ForwardFocus Conference is meant to inspire library innovations in community college libraries by showcasing current projects, pilot projects, or out-of-the box ideas that have yet to take off. The event will be held on Friday, November 2, 2012 at Illinois Central College in East Peoria, Illinois, as well as online via Blackboard Collaborate and will feature a keynote presentation by Dr. Anthony Molaro. The ForwardFocus Conference will include highly interactive online and in-person sessions. We are interested in a broad range of topics that highlight current, evolving, and future issues in community college libraries.

**Register & find out more at**

[ForwardFocusConference.wordpress.com](http://ForwardFocusConference.wordpress.com)
Expensive textbooks and a push for more student engagement are two pressing issues in higher learning right now, but what if the solution to both problems could be found at the library? The Paradise Valley Community College library is working on it with the Medrano Project. Faculty Librarians Sheila Afnan-Manns and Kande Mickelsen collaborated with faculty member Reyes Medrano to create a model where students curate content to build their own wiki-based textbook. The project was awarded the 2012 EBSCO Community College Library Program Award.

The PVCC library’s OneClick Digital Initiative had been successful in blending open education resources (OER) with proprietary resources to supplement and in some cases replace current course materials. It was through positive reactions to OneClick that Afnan-Manns and Mickelsen connected with business faculty member Reyes Medrano. Medrano was preparing to teach an International Business course and wanted to see if the library could help him find course materials. Working together, the team was able to take it one step further and a solution to the dilemma of expensive textbooks that quickly go out of date was born. The students would create their own wiki-based textbook while obtaining valuable information literacy and international business skills.

The students were taught information literacy competencies, the difference between open access and proprietary resources, and even given a module on the history of open access, starting with its beginnings in the hacker movement. But the real innovation was that the project allowed the students to get engaged with the content in a very substantive way. They were able to work in teams, present information in front of a group, and research digital information. All of this allowed them to gain valuable real world business skills. Additionally, it allowed faculty to reach students of all learning types. Librarian Kande Mickelsen stated, “Classroom teachers strive to provide auditory, visual and tactile learning opportunities—this project lends itself to all three learning styles each and every week through the process of creating the ‘living textbook’.”

The student reaction was very positive. 100% of students strongly agreed that instructors promoted learning that was interactive, hands on and pertinent to class content and 90% believed that the “living textbook” created by the students better facilitated learning. As one student pointed out, “Since this course is about current business affairs, it makes more sense to do it this way. If we had a textbook it would be outdated by the time we started.” This sentiment drives home how important it is for educators to adapt to a culture of constantly changing information.

Perhaps the most exciting part of the project is the opportunity for librarians to become leaders in the OER movement. Sheila Afnan-Mann commented “Colleges are concerned about the high cost of textbooks. We can insert ourselves as leaders into this conversation, and bring greater use to our proprietary sources along the way.” Future plans involve putting the project under a Creative Commons license for 2.0 sharing, integrating more information literacy instruction, and doing a formal assessment to measure the impact on engagement and cost. With the dual benefits of saving students money and providing a unique engagement opportunity, The Medrano Project is an excellent example of innovation in libraries.
As within other communities around the country, California community college librarians have been facing difficult and discouraging times. Severe budget and staff cuts, student disquiet, accreditation anxieties are just a few of the significant concerns we have.

What a great time to share resources, as well as to nurture and inspire each other! Our passion for the profession—and need for a supportive community—is undiminished even if there is little time and less money. How can these passions be fulfilled?

Last spring, Santa Barbara City College (SBCC) librarians offered our library as a place for California colleagues to gather, connect and explore common concerns and creative solutions in our work with our distinct student populations.

With just a little bit of planning in the months prior, a great group of 32 community college librarians from all parts of the state arrived on May 5th, 2012 for an energizing day of collaborating, problem solving, and forming new partnerships.

