

Colleges add JFK conspiracy class

*Seminar decision
angers faculty*

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MISSION VIEJO, Calif. — The South Orange County Community College District has approved a course that claims a conspiracy was behind the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and has committed \$5,000 to flying in four guest speakers, one of whom says the Israeli intelligence agency, Mossad, masterminded the killing.

The course, scheduled Sept. 26-28 and advertised by district literature as a "high-quality community education" offering, has angered some faculty members and citizens who say the board's decision subjects the college to ridicule and endorses the agendas of political extremists.

"All of this is out-and-out anti-Semitism," said Cheryl Altman, chairwoman of the department of reading at Saddleback Community College, which, along with Irvine Valley Community College, is run by the district.

The Anti-Defamation League, which formally opposed the course at a trustees' meeting Monday night, accuses one of the speakers, Washington author Michael Collins Piper, of being a proponent of Holocaust denial and labels his claim that Israelis killed Kennedy as ridiculous.

Another speaker, Chicago author Sherman Skolnick is, according to the ADL, a member of the advisory board of *The Spotlight*, which the organization called "the most anti-Semitic publication in America."

Steven Frogue, the controversial president of the community college's seven-member board of trustees — who cast the tie-breaking vote to approve the course — will also teach the three-day seminar, free of charge. Frogue said the \$5,000 allocated to the speakers will come from the \$99 fees being charged the students in the course.

Frogué also noted at the meet-

ing that no student will receive academic credit for the course.

Gerald Posner, the author of *Case Closed: Lee Harvey Oswald and the Assassination of JFK*, seemed aghast yesterday at the panel of speakers heading to Orange County.

"The harm is setting this in an educational environment, where it has an official stamp of approval," Posner said. "This strikes me as being similar to the notion that the Holocaust was a hoax."

Chip Berlet, senior analyst at Political Research Associates, a non-profit think tank in Somerville, Mass., and who has studied the assassination extensively, laughed when hearing the names experts.

"Oh, get out of here!" Berlet said. "You couldn't find four more embarrassing conspiracists in America. Even among conspir-

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acy theorists, these people represent the outer limits."

Some faculty members fear the course will harm the reputation of the district.

"I am profoundly embarrassed that the president of our board of trustees is a man who takes seriously crackpots such as these," said Roy Bauer, a philosophy instructor at Irvine Valley Community College.

Last November, Frogue received a bigger endorsement than any other candidate in the district, garnering 128,361 votes in a reelection bid for a decisive 60.7 percent to 38.7 percent win over his opponent.

Frogué did not return calls from the *Los Angeles Times*, but said during an interview last fall that he believed the Anti-Defamation League played a key role in killing Kennedy.

Calling the Anti-Defamation League "a group of spies that actively keeps files on people . . . people like me," Frogué added, "I believe Lee Harvey Oswald worked for the ADL. That's right. . . . I believe the ADL was behind it."

At the meeting Monday night, Frogue denied making the comment.