

March 26, 2012

This is Jill Duffy, with Community Comment

It's not bad enough that our high school grads are trying to enter the workforce under today's economic conditions, but here in California we have more bad news for them. It's been a rough time economically, and now we can add that pursuing higher education for many will become that much more challenging.

A story about the state of higher education last week came with the announcement that, facing a troubled budget, the California State University system and its 23 universities including Humboldt, will restrict enrollment during the Spring of 2013. At the moment the action is targeted primarily towards those 16,000 junior college students transferring from a JC to a State University. But this isn't a one time action because, should voters reject a tax proposal by the Governor later this year, then the following fall of 2013, Californians can expect to see a further reduction of 20,000 to 25,000 students in the CSU system.

Investing in our youth is one of the most important things we do as a State and Nation. They are our future leaders and taxpayers. How many of those JC students who are shut out of spring semester will temporarily "stop out" of college and never return at all? And if they make the logical decision to spend one more semester at their community college, how will the equally cash-strapped community colleges cope with them all?

I realize there are students who will be able, by grades, SAT scores or financially to pursue higher education. We may even see our youth pursue education out of state – and they may not want to return. But there are a lot of people who will find relocation or affording higher costs a significant barrier to education.

Honestly I don't know what the solution is, but employers will continue to need educated and talented employees, and too many Californian's may be shut out of professional development without a bachelors degree.

On another note. A little over two years ago, Brian Papstein asked whether I would consider becoming one of KINS Community Commenters. For 6 years I had been a regular Talk Shop, but Brian explained that Community Comment offered more latitude as I could undertake any topic I desired, so long as it was 3 minutes in length. No longer, no shorter.

While hesitant, and a little concerned about whether I would find interesting topics or whether I would be able to prepare Comments that listeners found of interest, I said yes. There have been occasions it's been a challenge, but on the whole I have had fun. So, thank you to KINS listeners – I appreciate hearing from you, and it's been interesting to hear what stories and issues resonate with you, thank you to Brian and KINS for the opportunity, and especially thank you to the recording

engineers who have offered their suggestions and editing expertise –
You guys have been great and I appreciate that whether listeners agree
or disagree, you always make us sound good.

This has been Jill Duffy with Community Comment