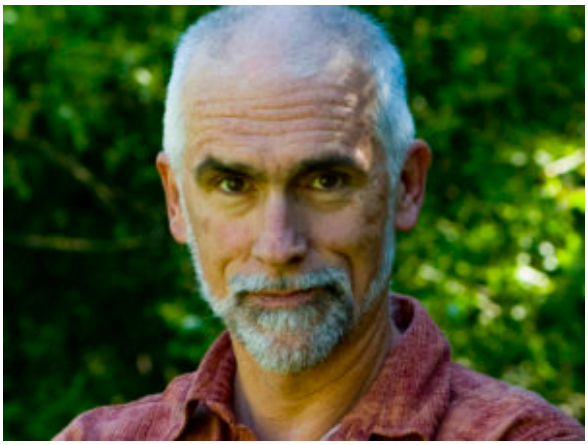
Hamilton: Background, experience with LTCC

Publisher's note: ***Lake Tahoe News asked candidates for South Lake Tahoe City Council, Lake Tahoe Community College, Lake Tahoe Unified School District, Douglas County School District, South Tahoe Public Utility District and Lake Valley Fire Protection District a series of questions. We are running the responses in the order received. All profiles may be found under the Special Projects listing and then the 2106 November Candidate Profiles category.***



Dave Hamilton is one of two candidates for the Area 4 seat for Lake Tahoe Community College.

Name: David Hamilton

Age: 60 (as of October)

Job/profession: Retired college educator

What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?: Local organizations: Currently part of core group forming the Tahoe Arts Alliance; president, Tahoe Tallac Association board of directors; 2007 board member

from 2004-2014; member Pathway 2007 Forum (TRPA and LTBMU plan updates) representing non-motorized recreation in the Lake Tahoe Basin: 2005-2008;m ember of Public Lands Working group for Placed Based Planning Workshops, 2007; member board of directors Tahoe Rim Trail Association 2000-2003; member of initial planning committee for Van Sickle Park: 2000; president Tahoe Area Mountain Bike Association 1998-2005; member board of directors, Tahoe Arts Project 1990-92; president, board of directors South Lake Tahoe Theatre Company, 1990-1994

Regional/statewide organizations: member board of directors California Educational Theatre Association, 1993-1999, 2004, 2006-08 representing higher education; president board of directors Northern California Educational Theatre Association, 1993-1995, vice president 1990-1993

Why are you running for the college board?: My first connection with LTCC was taking classes back in 1976. I was first employed by the college in 1977 and I first taught at the college in 1984 then hired as a full time instructor in 1989 working until 2008. I consider Lake Tahoe Community College my college and I have been involved with much of its history. I helped write the original mission statement, participated in many annual planning sessions and three accreditations. Not only is LTCC a vital fixture, but also a large part of our community's future. As a member of the board of trustees I want to continue serving the college in its important role for our students and community.

Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?: First, I have extensive background and experience with the college. As a faculty member over the years I connected with all types of students, getting to know them and understanding their academic needs. I was very involved with innovation in teaching and learning. In academic service I served as president of both the Academic Senate and the Faculty Association. I worked closely with the business office in the

design and construction of the theatre as well as its yearly budget. I also served as a part time administrator gaining experience in administrative operations. I have worked as an administrator outside the district at other colleges, gaining insight to other ways of being successful within the California Community College system. But that experience is only one piece of why I would deserve the vote. South Lake Tahoe is my home town. I first moved to South Lake Tahoe in 1968. I graduated from STHS and have had about 38 full time years here. In that time I have been involved in many community projects and organizations. I have extensive experience in working as a member of a board of directors and feel I am innovative, collaborative and inclusive in that work.

What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?: Though I have all this experience with the college, it really just amounts to having knowledge and doesn't by itself make me an effective board member. I think what makes me uniquely qualified is that I have spent a large part of my career working collaboratively with groups of people to achieve a goal. Whether it is directing a play, which involves bringing a new group of people together to build a production, negotiating a union contract, working within the boards of various nonprofits or being a member of the Pathway 2007 Forum which updated the TRPA Regional Plan. I believe I have an ability to help synthesize ideas and discussion into agreement and forward movement. I enjoy group synergy and work hard to establish positive working relationships with individuals and the community.

Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?: I believe the college already does a good job making sure the community is aware of what is going on. Accreditation requires the college to be accountable for how

it operates. Though accreditation is only every six years, it ensures the college has processes and policies that ensure it is staying on track. As a public agency under the Brown Act the public has access to all board meetings as well as documents such as the budget, policies and procedures, etc. The college has been good about providing easy access to those documents. As a trustee I would want to make sure the Board communicates with both the public and staff in an open and timely manner. Processes for communication need to be clear and effective. Any decision made should have background and justification available.

What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?: The budget process with the college involves many layers. It would be difficult to pick out a specific that is, or isn't, valid without understanding all the background and discussion. That being said, in a general sense and based on the past few years of data, I support the current budget being based on zero growth. The F2F FTE (number of general students) is still dropping and though it has been filled in in other categories it is a good idea to not over-project. The college has traditionally been fiscally conservative in budget projections and I think that is wise in the current climate. I also support the level of reserves and the additional funds for STRS/PERS reserve. In the change area, one of the things that stands out for me, though it is not in the current budget, is why the college is spending money from Measure F on the bleachers and scoreboard in the gym. To my knowledge they are not currently used much and we do not have any competitive sports that need them. Again, I wasn't in on the discussion, but that doesn't seem like a priority.

Do you support current legislation for $15 minimum wage? Please explain: Yes I support it. I think the improvement in living standards would outweigh the effect on employment and increases in consumer costs. In Tahoe it will be felt strongly

because we have a lot of small businesses that are barely making it now and they will take the brunt of the change. But at the same time, students coming to LTCC from out of town need to be able to make a living wage while going to school, no matter what job they find.

Do you support Proposition 55? Please explain: Even though Proposition 30 was a temporary tax, I feel that we have been able to absorb it without undue stress to our higher income earners. In addition, Prop. 55 does not extend the one-quarter cent sales tax. The money helps in areas that always need help, schools and health care. Though the state is recovering from the recession, I think it will be beneficial to extend this formula.

Describe three attributes for a successful board: Collaborative, innovative and responsive. They should be collaborative in making decisions using their collective knowledge in a synergy to make good decisions. They should be innovative in thinking as the college must grow and change with the ever changing environment of higher education. They should be open to new ideas brought forth as well being able to think outside the box. And they must be responsive to the public and staff of the college with open communication and dialogue as well as timely responses to issues and concerns.

What are your thoughts about public employee defined benefits?: Defined benefits have a long and involved history. The college deals with PERS and STRS. Unlike many other government entities, LTCC has not negotiated substantial benefits for retirees beyond the state level benefits. Both retirement systems are significantly out of balance in terms of unfunded liabilities. The process to make both systems fully funded has begun to take more money from both members and employers. LTCC, anticipating these continued increases is placing money into reserves to cover increasing costs. So the question is, is it worth it for the state to continue these systems as they are? Defined benefits have basically

disappeared in the general workforce. Many people see them as a taxpayer gift to public employees. This is reinforced by sensationalized examples of the highest end of retirees, the people who make six figures in retirement. But the reality is that the average retiree makes significantly less and a large portion of their retirement is money they have contributed out of their salary. I think overall they are working to get the systems sustainable. As the economy improves and the market goes up, so too will the amount each retirement system has. For the college it is still a way to attract people to jobs. As the LTCC board we only have the ability to augment the retirement systems. And that is the place where we would need to be very careful in how much money that would be in the long term.

Please explain your position on contracting out work normally done by staff: In general contracting out work should only happen for a three main reasons. Either it is temporary work that staff does not have the expertise to accomplish, it is work that would overload staff beyond their ability to complete and/or an outside contractor will save a significant amount of money. Your question indicates work “normally done by staff”, which would seem to indicate contracting out different services to a private contractor. It depends on the nature of what the situation is. If it is a long term situation then the benefits must be examined. An example would be janitorial work. It is often less expensive to hire a service to clean rooms, restrooms etc. than to hire full time janitors. But you have less control and flexibility with a service so you must balance the results with the costs. If there are substantial savings, that money could be put to better use, though on some level, you get what you pay for. An outside contractor does not necessarily have your best interests at heart, as their primary interest will be financial. I think the key is consistent monitoring of outside contracts to make sure you are achieving your goals with them.

