

LTCC **eliminating** international program



By Kathryn Reed

All of the information about being an international student at Lake Tahoe Community College or studying abroad is still on the website, but the program no longer exists.

It will continue to be there, just changing a bit.

The college board of trustees this week eliminated the program as well as Jen Spina's job. The department ceases to exist after June 30.

However, LTCC students can study abroad through other colleges and earn credits. Instructors can also teach via other institutions.

Spina, who was not at Tuesday's meeting when decision was made, had given a presentation to the board earlier this year about her efforts to recruit international students. Although she went to where the would-be students are, they chose not to come to South Lake Tahoe.

Two students are signed up for fall quarter. Thirty are needed to make the program work.

The elimination of the program doesn't mean people from other countries can't come to LTCC. It means no one is promoting the college.

It wasn't about Spina; it was about economics.

"Jen Spina has done a phenomenal job," said Diane Rosner, dean of instruction.

"It's a matter of priorities," Rosner explained.

With the state not paying community colleges for all of their full time students, LTCC chose to cut a program that essentially drains other resources. The students who go on the trips are counted in the full-time equation.

Cutting the program means being able to serve more students on campus with more academic-oriented instruction.

And although the study abroad program has been popular, like the trip to Chile this school year, it requires someone to oversee the program. With Spina's job being axed, so too are those study opportunities.

"I look back and I'm proud of what we've done. It's a sad time for me because I was one of the creators of the program," Rosner said. "I think it will come back."

The formal study abroad program started in 2001. Former Art Department Chairman David Foster had been taking students on international art related to art study programs before that.

If enough people sign up by the May 24 deadline, the Paris trip set for September will be honored. An ecological trip to Costa Rica in October is on the books, but Rosner said it looks likely it will be canceled.