to the public. It appears to me that this may have not been discussed during committee meetings.

Staff needs to tell the Board and the budget committee what the hard facts, not what they want them to hear. One of those facts may be that the college is overstaffed and deeper cuts might have to be made. Exempt positions not being filled aside, more expenses need to be reviewed and soon.

I urge you to consider bringing the automotive programs back. They reflect on the school's well deserved great reputation for going above and beyond in offering these programs at facilities paid for by taxpayers financed through multiple bond measures.

Respectfully submitted,

John Clemson