

Glen Oaks Community College deals with rapid growth

Dr. Gary Wheeler, President of Glen Oaks Community College, reported to the Board of Trustees on Wednesday, "If our rapid growth in student numbers continues we may have to take a look at a number of factors going forward." He said the college is currently maximizing classes and trying not to hire too many instructors because of problems later if student numbers level off. Dr. Wheeler agreed when Board member Pat Haas noted, "As long as unemployment remains high we are going to see this kind of growth...and I see this going on for at least another year, but we don't have a crystal ball either."

Dr. Wheeler said the jump from 1300 to 1700 students has strained all sectors of the college, the faculty and the Student Services department. He said, however, he is "reluctant" to increase tuition. "We want to make sure we are affordable. We want to be able to help the underserved in our district with a better education and future," said Dr. Wheeler.

Marilyn Wieschowski, CPA, Chief Operating Officer, presented a financial report noting the college revenues year-to-date are \$8.8 million, which represents 81 percent of the annual budget. This revenue rate as a percentage of budget is approximately five percent higher than last year's revenue rate at this time. Expenses year-to-date were \$8.2 million, which represented 76 percent of the annual budget. The increase in net assets is approximately \$329,000 lower than last year. Wieschowski said the college is 75 percent through fiscal year 2010.

Wieschowski said payroll and fringe benefit expenses were \$6.2 million through March 2010. This was \$1.1 million higher than last year at this time, due to raises in July 2009, increases in benefit costs, and due to FY2010 faculty wages being expensed when earned, not when paid. She said recording salaries and benefits in this manner gives a more accurate monthly year-to-date fund balance. Total budgeted payroll related expenses represent 75 percent of the total budgeted general fund expenses. She said the college got a break this year due to a mild winter. "Utilities and insurance showed a 59 percent spending rate through March as compared to budget. This is lower than last year's spending rate at the same time. Milder weather has helped in reducing the utilities cost through March," Wieschowski noted.

The financial report noted maintenance and repair expenses through March were 74 percent of the annual budget, or a higher spending rate than last year at this time. It was noted this is due to outsourcing the Datatel system monthly updates allowing the IT staff to address internal modifications and revisions.

Nick Milliman, Director of Buildings and Grounds, added that contract work with Honeywell on updating of lighting and heating/air conditioning has started, along with repair and updating the sewer lines along the main drive through the college. He said considerable savings are expected in lighting when all hallways and classrooms are completed in June.

Wieschowski's proposed budget for fiscal year 2011 forecasts a rise in expenses from \$10,972,300 to \$11,287,351.

The Board was provided for consideration a proposed tuition increase for 2010-2011 of 3.9 percent for resident in-district, service area and out-of-district/international students. No action was taken on the proposal which would increase tuition for a full-time in-district student from \$2,790 to \$2,948, or an impact of \$158 per year. At the same time, the impact of the increase is expected to be lessened by financial aid and payment plan options. The revenue generated, if approved by the Board, would capture another \$353,797 for the budget. "Glen Oaks Community College is, and still will be, the most affordable option for those living in our area. We will seek external funding whenever possible, seek student opinion on college costs, and employ data analysis in decisions affecting students and their learning success," said Dr. Wheeler.