

# SC settlement in hands of mediator; classes resume

By TOM LONERGAN

Schoolcraft College students are back to the books, and a state mediator has one month to propose a settlement between 350 back-to-work instructors and the community college.

Wayne County Circuit Judge Michael L. Stacey Tuesday signed an order which returned striking teachers to their jobs and which also sent a primary salary dispute to a so-called "fact-finder."

But Stacey did not issue an injunction requested by the Schoolcraft Board of Trustees.

Both sides have five days to agree on a mediator, who will act as the fact-finder. If there's no agreement, the Michigan Employment Relations Commission (MERC) will appoint one.

## County votes GM road funds

Oakland County commissioners last week unanimously approved spending \$1 million for road improvements for General Motors Corp.'s new auto plant in Orion Township.

The county share of the estimated \$15.2 million in road improvements matches the \$1 million for preliminary engineering being spent by the Oakland County Road Commission. The bulk of the road funds will come from the federal and state governments.

Earlier this year, the county sold its Orion Airport property to General Motors for \$2,005,500.

The \$1 million approved last week will come from the county's airport capital fund. That fund, for airport improvements, will be reimbursed from the county general fund during 1981 and 1982.

GM's proposed ultramodern, three-million-square-foot assembly plant, to be built on the site of the former Oakland-Orion Airport, will replace the Pontiac Division assembly plant and the Fisher Body plant, both in the city of Pontiac.

About 7,000 jobs would be moved to the new plant, northeast of Pontiac. GM wants to begin full production in Orion by September 1982.

Roads which will be widened for the plant include Giddings, Silver Bell and Brown.

"We're pleased with the concept of the back-to-work order," said Delavan W. Sipes, president of the Faculty Forum, the teachers' union. "It gets us back to work, and we still have a mechanism for getting a settlement."

A two-week strike in 1978 also was ended when a judge ordered the dispute to fact-finding.

Schoolcraft President C. Nelson Grote said Tuesday, "I'm very confident that a settlement will be reached. What the judge has done is in everybody's best interest."

Monday, Judge Stacey ordered both sides to bargain rather than proceeding with a hearing on the college's request for an injunction to force 160 full-time and some 189 part-time instructors back to work.

According to one faculty negotiator, there was no progress at Monday's bargaining session, which was held in the downtown MERC offices. Grote said the two sides were "very close to reaching a contract" Monday but would not elaborate.

"The board hasn't budged one bit," said Richard Arlen, chief faculty negotiator.

But, Arlen added, because an injunction wasn't ordered, "the faculty is feeling pretty decent. Since it's not a binding fact-finder, the board can say no and we can say no."

Both he and Sipes are full-time instructors at the two-year college.

STACEY GAVE the fact-finder 30 days to propose a settlement.

The teachers are seeking a two-year contract with raises of between 9 and 10 percent each year for full-time instructors. According to the faculty, the college is sticking with its offer made before the strike began Sept. 2 — 8 percent the first year and 7.25 percent the second.

An estimated 90 percent of Schoolcraft's full-time instructors make the maximum allowed under the expired contract — at least \$24,300 a year.

The majority of the faculty, however, are part-time instructors paid on a "contact hour" basis. They are now paid about \$14 an hour, which Grote has said is "extremely low."

The college said in a statement last week that it has offered part-timers a 14 percent raise effective the upcoming winter semester and 13 percent the following winter semester.

The college has said it cannot pro-

vide a larger than 7.25 percent second-year increase for full-time faculty without taking the money from the proposed part-time faculty raises. Faculty negotiators have refused to agree with the proposal.

Grote said the Board of Trustees believes the college has offered the teachers a "fair and reasonable offer."

"The board has not given us any new parameters," he said, "but they are sufficiently flexible that we can make movement. He said in terms of a 'take-it-or-leave-it offer,' the college has not made a final proposal."

DESPITE TWO strikes at Schoolcraft in the last two rounds of negotiations, Grote maintains the faculty and

administration have a "good working relationship."

"This is not necessarily symbolic of any long-term problem," he said of the latest strike.

According to the faculty, other unresolved issues are continuation of fully paid medical benefits for full-time instructors and an optical plan.

During 1978's contract dispute, the faculty eventually accepted a 7 percent raise the first year and a 5 percent raise the second for full-time instructors.

Sipes said the Faculty Forum, affiliated with the Michigan Education Association, was "disappointed" with that fact-finder-proposed settlement.

Asked what would prevent a repeat situation, Sipes would only say, "We have reason to be more optimistic."

Should there be no agreement after the fact-finder's proposal, Sipes said that Stacey may enter the picture again.

"He (Stacey) has made it very clear he will take a hand in obtaining a settlement," said Sipes. "He's interested in seeing the thing settled."

A COLLEGE spokesman estimated Tuesday that "75 to 80 percent" of Schoolcraft's students attended the first day of classes since Aug. 29.

The college had expected a fall semester enrollment of 10,000, including

2,000 in continuing education courses.

The five class days lost due to the strike will be made up, said David Heinzman, director of College Relations. College officials still intend the fall semester to end prior to the Christmas holidays, he said.

The Board of Trustees had approved full tuition refunds for those students who could prove "undue hardship" if the strike had extended beyond 8 a.m. Tuesday.

Grote said fall enrollment is likely to be down because of the strike, but added that the college as yet "doesn't know the data."

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