



# THE FACULTY CORNER

FROM THE ANACAPA SCHOOL. . .

## **2010-2011 SYNTHESIS UNIT – HOW WOULD YOU BALANCE THE BUDGET?**

The Anacapa community just concluded a series of lectures that constituted the first stage of this year's Synthesis Unit, "How Would YOU Balance the Budget?" For three days, February 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>, Anacapa students listened to a variety of lecturers, ranging from fiscal conservatives to liberals. Sixteen speakers came to us from UCSB, Westmont College, the Armed Services (both active and retired), the State Assembly, the Service Employees International Union, COLAB, the City of Santa Barbara, AARP, and the Santa Barbara Tea Party. The information presented to the students was certainly complex and thought-provoking. In spite of the difficulty of the topic, Anacapa students were engaged, interested, and open-minded. Their thoughtful, high-level questions confirmed this. After the lectures, Anacapa received several compliments on the intelligence, conduct, and inquisitiveness of our students.

The next stage of the Synthesis Unit is now in progress. Students have divided up into "commissions" to study budget questions at different levels of government. There are two commissions studying the federal budget, one for the state, one for the county, and one for the city. Each student will serve as an expert in some facet of the budget and will write a research paper on it. These papers will be published in a booklet at the end of the year.

The final stage of the unit is an all-school assembly in which each commission will present its answers to the question posed by the unit: how would you balance the budget? These presentations may have assenting and dissenting members.

Our Synthesis Units are an important program for challenging students to think critically and to synthesize the information presented to them. This year the students are performing at an impressive level and enjoying it, too.

~ PEGGY LAUER