



File this one under "The More Things Change, the More They Remain the Same"....here's a taste of some of the budget battles we were fighting back in February 1983....

College advised to be aggressive in fighting cuts

By Russ Hemphill
The Phoenix Gazette

South Mountain Community College will be the state college most "vulnerable" to budget-cutting legislators, state Sen. Alfredo Gutierrez, D-Phoenix, says.

The college "will be irreparably damaged if you allow the Legislature to simply cut community college" funding, Gutierrez said.

The senator said a \$3 million cut in community-college funding is being considered by the Legislature and predicted it will become law.

The Legislature "always follows the path of least resistance" in making difficult decisions, Gutierrez told a small group Wednesday at South Mountain Community College.

If the Legislature considers cutting other departments, "the earth opens up" and people put pressure on their representatives, he said.

"But if you proceed to cut community colleges, you get a nice letter, and it says, 'Gee, I wish you wouldn't do that,'" Gutierrez said.



Alfredo Gutierrez

The senator urged the colleges to take a chapter from their government courses and lobby the Legislature more aggressively.

Unfamiliar with the Legislature's ways, "the community colleges find themselves dealing with an alien body . . . They find themselves dealing with this insane group of folks," he said.

"The community colleges are wonderful sources of dollars. Wonderful sources!" Gutierrez said. "That's because they are extremely vulnerable."

If community college funding is cut, he said, "obviously, South Mountain, being the newest, is the most vulnerable."

The senator said many who opposed creating the college are still foes.

"It's going to be natural for some people that, instead of sharing the pain, to move it to South Mountain (college).

"There is a long tradition in this city that when you have pain, that you try to move it south," the senator said.

"It seems to me that the community college has to raise its level of activity at the Legislature," he said.

Gutierrez said that instead of cutting programs, legislators should raise taxes to keep programs at current levels.

"This is no time to do damage to the Department of Economic Security," the senator said, noting the poor condition of the state and national economy.

"There is no indication that the economy in this state is going to improve."

Gutierrez predicted that this year's anticipated deficit, which he put at \$224 million, will be matched next year.

The deficit will grow "and perhaps equal or exceed that which we face today," he said.