

College aid alive and available

By Mary Klemic staff writer

To borrow a line from Mark Twain, stories of the death of student-aid in recent years have been greatly exaggerated. Nevertheless, students should submit their applications for financial aid as soon as and as often as they can.

"The (federal) cutbacks really are not as large as the media have made them," said Spencer Johnson of Oakland Community College. "Financial aid is still very strong and viable."

Johnson, director of financial aid at OCC's Highland Lakes Campus, said many people have overestimated the amount of student-aid cuts made by the Reagan administration.

"We've never had a tremendous decline in the amount of dollars available (for student aid)," said John Tomey, director of admissions and financial aid at Schoolcraft College in Livonia. "Despite all of the attempts to cut back, not much really has been done."

JOHNSON SAID nearly 120,000 students in Michigan applied in the College Scholarship Service for the 1982-83 school year.

Of these, 69 percent are dependent (living with their parents), and 31 percent are self-supporting, he said.

This figure has steadily increased since 1978 because of the economic situation, Johnson said.

"Students have to go back to school

because they lose their jobs and have to be retrained, or because students can't afford to go away to school," he said.

Johnson advised students intending to begin college in the fall to submit a financial aid form from the College Scholarship Service before Feb. 15. A student may obtain the forms from his high school, or from the college he is planning to attend.

Copies will be sent to the colleges designated by the student, which will then determine financial need and appropriate aid programs.

TOMEY SAID many students think financial aid is based solely on the parents' income.

Actually, other factors — including family size, number of children in college, parents' age and indebtedness of parents — are also considered, he said.

"Students who come from families with incomes of \$25,000 to even \$30,000 can qualify for some of the grants available," Tomey said. "When in doubt or when in need, contact the college's financial aid advisor or even your high school counselor."

Tomey estimated that 1,200-1,500 students at Schoolcraft (which has 8,000 students) are getting financial aid.

Forms of student aid are scholarships, grants, loans and work-study

programs. Usually, only loans have to be repaid, Johnson said.

Scholarships are given for academic or other achievement, while grants are based on need. A work-study program would hire the student for a job on campus.

THE MICHIGAN Student Financial Aid Association is sponsoring a series of college financial-aid presentations in Wayne and Oakland counties this month (see listing for dates and places).

Workshops are designed to provide the latest information regarding financial aid and changes in the application process for all types of colleges and universities.

Johnson said that at the two-hour workshops, all aid programs — for high-school students as well as older or returning students — and the application process are explained. Time is reserved for questions and answers.

"There are constant changes in the programs," he said. "If somebody hears it all one year, they have to come back."

As an example, Johnson said, federal legislation would require students applying for aid to prove that they registered for the draft.

But there is still a wide variety of financial aid available for students of all ages, he said.

Meetings may help you find college financial aid

A series of college financial-aid program presentations will be held around Oakland County this month.

The goal of the workshops is to provide the latest information regarding student financial aid and the changes in the financial-aid application process for all types of colleges and universities.

Financial-aid professionals will conduct the presentations. Time will be set aside for questions and answers.

The series is sponsored by Region V (including Oakland and Wayne Counties) of the Michigan Student Financial Aid Association and is for area students and parents.

In Oakland County, the presentations will be held at:

- 10 a.m. Saturday in Room 204 of the J Building at Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge Campus, 27055 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills.
- 10 a.m. Jan. 15, Room 204 of the J Building at OCC's Orchard Ridge Campus.
- 7 p.m. Jan. 19, in the auditorium at OCC's Royal Oak Campus, 739 S. Washington.
- 7 p.m. Jan. 27, in the Gold Room of the Student Center Building at Oakland University, Walton Blvd., Rochester.

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