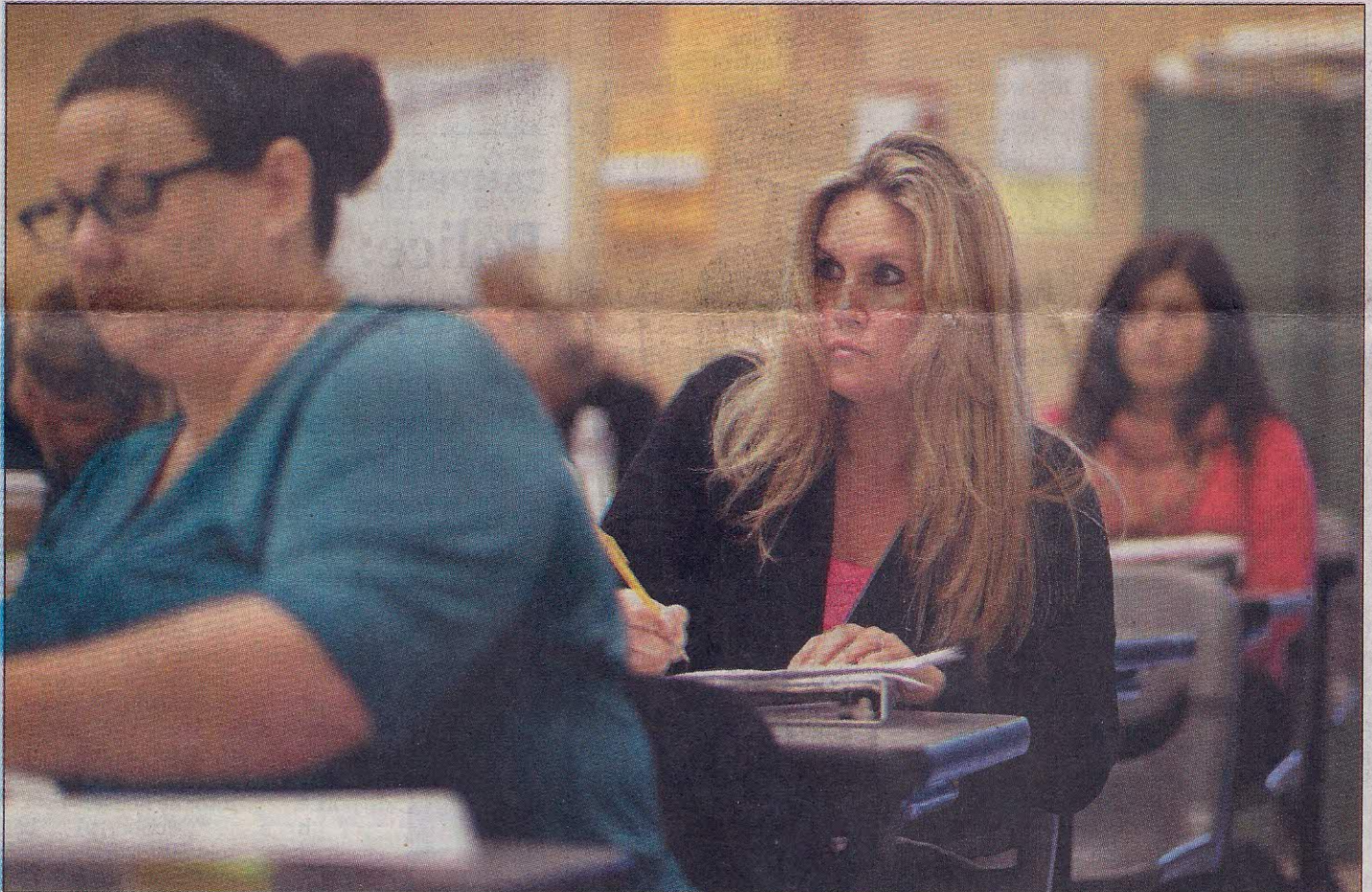


Night-school students get a path toward graduation

Cañada College program makes it easier for those with day jobs to earn an associate degree



PATRICK TEHAN/STAFF PHOTOS

Shaina Denner, of San Jose, takes notes during an English class earlier this month at Cañada College in Redwood City.



Beth Sheofsky teaches at Cañada College. The school is one of a handful in the region that helps night-school students graduate.

By Katy Murphy

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REDWOOD CITY — For college students who work all day, Cañada College has set up a night school with a personal touch that keeps them from wandering in the dark as they manage their hectic lives.

“They help you register. They counsel you. They check in with you every semester,” said Siosiuua Vea, who studies at Cañada College’s new College for Working Adults in Redwood City. “They just make sure you’re on course to get your degree.”

Vea spent years signing up for courses he never finished before discovering the program, which spares night students the hassles, delays and loss of momentum that can drag them down. Now in his third year, the 31-year-old from East Palo Alto is on track to graduate in May.

Contrary to popular images of college students — and

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School

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the interchangeable use of "students" and "kids" — about 43 percent are 25 and older, and their numbers are expected to grow, according to data from the U.S. Department of Education.

