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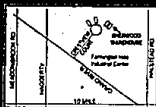
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OCC charges \$4 more per credit

By RALPH R. ECHTINAW
STAFF WRITER

It's that time of year again. The flowers are blooming. The gardens are greening. The kids are out of school. And Oakland Community College just raised tuition.

Board members Richard Blonda, Judith Wiser, Doug Wakefield, Dave Hackett, Janice Simmons and Ann Scott voted Tuesday to boost OCC tuition for in-district students from \$41 to \$45 per credit hour while approving a \$71 million budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1. (vice chairwoman Sandra Ritter was absent.)

Tuition for out-of-district students and out-of-state students was also raised to \$77 and \$108, respectively.

OCC's in-district tuition is now 12th highest among the state's 29 community colleges. Highland Park Community College tuition

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is \$55, Wayne County Community College is \$54, Macomb Community College is \$47, Schoolcraft College is \$43 and Henry Ford Community College is \$42.

OCC chancellor Patsy Fulton said the tuition increase is necessary because costs keep rising and state aid keeps shrinking. "There's no other way to go," she said. "We're presenting to you a very tight budget. We're trying to take care of our people here and promote educational opportunities for students."

Tony Janson, OCC's chief financial officer, backed up Fulton. "We can't spend any less money per student and be a real community college," he told the board. "We don't really have many alternatives."

Noting that Bloomfield Hills has been named the most affluent city in the United States, Wiser asked wistfully, "Why are we having such an austere program in the richest city in the country?"

With the annual state subsidy reduced by \$300,000 to \$16.7 million and not expected to rise any time soon, Janson said the situation is grim. "I expect it to be painful next year and the year after."

Also, investment income fell 35 percent from \$1.15 million to \$750,000, mainly due to falling interest rates on government bonds.

In the new fiscal year, OCC will get 39.2 percent of its budget from tuition, 35.1 percent from property taxes (from a 1-mill levy which because of the Headlee Amend-

ment is reduced to .85 mill) and 23.5 from the state subsidy. Talk lately has been about asking voters for an additional millage, up from the current 1 mill, but no one is ready to ask for it any time soon.

College officials took pains to explain to trustees Tuesday how they've been real frugal with the college's money. For example, Fulton said that, of the 38 recent retirees, 15 won't be replaced with new hires. Only retiring faculty members will be fully replaced.

Other positions, when vacated, are not being filled for at least three months. A voluntary, early retirement program for faculty and staff has saved \$1 million, Fulton said.

And salaries are the biggest chunk of OCC's spending, accounting for 61.4 percent. Social Security taxes are 12.8 percent, benefits 8.5 percent, supplies and services 13.5 percent, utilities 2.6 percent and transfers 1.1 percent.

Rush hour may be no time for a meeting

The incredible creeping line of cars between West Bloomfield and Bloomfield Hills got Oakland Community College trustee Judith Wiser in a complaining mood Tuesday.

Wiser objected to the OCC board having a meeting at the col-

lege's Bloomfield Hills office at 5:30 p.m. because that's when everybody and his/her brother/sister is on their way home from work.

She said an hour was required just to drive from her house in West Bloomfield to the OCC's

Bee Center.

"I don't think it's reasonable to ask me to come at 5 o'clock," Wiser said. "I'm just bumper to bumper for no reason."

Somebody suggested a vote on when to hold meetings, but Wiser would have none of it.

"I'm not asking for a vote," she said.

Said board chairman Dave Hackett, "OK, everybody think about it."

Said trustee Doug Wakefield, "I personally want to come at midnight."



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