

Cuesta President Pelham applying for top community college job in Alabama

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Cuesta College President David Pelham is interviewing today in Alabama for the job as the chancellor supervising that state's entire community college system.

Pelham is one of 11 or 12 candidates interviewing for the job, according to a host of Alabama newspapers. If selected, Pelham would leave Cuesta not long after arriving on the San Luis Obispo campus in March 2008.

Cuesta College is currently in a fiscal crisis associated with the state budget and has seen layoffs, cuts in classes and more. Some staff members have complained about Pelham's leadership in the crisis. It is also undergoing a complicated accreditation process.

Pelham stressed in an e-mail sent to staff members that the only reason he applied for the Alabama position is because it is such rare opportunity to advance to such a high level in the world of community college administration.

"He has family in the area, which is the reason for Alabama," said Jill Ivie Beck, Cuesta spokeswoman.

In his e-mail titled "Dave's Desk," Pelham informs staff that the job would be only four to five hours away from his grandchildren.

"I am not looking for another job, but there are literally only 50 of these positions in the country, so I could not pass up the opportunity to try for one," Pelham wrote.

"Should this not work out, which is entirely possible, I would not consider other positions unless they represent truly unique and exceptional opportunities as this position does," he wrote.

Pelham was hired in late 2007 and arrived on campus in March 2008 after serving as the president of the College of the Siskiyous in Northern California.