Although most community colleges do offer night courses, students with inflexible schedules often find it difficult to find the courses — and services, such as financial aid and counseling — they need strictly at night.

Cañada, which graduates its first group of night-school students this spring, is the latest to start a program specifically for people with full-time day jobs, joining the ranks of Berkeley City College and Hayward's Chabot College. For three

years, students come to campus on Thursday nights and every other Saturday, chugging through a defined sequence of courses on a fixed schedule with the same group of students and the same counselor.

"We've taken out all the guess work," said David Johnson, Cañada's dean of humanities and social sciences. "They don't have to figure it out on their own."

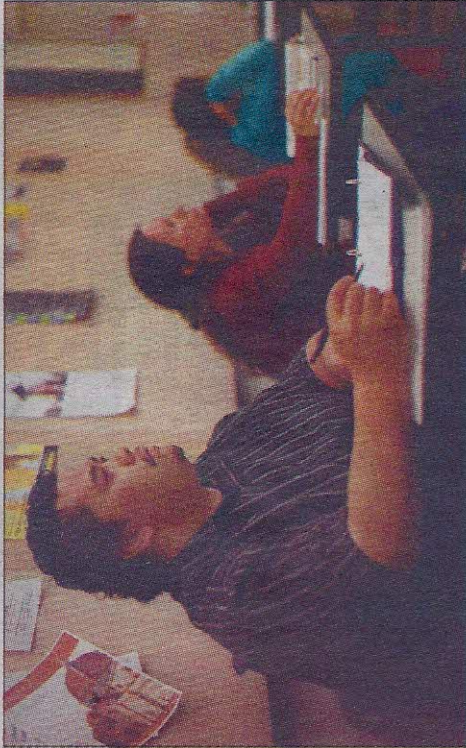
Such programs take a great deal of coordination, but they don't cost colleges or students any more than traditional classes, Johnson said. Their built-in efficiency arguably gives taxpayers more bang for their buck.

It's too early to gauge the success of Cañada's program, which has about 120 students, but the nearly 30-year-old Program for Adult College Education program, or PACE, at Berkeley City College typically graduates about 80 percent of its stu-

Brown

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Brown will face two Republican challengers in June's open primary — former U.S. Treasury official Neel Kashkari, who has staked his campaign on pledges to spur job creation and improve the public schools, and Assemblyman Tim Donnelly, R-Hesperia, a gun rights advocate whose candidacy is favored by the tea party. The



Siosua Vea, left, is a student in Cañada College's College for Working Adults. He is on track to graduate in May and plans to study architecture at a university.

PATRICK TEHAN/STAFF

or human services — which they can use to transfer into one of 13 CSU majors, including political science and sociology.

Still, programs designed for working students are rare in community colleges, with only a handful in the Bay Area.

Cal State East Bay is the only public four-year

more than 30 percent of the degrees the college awards. The program takes about two years to complete and recently has been revised to let students study a wider array of fields, including business and political science.

Cañada's night students, by contrast, leave with one of three associate degrees — psychology, humanities

said Linda McAllister, a sociology instructor and one of the program coordinators.

"These are incredibly effective programs for degree completion," she said.

PACE students make up about 2 percent of Berkeley City College's student body, McAllister said, but in some years, they have received

1976 to 1983, stands a good chance of winning the election in a landslide.

A poll conducted by the Public Policy Institute of California in January found that 53 percent of likely voters would pick Brown, while 17 percent favor Donnelly. Respondents were not asked for their opinions of Kashkari because he had not yet announced his candidacy when the poll was taken.

The poll also found that 60 percent of likely voters say they approve of the way

Brown is handling his job, up from 49 percent in December. And the governor's job performance won praise from more than 3 in 4 Democrats and a solid majority of independent voters, who often swing California elections.

Brown is also winning the fundraising war.

Last month, records showed Brown had already amassed a roughly \$17 million campaign war chest from a broad coalition of supporters, including some

college in the area to offer nighttime on-campus degree programs.

Felicia Valdez works in Belmont — not far from Redwood City — but she lives more than an hour's drive away in Tracy and commutes for Saturday classes. Like Vea, she tried to take courses on her own, while working, but found it frustrating and difficult.

"I was taking random classes. I didn't know what I needed, or if it was getting me closer," she said.

Vea is a classic example of a student who needed help finishing what he started. He failed so many courses, he said, he was kicked out of college. Twice.

After he graduates from Cañada in May, he plans to study architecture at a university.

"I still can't believe it. It hasn't hit me yet," Vea said. "It's been a while since I put on a cap and gown."

criticized Brown for "touting a status quo" that has been devastating for millions of families and communities across the state.

"Californians can't afford another four years of Gov. Brown's failed leadership," Kashkari said. "It's time for a new leader in Sacramento who will do the hard work of creating good jobs and giving every kid a quality education."

Contact Jessica Calefati at 916-441-2101.

Llaneza

sincerely apologize, and I'm sorry for any misconduct on my part," he said.

along with him the bombing scheme, which Llaneza reportedly said would have

engaged in a terrorist plot, even as questions arose about whether he would

needs to follow people, and that got him into a great deal of trouble.

erratic behavior tied to his mental illness and which