What is your 10-year vision for LTCC?: It will be very interesting to see where the California Community Colleges are in 10 years. I believe the system is currently undergoing fundamental changes to its mission and what we see 10 years from now may look very different from what we see today. I would like to see LTCC continue to build a reputation as a destination college beyond the beauty of being in Tahoe. Part of this will be the introduction of new, unique programs such as the current fire science or wilderness programs that provide students training, certificates and/or degrees that will draw students from outside the area. The college will not be able to rely purely on transfer programs. If new programs can build the student population then that will help the college keep the breadth of programs it has now and will make it financially sustainable with faculty and staff making equitable wages. I would also vision greater partnerships with universities and participation in offering Bachelor degrees. The potential for student housing is still a reality. If it is financially sustainable that could also provide a resource to attract and retain students.

What one vote in the last four years that the current board made do you disagree with and why?: Again, without having been in on the planning and discussions I wouldn't want to second guess decisions made by the board. It is also easy to see the results of a decision in hindsight and thus disagree with it. But I am of the belief that once a decision is reached, whether you vote to agree or disagree, you live with that decision and move on.

How many meetings have you attended this year for the board you are running for?: Over this year, none. I recently finished a one-year assignment as dean business, design and workforce at Cañada College in the Bay Area and was only home on weekends. Prior to that I have been to an occasional board meeting, though when I was Senate President I was at many. The agendas and minutes are posted, so it not difficult to keep up

on discussion and decisions.

What do you know about the strategic plan, finances, debt, goals of college?: I have been catching up on the current state of the college. I have read the current plans and budget. Having been connected with the college I have a context for the content of the goals and strategic plan and understand how the college is moving forward.

Being on a board means working as a team. How will you work with the sitting members for the greater good of the community?: As I had stated above, I work well in collaborative decision-making. I already know the members of the current board and have worked with a couple members in different settings. As a new board member I would take the time to strengthen relationships with the rest of the Board and not simply come in with thoughts about what I think should happen. The reason we are all elected is to represent the community and provide a collective voice to help direct the college.

What should be the three main priorities for the board?: 1. Help the college achieve its mission 2. Maintain the fiscal health of the college 3. Represent the public interest.

What have you done to make yourself ready to be a board member?: I suppose one way I have made myself ready to be an LTCC board member by being involved with the college and the community over the last 45 years. More specifically, I am now current on college policies and procedures as well the recent budget and issues the college has faced.

What is your opinion about career and technical education at the high school level?: CTE is a vital component of our education system. Along with providing a general education, our education system gets students ready for careers they will pursue in life. Many careers in today’s world require training but not necessarily in a traditional academic environment. And

many of these career paths can begin in high school. By providing hands on career training opportunities (CTE) in high school we can shorten the time needed for students to transition from high school into successful careers. And CTE is no longer seen as simply traditional blue collar jobs or an end in itself. CTE now represents pathways with multiple entry and exit points and also represents high paying careers. An example would be the tech industry. In high school students could get hands on experience in coding and/or graphic design which might transition them to a program at a community college where they could achieve a certificate or degree that would place them into a high demand area where they could earn a significant salary. At some point they might take that work experience and re-enter a training program to further their skills for a next level job or change careers entirely. The work they did in high school would fast track them at the next level, having them career ready with less time and cost. The state is currently providing funding for these pathways through the CTE Transitions program, which connects CTE high school students with degree and certificate pathways in a community college.

What will you look for in a new college president?: If I am elected to the board, the new college president will have been selected and will be starting the same time I do. I have faith that the current board will have made the best choice based on the profile given in the search announcement. As the new superintendent/president begins I would look for the building of a solid relationship with the board, the college and the community. We are a small community and the more engaged and active the president can be with both the college community as well as our greater community, the better.

Tell us something about yourself that people may not know: Two things: First, I once performed with the San Francisco Symphony at Davies Hall and I don’t play an instrument. They did a performance of “The Flood” by Stravinsky which had

spoken parts, of which I got to do one. Second, I know Nancy Dalton who is also running. I think she is also well qualified and an excellent person and community member. It will be a win for the college either way.

As a former instructor at LTCC, how can the public believe you will represent everyone and not just staff?: I understand what it means to be a trustee. As a trustee I do not represent the staff at all. I represent the public interest and my job is to work with the entire board to help the college fulfill its mission and to make sure the use of taxpayer money is responsible. The only thing I represent as an individual board member are the people in Area 4. Even when I was an instructor at the college I understood the importance of every element of the college to make everything function well. I had no illusions that my needs were more vital than any others.