

## Glen Oaks Board agrees to modest tuition increase

**CENTREVILLE---**The Glen Oaks Board of Trustees passed a \$5.00 per contact hour tuition increase, or 6.3 percent, for in-district students beginning with the Fall 2011 semester. At the April 13 morning meeting, Dr. Gary Wheeler said the college gains its revenue from three primary sources and two (taxes and Federal/State education funds) don't reflect enrollment increase, and "we are faced with the expectation of lower payments from these sources while costs for employee benefits/insurance rise as much as 26 percent." Resident In-District tuition increases from \$80.00 to \$85.00 per contact hour. Service Area tuition increases from \$120.00 to \$128.00 per contact hour. Out-of-District/International Student tuition increases from \$150.00 to \$160.00 per contact hour. The change means an average increase of \$200 for most students at the college.

Dr. Wheeler said negotiations continue with faculty and staff, however Glen Oaks must meet the challenge of providing quality instruction and training to meet higher education and workforce development. Pat Haas, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, said, "It is unfortunate that we have to make this increase but the way things are going we have to make the decision." Based on a list of comparable Michigan community colleges, Glen Oaks is in the lower quartile among the schools for tuition and fee costs. Dr. Wheeler said Glen Oaks remains a bargain, even with the increase, compared to area colleges and universities.

The Treasurer's Report presented by Marilyn Wieschowski, Chief Operations Officer, said total revenues year-to-date were \$8.7 million, representing 75 percent of the annual budget. The revenue rate, as a percentage of budget, was about 6 percent lower than last year's revenue rate at this time. Expenses year-to-date were \$8.2 million, representing 71 percent of the annual budget. She said both tuition revenue and fees were down, reflecting a 7 percent decline in tuition that included a drop in Michigan's No Worker Left Behind program through Michigan Works.

In other business:

- The Board was introduced to Dr. Margaret Hale-Smith, the new Dean of Students. Dr. Hale-Smith replaces Dr. Dennis McCarthy who retired after over 30 years service. Dr. Hale-Smith earned a BA, MA, and Ph.D. at Michigan State University. She has held leadership roles at Baker College of Flint, Lake Michigan College, Lansing Community College, and Michigan State University. She was most recently a partner in the Stratus Group Consultants, Inc. The new Dean of the College selected Sturgis as her new residence.
- The Board heard comments from Dr. Wheeler and Wieschowski concerning the possible addition of a security officer at Glen Oaks Community College. Dr. Wheeler said faculty and others have expressed alarm over several student and non-student incidents, as well as increasing news of confrontations at colleges nationwide. "There is some anxiety about the time it would take a law officer to reach our campus. We know this is certainly not a time to be adding staff, but this issue raises concern," said Dr. Wheeler. Chairman Haas agreed, saying, "Actually I've been reading about these incidents at other colleges and thinking about our situation at Glen Oaks. We need to look into this, get some costs put together and report back to the Board."
- The Board discussed the recent Trine University proposal made to St. Joseph County Commissioners to invest about \$7 million in matching funds for renovating buildings and enhancing programming of Trine University's Angola campus. Dr. Wheeler said his meetings have led him to feel "it is not clear how this would work. I am not saying it is a bad idea for the county and I know that communities with ties to a university tend to weather economic downturns better. I will keep the Board apprised of what I learn as we go forward."