

2 OCC unions arguing merits of hiring freeze

BY TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

Two union leaders told the Oakland Community College board to be wary of Chancellor Richard Thompson's hiring freeze.

"We challenge the assumption" that extra millage approved by voters in 1995 shouldn't be used "to improve instruction," said Charles Neumann, math instructor who heads the Faculty Association.

Neumann and Rose Coutour, president of the classified employees union, referred to Thompson's chancellor's council decision not to fill 54 of 61 vacant positions.

"Of the 64 not-filled positions, 15 are classified — clerical and technical," added Coutour. "Eleven are directly related to student services. I'd like the board and chancellor's council to review that decision. It might have an effect on enrollment."

They were the only speakers during an April 28 public hearing on Thompson's proposed \$101.7 million budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1. A board vote is scheduled for May 19.

The polite argument was over what voters were told in June of 1995 when they approved 0.8 mills for seven years on top of the 0.65 "charter" mills approved when OCC was founded in 1984.

Thompson contends the 1995 promotion promised "renovation, upgrades and improvements in

facilities, scholarships, technology, new programs and stabilization of tuition costs."

OCCFA chief Neumann quoted promises of improving instruction, adding that the lid on tuition should be funded by the 1995 tax hike.

The union leaders had at least one sympathetic ear in trustee Pamela Davis of Sterling Heights.

Thompson, who completed a year in the chief executive post in March, promised "a major restructuring of the college" by September. "We will do things quite differently in the future. In this restructuring, we will think in terms of systems rather than jobs." In remarks last month, he promised great emphasis on teamwork and technology.

Thompson's budget reasoning goes like this: Of the "charter" 1984 millage, 80 percent should go for personnel and 20 percent for other costs. Instead, personnel costs are eating up 87 percent. "With no increase in the number of employees (currently 823), personnel costs will consume 100 percent of the charter millage by the year 2003," he said.

That is when the 1995 voted millage is due to expire.

Thompson's budget freezes tuition again at \$46 per credit hour for OCC district residents, \$78 for other Michiganders and \$109 for out-of-state students.

But he projects a further slump in enrollment to 400,000

credit hours in the year ahead and 390,000 hours in future years. In fiscal 1991-2 enrollment was 532,000 credit hours. It dropped steadily each following year and is estimated at 425,000 for the current year.

Thus, the total budget of \$101.7 million is a scant 0.4 of a percent above the current year. The revenue breakdown:

- Property taxes — \$68.1 million, up 7 percent from the current year.

- State aid — \$19.5 million, up 3.34 percent in the governor's budget; more in the House of Representatives' budget overseen by Rep. Hubert Price, D-Pontiac.

- Tuition and fees — \$22.5 million, down 8 percent.

- Investments and miscellaneous — \$1.6 million, about the same.

Spending will be about \$1.7 million less, adding to the "rainy day" fund. Highlights:

- \$12.3 million for renovations and improvements.

- \$5 million for equipment, ranging from technology to trucks.

- \$1 million for "staff training and retraining as well as one-time funding for new initiatives."

- 4 percent less for operating expenses due "to savings in maintenance and repairs due to millage-funded facility renovations and improvements."

Walk aids scholarship funding

Oakland Community College's Hospitality Department is hosting the second annual Great Lakes-Great Wine Walk-Around on Wednesday, May 14.

Prior to the evening's festivities, professional judges from the eligible states and province (Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, New York, Indiana, Illinois and Ontario) will taste and judge each entry.

Share in the Celebration of the gold, silver and bronze medal-winning wines released for tasting at 5:30 p.m. and paired with great food from top area restaurants including the Golden Mushroom, Tribute, Rocky's of Northville, Pike Street, Five Lakes Grill and Morels.

Ticket price is \$40 and is tax deductible. All proceeds benefit the scholarship fund for students in the culinary arts and hospitality management programs.

The event is set for Wednesday, May 14, Oakland Community College, 3rd floor, J Building, Farmington Hills, from 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Call the campus Hotline: (810) 471-6340.

CLARIFICATION

The photos for the Timlin Development and Snyder, Kinney, Bennett & Keating on Page F4 in today's Real Estate section were shot by Beth Singer and the interior design was done by Jeffrey King.

Michigan AAUW marks 75th anniversary

Marking its 75th anniversary the first weekend in May, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Michigan will be showing off a kaleidoscope of projects and speakers.

Festivities open Friday, May 2, at the Marriott Hotel in Troy, with a VIP reception honoring the organization's past presidents, and close 2 p.m. Sunday, May 4 with a press conference announcing a new AAUW media survey.



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