

'No new money'

OCC chancellor: Aid falls short, tax hike needed

BY TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

With inflation running above 3 percent, Oakland Community College faces the prospect of just a 1.1 percent hike in state aid in the coming budget year.

"That 1.1 percent is \$199,000. That is no new money," Chancellor Patsy Calkins told the board of trustees Monday. "The cost of living allowance (COLA) is 3.1 percent. The higher education price index (HEPI) is 3.2 percent. We are a long way from where we need to be."

HEPI, little known to the public, is the price index most meaningful to college administrators. It reflects what colleges buy — faculty and benefits — rather than

the market basket of goods bought by consumers.

To Calkins, Gov. John Engler's proposed fiscal 1996 budget underscored the need for passage of OCC's one-mill property tax increase on the March 16 ballot. If approved by voters, the new \$29 million would be earmarked for maintenance and equipment improvements during the first two years.

While a state aid increase of 1.7 percent had been widely quoted, Calkins said four major institutions — OCC, Henry Ford, Wayne and Kirtland — are scheduled for just 1.1 percent under the Gast-Mathieu formula, a state aid formula named for the Senate and House appropriations subcom-

mittee chiefs who drafted it.

The formula, Calkins said, starts with an aid number that is reduced by a one-mill deductible. The irony is that OCC's current tax rate is 0.85 of a mill, resulting in a "double hit," the chancellor said.

Trustee Anne Scott of Royal Oak was hopeful lawmakers would raise the amount proposed by Engler. "This is the governor's suggestion. I don't feel this budget is going through," Scott said.

Charles Neumann, the math professor who heads the OCC Faculty Association, agreed. OCC and Macomb Community College, with 63 percent of all community college students in the state, are

getting less than a fair shake from Lansing.

Veteran trustee Sandra Ritter of Waterford blamed not lawmakers, but the Michigan Community College Association (MCCA), the professional and lobbying group the 29 two-year colleges belong to. "We're the most heavily taxed by MCCA. It doesn't serve our purposes. I feel neglected," said Ritter.

Disagreeing, board vice chair Judith Wiser of West Bloomfield said, "We should work from the inside. To remove ourselves from our own professional group is a big mistake. I don't think we should cut our ties."

Three sources provide 98 percent of OCC's revenue: state aid

(24 percent), property tax (36 percent) and student tuition and fees (38 percent).

In related business, the board trimmed the current year's budget to \$71.5 million, a cut of \$2.1 million or 2.9 percent. Most of the cut was due to an enrollment drop of 1,360 full-time equated students worth \$2 million.

A state aid increase of \$70,000 was offset by a \$130,000 shortfall from the industrial facilities tax. Calkins said "very tough cuts" in spending will be made by not filling faculty and staff jobs and not incurring instructional costs due to the enrollment drop.

Trustees approved the revised budget 7-0.

The board approved two con-

tracts:

■ \$38,306 to low-bidder National Satellite Corp. of Rochester Hills to equip and configure an interactive video classroom on the Highland Lakes Campus, Union Lake. Campus President Preston Pulliam said 220 Levinson Hall, now used for storage, will be used for videotaping and long-distance teaching to business customers.

Trustee Ritter, who last month delayed the project by voting no, said her questions had been answered and voted yes.

■ An unspecified amount with Cardiovascular Clinical Associates in Farmington Hills for training students in non-invasive cardiology.

Magazine publishers hire Harrison grad

Jeffrey A. Sklar, 22, a graduate of Harrison High School and Michigan State University, has been hired by Hachette Filipacchi Magazines as a communications associate.

The publishers of 24 major magazines that include Car &

Driver and Road & Track, Hachette Filipacchi is a worldwide operation. Sklar will be based in the New York office.

During college, Sklar spent two summers in New York as an intern for Wenner Media Inc., the

publishers of Rolling Stone, Us, The Entertainment Magazine, Men's Journal, and Family Life.

In 1994, he graduated from MSU with a bachelor of arts degree in journalism/economics and began his career writing for Fi-

nancial World magazine in New York.

Outside of work, Sklar enjoys lifeguarding for New York University, lifting weights, playing guitar, running in Central Park and modeling for Trouble in New York, a division of Wilhelmina.

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