We set no limitations on the topics to be discussed as long as they in some way touched upon community college librarianship. The content of the day was determined by attendees; when registering, each was asked to either give a short presentation or facilitate a topic discussion. A week before the Unconference, attendees ranked submitted topic choices and this created the agenda, including enough time and space for each requested individual presentation.

None of us having attended an Unconference, we didn’t know what to expect, but we found we could go deeper into topics of specific interest to us than we could at a larger conference, and the intimate setting was conducive to conversation.

Given limitations on travel and conference money, we made the day free to attend. To keep it as low-cost as possible for us and for travelers, we found SBCC faculty and staff willing to host attendees in their homes, made home-made treats for the morning snack. On Saturday, classes are not held, so parking was be free and ample. A student bake sale provided our afternoon snack, and participants were asked to bring their own name badges and paper.

Ultimately, there wasn’t much talk about our state budget crisis. In fact, there was a good deal of laughter, much admiring of the ocean view, and, during “recess” in the afternoon, even a little hula-hooping by some brave souls! A new—and supportive—community was formed.

A successful Unconference?

...CONTINUED ON PG. 4
SBCC Unconference

Keep it simple and flexible for both organizers and attendees, and keep it focused on participation. Most participants wished for a longer day, in order to delve into different topics which arose spontaneously. The enthusiasm extended to last question of the day: "when can we do this again?" Planning for 2013 is underway and will be posted at the Unconference website along with the 2012 schedule, topics discussed, and some of our post-Unconference resource sharing.

Editor's Corner

I am ecstatic to see so many events in the world of community college libraries. This newsletter alone mentions both a conference and an unconference. We face our own unique challenges, and intrepid librarians are taking it upon themselves to organize these wonderful fora for learning and discussion.

As part of the CJCLS Membership/Communications Committee, I have spoken to MLS students about the value in working for a two-year institution. I spoke to students in a seminar on academic libraries at the University of Maryland’s iSchool; I also spoke during a virtual Career Exploration Speaker Series at the University of Illinois' Graduate School of Library and Information Science. I think few MLS students target community colleges in their job search, but it is not difficult to articulate the appeal. Community colleges can be an ideal blend of public and university libraries; the community focus of a public library meets the educational mission of a university one.

Why do you work for a community college? The Membership/ Communications committee will produce a "Top 10 Reasons to Become a Community College Librarian" list soon. Keep your eyes out for it on the CJCLS listserv!

-Eric Phetteplace
CJCLS Newsletter Editor

On the CJCLS LISTSERV

2 Questions (May 4th-7th) - What do you call your OPAC when teaching students? Do you cover Library of Congress Classification?

Suggestions for Topic/Category Database (June 20th-22nd) - What is a good database for students looking for research topics on major social issues?

What is your CC tuition cost per unit? (Aug 25th-28th) - A discussion of the varying cost of credit hours at community colleges across the country.

Community College Links

Confessions of a Community College Dean on Inside Higher Ed

The Two-Year Track on The Chronicle of Higher Education

U.S. Community Colleges by State

Community College Research Center (at Columbia University)

ACRL 2013: Imagine, Innovate, Inspire

Submit Cyber Zed Shed presentations, Poster Sessions, Roundtable Discussions, and Virtual Conference Webcasts proposals by November 9.

Register by February 22, 2013 to get an early-bird discount.

ACRL is offering more than 70 scholarships in five categories worth over $40,000. Applying online is easy and there’s still time! Scholarship applications are due November 9, 2012.
These two annual awards recognize significant achievement in the areas of programs and leadership.

Nominees for the program award should demonstrate significant achievement in development of a unique and innovative learning resources/library program.

Nominees for the leadership award should demonstrate significant achievement in advocacy of learning resources/library programs or services, or leadership in professional organizations that are associated with the mission of community, junior, or technical colleges.

Individuals or groups from two-year institutions, as well as the two-year institutions themselves, are eligible to receive awards. Nominations will be kept on file for three consecutive years.

Each Award: $500 and plaque sponsored by EBSCO Information Services