

House considers giving students a break on textbooks

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STAFF WRITER

Melissa Mayes, a nursing student at Oakland Community College, pays almost \$800 tuition each semester. She also has to pay about \$350 for textbooks.

So, when Mayes buys her books, she pays about \$20 in sales tax.

Proposed House Bill 4414 would change that.

Mayes, a junior, was among those representing OU, Madonna University, University of Detroit-Mercy and Oakland Community College who testified in favor of the bill, which would eliminate sales tax on textbooks, at a hearing of the House Colleges and Universities Committee Monday at Oakland University.

OU student Amy Towle, associate director of Legislative Affairs, said the average student spends roughly the cost of four credit hours on textbooks per year. Eliminating the sales tax would save approximately \$30.

"Although this may seem like a modest saving, it is significant to students," Towle said. "Students living in the residence halls could use this \$30 toward phone calls home or weekend meals which are not provided directly by the residence halls."

Commuters, who make up a majority of the university's 14,379 students, could use the extra money for gas, she added.

It isn't just the sales tax the students are worried about. OU

I've paid almost \$100 for some of my books.

Roshanda Walker
—Oakland University student

students rated the price of textbooks as the top issue in a survey conducted as part of the 1997 University Student Congress.

"I've paid almost \$100 for some of my books," OU technical engineering student Roshanda Walker said. "I've also paid between \$30 and \$40 for some books and never even taken them out of the wrappers. It's robbery."

Several students said because of the high book prices they are forced to photocopy textbooks or borrow them from friends to save money.

"The cost of higher education is often a roadblock for students and buying textbooks should not add to that burden," said state Rep. Deborah Cherry, D-Burton, chairwoman of the House Colleges and Universities Committee. "Students may take fewer classes to save money or simply not buy the book. Our students should not have to shortchange their academic careers in order for publishers and bookstores to make a few dollars."

The House Committee plans to conduct one last hearing before its members vote on the proposed bill in late April or early May.

County parks looking for summer help

If you're a "people person" looking for outdoor work in a fun environment, Oakland County Parks need you. With more than 5,600 acres featuring 11 parks, including four golf courses, two campgrounds and two waterparks, the park system employs more than 400 part-time employees every summer.

"It's a fun place to work, meet people, make friends, and if you do a good job there's a good

chance we'll hire you back next year," Chief of Recreation, Sue Wells Delridge, said.

Competitive wages start at \$6.54-\$8.95 per hour; pay rates have been increased from last year. The jobs offer opportunities to develop leadership and customer service skills. The positions are team-focused and directed by professionally trained staff.

Lifeguard (\$7.58-\$8.76/hour) assist swimmers, teach lessons

and enforce safety rules. Seasonal program specialist (\$8.95-\$12.36/hour) are facility managers or coordinate specialized recreation activities such as puppet shows or musical performance. Program leaders (\$7.05-\$8.12/hour) coordinate activities with guests and plan special events and programs. Attendants \$6.54-\$7.76/hour greet visitors, answer questions and take reservations. Laborers \$7.20-\$7.58/hour perform gen-

eral maintenance including mowing.

Other opportunities include planning/engineering and accounting/programming positions.

Applications are currently being accepted.

Contact the Oakland County Personnel Department at (248) 858-0530 or Oakland County Parks at (248) 858-0906 for applications.

Land development workshop is scheduled

Randall Arendt, an internationally recognized advocate for conservation development and author of several books on community planning, will be the keynote speaker at a workshop on alternative land development methods from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, March 27 at the Heather Highlands Golf Club in Holly.

Vice president for conservation planning with Natural Land Trust located in Media, Penn.,

Arendt's presentation will focus on proven methods for creating more livable communities through conservation planning. His designs for open space subdivisions have been praised by various planning and development officials throughout the world.

The golf course is located at 11450, East Holly Road.

To register, call (248) 858-5442. There is a \$25 registration fee.

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