

reasons. Once the construction was done we thought they would open the gates," Brown said. "Now the city says they don't want students driving by the airport, so they are keeping locks on the two entrances.

"So it's gone from a security issue to a driving-by-the-Airport issue," Brown said. "The college volunteered to assist with any improvements on Airport Avenue. They (city officials) haven't responded."

Temporary access is denied but SMC administrators have made several offers to resolve the single entrance and exit issue. Administrators are pushing the City of Los Angeles for a street light, but Brown notes that can take months to years.

"We did traffic studies prior to opening the campus. We did our research, and when we purchased the property the gates were open," he said.

As of Corsair deadline, Santa Monica Public Information Officer Judy Rambeau was not available for comment. Assistant City Manager, Gordon Anderson also did not return a call, so there was no comment from the city.

News Briefs

•A.S. Positions Up For Grabs

The deadline to apply for the four vacant Associated Students' positions recently passed on Sept. 16, and as of Tuesday, Sept. 20, 11 SMC students have applied. For the A.S. director of student services Avraham Sinai, Ka Woo Lee, Anusa Ravi and Gugundee Sidhu have applied; for vice president Jeff Jensen, Avraham Sinai, Marissa Cirami and Richard Goodman are the applicants; for director of academic support Avraham Sinai and Christian Herrera submitted; and for the position of director of instructional support there were no applicants. One student, Farah Vasavez applied, yet didn't specify a position.

Interviews started yesterday for the positions and will continue through today, Wednesday, Sept. 20. The applicants will be voted in at the next A.S. meeting.

•SMC Suspect Pleads Not Guilty

The suspects Hammad Riaz Samana, 21, SMC student, Levar Haney Washington, 25, Gregory Vernon Patterson, 21, accused of levying war against the United States through terrorism, pleaded not guilty in the U.S. District Court in Santa Ana, California.

U.S. prosecutors believe the suspects to be part of a radical Muslim organization that planned bombings on the National Guard facilities, the Israeli Consulate and the national airline of Israel, El Al.

The fourth suspect, Folsom prison inmate Kevin James, 29, is the alleged head of the organization. His arraignment date is expected for September 26.

According to the Los Angeles Times, the trial is set for November 8, although the defense attorneys said they would seek a delay. The defendants will probably be tried together.

Samana's attorney was not available for comment.

Saturday, Sept. 17. The cleanup was sponsored by the California Coastal Commission and has been an annual event held throughout the state since 1985.

Student Sues SMC Over Public Records

By Tiffany Franklin

Corsair Staff Writer

A former teacher's assistant and current student in animation and game development at Santa Monica College claims that the college denied her access to public records and documents typically made available for public inspection at the district office in Santa Monica.

Des Manttari alleges that instead of seeing the records as requested in late June 2005, all she saw was administrative red tape.

"We have the right to know what's going on in a public entity," she said. "These public officials are supposed to serve us, the public, not themselves. If everything is so well-documented, so clean, then why suddenly when a bunch of harmless students inquire about these records, these records then have to be so scrutinized, so prohibited?"

Manttari filed a lawsuit against the college on Sept. 7. Her suit alleges that the college and its related defendants failed to comply with her repeated written requests to obtain access to, and copies of, such records. These requests sought information pertaining to the college's grants available in the Accounting Office, as well as other financial summaries pertaining to the school's contracts with its affiliate, eCollege.com.

Manttari contends that the documents were denoted neither confidential nor classified, and consequently fell in accordance with the state's laws upholding the right of citizens to access this information. According to the Secretary of State's website, the California Public Records Act "establishes the right of every person to inspect and obtain copies of state and local government documents." The act requires state and local agencies to establish written guidelines for public access to documents and to post these guidelines at their offices.

The measure also requires that "meetings of public bodies and writings of public officials and agencies be open to public scrutiny. The measure also requires that statutes or other types of governmental decisions, including those already in effect, be broadly interpreted to further the people's right to access government information."

The law does limit the public's access to records that may potentially

compromise personal privacy rights, such as medical testing results and law enforcement records.

Manttari insists that her investigative reporting is not for the sake of "rebelrousing," but has the genuine improvement of the school in mind.

Manttari says, "I love school, I love learning. It really broke my heart when I had to leave school in May. If they hadn't pushed me out in the beginning, I wouldn't have had the drive to see what was in those documents."

Manttari said she was threatened with suspension from SMC at a discipline hearing in April of this year. Preceding that incident, Manttari alleges that the school attempted to have her arrested and successfully kicked out of the computer lab, and eventually had her fired as teacher's assistant to Professor Jim Keeshen in May. Keeshen was not available for comment.

The Corsair's attempts to contact Tom Donner, interim president of SMC, and Robert Sammis, vice president of planning and development, also proved unsuccessful.

But Manttari has this to say about the implications of the lawsuit among the school and its staff.

She said, "Look at the mission statement of SMC, which is about encouraging faculty, to cultivate mentorships and community. They've been attacking us, left us questioning the administration... How many people are they going to discredit? Are they going to try to suspend all of us, harass all the professors?"

Manttari admits that the same tenacity that earned her both her B.A. and M.F.A. in film from UCLA and USC, respectively, is also pushing her forth in the lawsuit. She says, "I want to know now, I'm fascinated. My curiosity keeps me looking forward to seeing how the story will end."

When asked what she hopes to accomplish as part of her legacy in the lawsuit, Manttari says she wants every student and citizen to "know your rights. Before you educate yourself about chemistry, English, or even animation, know your rights. Learning about your rights will apply in the workforce.

"If you don't exercise your rights, you lose them. Laws are malleable, like clay, and sometimes if you're not educating yourself, another law might come along to override the existing ones that you're not even paying attention to. What would it be like for someone to come and take away your rights, just because you chose not to exercise them?"