

OCC eyes state aid boost

By Tim Richard
staff writer

The state-aid picture is looking brighter for Oakland Community College, though a tuition increase in fall is still possible.

The picture is "welcome and good compared to prior (recession) years," President Robert F. Roelofs told the board of trustees last week. He said a new state-aid formula in the legislative works could be beneficial to OCC, which has the state's fastest growing enrollment and a long list of vocational programs.

Yet tuition hike likely

Asked by a trustee about Gov. James J. Blanchard's promise of a 10 percent increase to colleges which hold the line on tuition this fall, Roelofs noted it applies only to four-year colleges and universities.

"We'll be hard pressed to come out near the break-even point without a tuition increase," Roelofs said at the conclusion of a generally rosy financial report.

OCC, WHOSE pattern has been to increase tuitions every second year, raised its rate by \$1.50 a credit hour to \$23 for resident students last fall.

Tuition is providing about 37 percent of the current year's \$38.4 million budget; state aid, less than 25 percent; and property taxes, 37 percent.

Roelofs said Blanchard's promise of a 10 percent needed these clarifications:

- "Ten percent is being added across the board to the total (aid to community colleges). But we don't expect everyone (all 29 community colleges) to get 10 percent." He predicted the range would be 6-13 percent.
- The 10 percent figure means different things to different colleges. At four-year colleges and universities, state aid is 65 percent of the budget; a 10 percent boost in aid is a 6.5 percent boost in revenue over a 12-month period. But OCC gets only about 20 percent of its revenue from the state, so a 10 percent aid hike would amount only to a 2 percent revenue boost.
- Roelofs said he chairs a committee of college people proposing a funding formula for community colleges. "We have re-introduced enrollment as the main machine for the budget. We haven't had an enrollment formula for four or five years. This would benefit OCC because we've had the greatest enrollment growth," said Roelofs, noting the local school has jumped 50 percent in five years. The next highest increase was 48 percent; others range from the low 30s to a decline.
- The formula would consider program costs, granting more state aid for technical and laboratory courses than for lecture classes. "OCC will benefit. We have up to 40 technical programs. Since the 1979-80 school year, our enrollment in vocational reimbursable

programs has gone up 84 percent; the second highest college went up 70 percent," Roelofs said.

The new formula is being studied by appropriations committees in both houses of the Michigan Legislature. The OCC president said any formula would likely be phased in over a period of years.

"I WISH we could hold off this time around," said trustee Earl Anderson of a tuition increase. "I can't forget this is a community college. Most of our students are from middle class and poor families. We're not some high-class four-year school."

"I'm not saying we like to raise tuition," Roelofs replied. "I'm saying we've done a remarkably good job of holding it down." He said OCC's weighted average tuition ranked 25th of 29 colleges in the state, and that the only lower tuitions are at outstate schools. "Our revenue per student was 29th," he added.

Anthony Jarson, vice president for business and finance, said property tax revenues are likely to rise only 1 or 2 percent next fiscal year.

In response to a question from board Chairperson Suzanne Reynolds, Jarson said there are plenty of federal basic education grants for needy students, despite the Reagan Administration's reductions in other programs.

For the 1984-5 budget, the board approved levying the full one mill of the property tax for operations (\$14.4 million in revenue) and 0.5 mill for debt retirement (\$7.2 million).

THE BOARD also approved hiking expenditures for the current budget year ending June 30 by \$1.6 million to \$38.4 million.

Jarson said the increase was due to the need to employ more faculty to take care of enrollment increases, along with adjustments of fringe benefits, workers compensation, sick leave and other fringes.

OCC buys robotics unit; parts are free

Oakland Community College's Auburn Hills campus will get a new robotics unit, and the central administration computer center will be protected by a new air conditioning system.

The OCC board of trustees Thursday approved purchase for \$16,500 of a Servo control unit and motor assembly for the robotics department at Auburn Hills, in Auburn Hills east of Pontiac. That campus houses many of OCC's technical programs.

The sole available source, GMF Robotics of Troy, will donate the mechanical arm and hand, installation, five days training for operations and programming and five days training in maintenance, according to purchasing director David W. Sturges.

A 12-year-old air conditioning system has been running day and night, Sturges said, and a new unit will be more energy efficient.

The board approved the low bid of \$13,824 from Delta Temp Inc. of Madison Heights for the new air conditioning unit. The computer, in the George A. Bee Administration Center in

Bloomfield Hills, serves educational programs as well as administrative needs.

The board also accepted a long list of gifts for various programs, including:

• Auburn Hills Campus — a Chrysler body shell for the robotics program from Chrysler Corp.; a 1982 Buick Riviera for the auto service program, from General Motors Fisher Body division; computer software for geology instruction, from Floyd Keith; and a history of Pontiac Township, which last year incorporated as the city of Auburn Hills, from the Pontiac Township Bicentennial Commission.

• Orchard Ridge Campus — gifts of \$150 each from Horace Cooke and OCC President Robert F. Roelofs for the Smith Performing Arts Theatre.

• Highland Lakes Campus — several gifts of photo equipment for the photography program; 53 books and 77 nursing magazines for the learning resources center from various donors.

• Scholarships — \$25 for the Orchard Ridge scholarship fund; \$480 for the Sander's scholarship from various donors.

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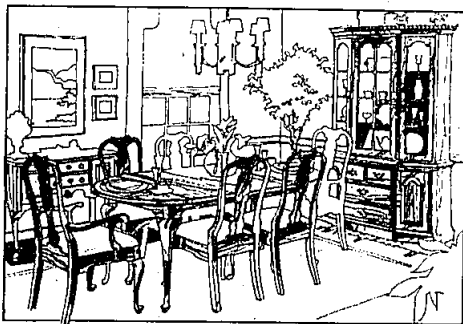
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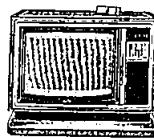
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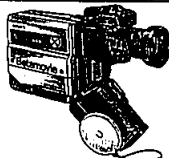
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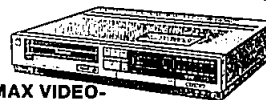
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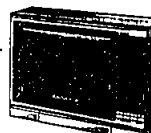
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