

TIP gives kids tuition, college incentive

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Oakland County has an image of affluence. But a lot of low-income kids could benefit from Michigan's new "tuition incentive plan," say Oakland Community College officials.

The TIP plan, as it's called, was passed without fanfare by the state Legislature and trumpeted this week by Rick Cole, higher education adviser to Gov. James Blanchard.

"Of those who take 12 credit hours or more, 26 percent receive some kind of assistance," said Spencer Johnson, OCC's director of financial aid. That would translate into some 5,000 students.

"IT BEGINS in June of '88," Cole said in a meeting Monday with OCC

financial aid officers and counselors. The state pays tuition at a community college for high school graduates who have spent three of the last four years on welfare. Those who complete the General Educational Development (GED) test also are eligible.

In the state social services budget is \$2 million, Cole said. It will pay 2,000 students' tuition of about \$1,000 a year for two years.

But as many as 20,000 or 25,000 could be qualified, Cole said. "If more sign up than the available funds, the governor's hopeful we'll 'break the bank.' If he has to move appropriations from one fund to another, he'll do it."

Cole was Blanchard's press secretary 1983-86 and chief of staff in 1987. He is due to become a profes-

sor of marketing at Michigan State University later this year.

KEY TO THE program, said Cole, is spotting potential TIP students early — "in the third or fourth grade, so they'll know they're part of a free K-14 system."

"We need to let children from below the poverty line know college is available," identifying them early will encourage them to complete high school and go to college, he said.

Asked by a counselor whether such early identification might not lead to families staying on welfare, Cole said it was doubtful. The odds are that a child on welfare in fourth grade is unlikely to get off by 12th grade.

"Education is the real key to breaking the cycle of poverty and

the cycle of dependence," said Cole.

TIP WAS the idea of Sen. Dan DeGrow, R-Farmington Hills, who "very systematically, very quietly," said the idea to the administration and Legislature, Cole said.

"We're very pleased it was a Republican senator who came up with this. It's easier for us to deal with it in Lansing."

Besides kids on welfare, those from low-income families are eligible according to a scale: \$7,400 income for a family of two, \$9,200 for three, \$11,200 for four and so on.

The \$1,000 grants will cover tuition, fees and some medical care for those who remain academically eligible and take at least six credit hours per semester. Students must complete an associate (two-year) de-

gree program within 2½ years of high school graduation or GED completion.

It does not provide mileage, room and board. "We assume they'll live at home the first two years," Cole said.

THOSE WHO move on to a four-year college also will be eligible for tuition grants, though that program has yet to be funded.

"Community colleges are in a wonderful position of being an entry point to higher education," he said. He called the community colleges the key to transforming Michigan from a "brawn- to a brain-power economy. The community college system is seen as the launching pad to new, high-tech occupations."

TIP is administered by high school

counselors, community college financial aid officers and social service caseworkers.

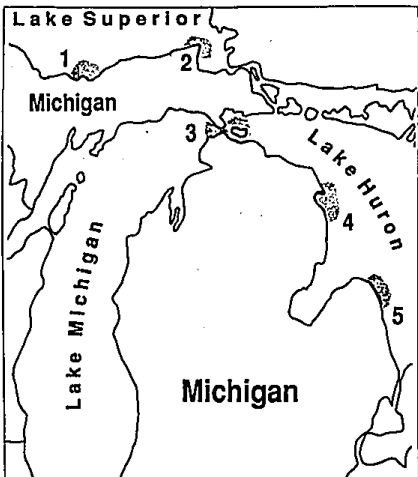
THERE ARE potential budget complications.

Community colleges are unhappy that Blanchard's 1988-89 budget raises their appropriation less than \$2 million, about 2 percent.

For OCC, the state aid increase will be \$100,000, a fraction of 1 percent in a \$49 million budget.

Meanwhile, the TIP program could wind up costing community colleges money if it proves too popular, too fast. Reason: Average spending per pupil is \$3,000, but the TIP program provides only \$1,000 in revenue.

Cole said the state aid formula for colleges may have to be revised if the program becomes a burden.



Michigan's five bottomland preserves are 1) Alger in Lake Superior off Munising, 2) Whitefish Point in Lake Superior east of Sault Ste. Marie, 3) Straits of Mackinac straddling Lakes Michigan and Huron, 4) Thunder Bay in Lake Huron off Alpena and 5) Thumb Area in Lake Huron off Pointe Aux Barques and Harbor Beach.

Save Great Lakes heritage

Diver Bill Kenner wants shipwrecks preserved

By Penny Wright
special writer

BILL Kenner learned scuba diving at age 65.

Since then he has averaged 30 dives per year, mostly into the cold depths of the Great Lakes; he was earned diving certifications from three accrediting agencies; he was an officer of the Great Lakes Aquanauts diving club; and he is currently representing the public and the Michigan Skin Divers Council on the state's Underwater Salvage Committee.

At age 75, the Westland resident is still fascinated with scuba diving and the Great Lakes.

"I was scared to death of staying underwater," said Kenner, who has 14 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

A persistent relative and a good diving course offered at nearby Churchill High helped him conquer his fears. Now the former physical therapist is one of the oldest active divers in Michigan.

Each year putting on his wet suit with 40-pound tanks gets a little harder each year, and he experiences more fatigue during his dives, but Kenner has no intention of hanging up his flippers.

"I am proud of being able to dive



our land
Penny Wright

with younger people and share in the enjoyment of this wonderful sport," he said.

Kenner strongly favors scuba diving in the Great Lakes. "Besides the fresh water and lack of such nuisances as sea urchins, our lakes are fascinating because of the many geological and archeological sights. The shipwrecks are the big attraction."

Every year an estimated 40,000 divers swim the waters of the Great Lakes, many in search of shipwrecks. The cold, fresh waters are a natural preservative for sunken ships. Of 6,000 wrecks thought to lie at the bottom, only 400 to 500 ships have been located.

Kenner has explored 35 to 40 wrecks and keeps a notebook filled with news clippings about each ship.

"The really interesting wrecks are those that have been left intact. Ships lying in deeper waters (110 feet or more) usually have the cargo, machinery, navigational equipment,

furniture and other artifacts aboard," said Kenner.

He said ships wrecked in shallow waters often were stripped before their owners could begin salvage operations.

A BIG concern of Michigan divers is to protect the wrecks from looters and souvenir hunters.

"Those wrecks are a part of Michigan's heritage," Kenner said. "The looters are stealing our history."

According to the passage of state Public Act 184 in 1980 has given underwater preservation a big boost. The law allows the state of Michigan to establish underwater preserves and rules for governing them. To date, there are five designated preserves (see map).

"Before the act passed, any wreck was open for divers to loot," said Kenner. "Now, no one can remove any artifacts from the preserve's shipwrecks or bottomland without a permit."

THE MICHIGAN Legislature is in the process of revising PA 184 to further increase protection of wrecks within the state's waters.

Kenner noted the new bill neglects the issue of enforcement. "There is no money for policing the preserves. It is up to the communities adjoining the preserves and the diving community to enforce the legislation."



Bill Kenner in scuba gear

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