

# Colleges may have to fight to keep state aid

By Tim Richeard  
staff writer

Most college presidents rejoice when they talk about the 5 percent average aid increase in Gov. James Blanchard's higher education budget.

Legislators warn, however, they may have to fight to hang onto it because other interests want more aid. Many departments were cut 2.5 percent, and social services is scheduled for only 0.7 percent more.

"It doesn't explain how we're going to fund social services, mental health and corrections, even at current year levels," said Sen. R. Robert Geake, D-Northville, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

SCHOOLCRAFT College did "not very well," getting only a 2.9 percent recommended aid increase, President Richard McDowell said.

Two-year colleges collectively got 5 percent more, or \$223 million in Blanchard's budget. The range among the 29 colleges is 2 to 9.1 percent.

"My lobbying will be to narrow the range," said McDowell, adding it's a tougher job than last year when Blanchard started with only a 3 percent average increase.

"Our enrollment is up," he said, pointing to a 5 percent increase to 5,169 full-time equivalent students.

McDOWELL WAS "disappointed" Blanchard failed to recommend any of the \$1.75 million Schoolcraft

wants to put up a \$3.5 million Community/Student Services Building. "We need to hurry around to make that happen," he said.

The 50,000 square foot building would go up near the south parking lot on the Livonia campus. It would house the Business Development Center (now in the library), learning assistance center, Women's Resource Center, bursar, counselors and student activities offices.

For years, student services have been scattered in various offices, including several converted houses on Haggerty Road which would be torn down.

"MOST ENCOURAGING," said Chancellor Blenda Wilson, whose University of Michigan-Deerborn campus was recommended for a hefty 5.3 percent increase.

In contrast, the U-M main campus

In Ann Arbor was scheduled for 4.7 percent more; Wayne State University, 4.7; and Michigan State University, 4.8.

Wilson said U-M-D would remain accessible "by keeping tuition and related costs as low as possible. We urge state leaders and the public to support the governor's recommendation."

U-M-D was recommended for a total of \$17.5 million in Blanchard's budget.

"FOR ALL THE elpom and doom in the clouds, the governor was very forthcoming for education," said Chancellor R. Stephen Nicholson of Oakland Community College.

OCC was recommended for a 4.8 percent increase, a little below the 5 percent average, but still worth \$700,000 more and a total of \$15 million in state aid.

"We had a record winter enrollment — an overall head count of 26,543 and 6 percent more credit hours. We continue to be astonished at how many people look to this college for help."

Nicholson hears "rumblings" that education may be in for a fight to keep its share of the budget, and that the battle may not end until after the Nov. 7 election for governor and Legislature.

"We're being very conservative in building our budget," he said.

"I FEEL POSITIVE," said President Joseph Champagne, whose Oakland University is scheduled for a 5.2 percent increase to \$35.5 million.

"We've got some library opening money in there," he said. OU tripled the size of its library on the Rochester campus and opened it last fall, but with only half the additional

state operating money it asked.

"There's a little improvement" in the research excellence fund recommendation, Champagne said. OU is scheduled for a \$15,000 boost to about \$530,000.

BLANCHARD'S \$7.7 billion general fund recommendation for fiscal 1991 is up 3.8 percent over the current year.

Michigan Hospital Association President Spencer C. Johnson next day complained that Blanchard's budget means a \$17 million cut in health care this year and another \$55 million next year.

"We believe that health care could have the same priority as education and corrections," Johnson said.

Rep. David Hollister, D-Lansing, guardian of the social services budget, said, "How can we educate kids who are not being fed and not being

clothed?"

GEAKE PREDICTED "another bitter conflict between in-formula (receiving state aid) and out-of-formula school districts."

Blanchard asked that out-of-formula districts be made to pay their own pension and social security costs. Most suburban districts are out-of-formula.

Sen. Doug Cruce, R-Troy, called Blanchard's proposal "repugnant."

Cruce said Blanchard poses for pictures as a proponent of cutting home property taxes and then proposes eliminating state payment of retirement costs. "I think it's absolutely a sin — hitting those communities with the highest property taxes," said Cruce.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

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We'd like you to meet Stego, Cera, and Pter, just three of the 20 life-size prehistoric pals in the Dino-Might! exhibit coming to Oakland Mall on February 12th. Stego the stegosaurus is 20 feet long, Cera is over 17 feet long, and Pter the flying pteranodon has a 26-foot wingspan! They're life-like as well as life-size, giving your kids a chance to find out how real dinosaurs looked and lived. And with the exhibit we'll have dinosaur story hours and the Judith Heiken puppet show, making the event both fascinating and fun.

Don't miss our Dino-Might! exhibit, Monday, February 12th through Sunday the 25th at Oakland Mall, where you'll meet 20 new dino-pals! And don't miss the Judith Heiken puppet show on Saturday, February 17th at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3 p.m. & 5 p.m. and Sunday, February 18th at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

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