

How To Balance 1968-9 Budget

College Trustees Face Problem

Budget problems faced Schoolcraft College's Board of Trustees last Wednesday as they met in regular session to find solutions to two problems: "Establishing a large cash reserve in the operating budget, and item the recent accreditation team had urged; and, "Balancing a record \$3.4 million budget—some \$700,000 under what staff leaders had asked to run the college's program next year.

On the first matter, members of the accreditation team had criticized the school for having a low operating cash balance.

TRUSTEE SAM HUDSON asked to have them placed on the agenda, and said he "took exception to the way money was gathered from other accounts" to meet day to day obligations. Board Chairman Harold Fletcher echoed these comments:

"It is our responsibility to those who have contracts with us that we operate this college in such a way that when pay checks are due we can meet them."

The discussion began over the college's contingency fund, but Kenneth Lindner, Schoolcraft's financial chief, steered discussion into another area. The contingency fund was for "emergency" use, and should not be confused with actually improving the college's financial cash position.

Lindner told the trustees there was an important need to reduce the college's tax anticipation borrowing—getting loans on uncollected taxes—and to eliminate borrowing from other funds.

"We need to do three things," Lindner said, obviously prepared for the board's questions: "One, establish and maintain an operating reserve—money to meet current bills. Second, build up an equipment replacement reserve, and a program and policy to go with it. Third, we must fund the special contracts we negotiate."

None of this can be on a contingency or emergency basis, Lindner insisted. Lindner also said seven to ten per cent

of the budget would make adequate reserve. Another method, college officials feel, might be to establish a fund large enough to meet one month's bills for operating the college.

LINDNER ALSO MADE it quite clear next year's budget offered little hope of improving the college's tight cash problem.

"There are two solutions. One, increase revenues in excess of expenditures through a tax or tuition hike. The second, obviously, is to lower expenditures below revenue."

The board agreed to study the problem when it takes up the budget on April 10.

Mrs. Jane Moehle had said earlier she felt the college was in a unique position because of the right of public employees to bargain. "The accreditation team told us Michigan was unique with the Michelson act."

Turning to the new budget, the board learned from Lindner that faculty and staff budget requests had totaled \$4.1 million, but that the administration "was presenting a balanced budget," totaling \$3.4 million.

That, Lindner was quick to point out, meant the operation funds of the college for next year need to be cut \$700,000. Reaction from two board members—Mrs. Moehle and Hudson—sparked a short debate.

"I don't want to second-guess

the administration on what should be cut," Hudson said.

BUT MRS. MOEHLE said that she felt the board needed to take a more active role in the budget.

"These kinds of budget cuts come in the area of policy and

I think we have to assume responsibility for them," she said. She criticized the board for its past lack of interest in the budget and said study sessions were called a "whim." "The administration doesn't feel we have given them enough direction," she concluded.

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