Going up

OCC hikes tuition to meet budget

BY JUDITH DONER BERNE
STAFF WRITER

EDUCATION

Oakland Community College will raise student tuition to help balance its 1992-93 operating budget.

The 86 percent of the student body which lives in Oakland County will pay $41 per credit hour - a hike of $2 from the current rate. The nearly 14 percent of students from other Michigan counties will pay $69 per credit hour, $4 more than what they pay now.

Student fees will remain the same.

Trustees reluctantly, but unanimously, approved the tuition hike at the May 28 board meeting. Then they approved the $69.5 million operating budget - up 6 percent from a year ago.

"I hate to see the burden go on the student," said board vice chairman David Hackett.

"My first and second year on the board, I voted against the tuition increase," trustee Judith Wiser said. "But students told me they would be willing to pay a little more to get the best teachers. We will give back to the students."

Student tuition and fees account for a little over a third of the OCC budget; property taxes, a little less than a third; and state appropriations and grants complete the picture.

Almost 60 percent of OCC's revenue goes for salaries; 21.6 percent for benefits; 15.4 percent for supplies and services; and about 3 percent for utilities. A bond issue is currently providing funds for campus renovations.

College Chancellor Patsy Fulton told the board she had just found out that the school will probably get only $160,000 for increased retirement costs from the state instead of the $940,000 hoped for. "We can still balance the budget — barely," she said. "We may have to come back."

"My philosophy is to give the county as many qualified workers as we can," Fulton said, suggesting that if the state portion of the budget declines, someday OCC may have to restrict enrollment.

Still, she said, "OCC is in a better position than many other colleges in the state," with healthy reserves and a contingency fund.

Fulton assured the board that the school would get the word out to students that financial aid is available for those who need it to afford the tuition increase.

"I don't think we'll see a significant problem with the neediest of students," said Julie May, director of financial aid. The school has received an increase in federal Pell grants.

"I'm concerned about the students on the edge," said board chairwoman Sandra Ritter.

"We must make a real effort to let everybody know there's help out there - just to apply for it," Hackett said.

OCC's tuition is eighth highest among 29 Michigan community colleges.

The 1992-93 budget is based on a series of projections which include:

- Enrollment increases of 4 percent in student credit hours.
- Salary increases of 4.5 percent for full-time and adjunct faculty.
- Fringe benefit cost increases of 10 percent.
- Retirement cost increases from the current 11.29 to 12.3 percent.

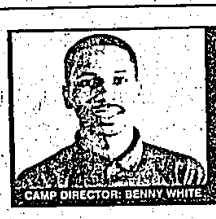
Garden party aids center for young, unwed mothers

Tickets are still available for "La Fete au Jardin," a garden party fund-raiser for St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center, Farmington Hills, scheduled 2-6 p.m. Sunday, June 6, on center grounds, 27400 W. 12 Mile, near Inkster Road.

The event features gourmet food from 53 metro area restaurants, as well as 100 different wines.

Eddie and Juliette Jonna of The Merchant of Vino are honorary chairpersons for the event. They are assisted by WKQI-FM radio personality Dick Purtan, his wife, Gail and WXYZ-TV news anchor Bill Bonds.

Event tickets are $80. Tickets are available by calling Artist Wells, 626-7527, Ext. 224.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