

Glen Oaks Trustees foresee challenging times ahead

CENTREVILLE---Glen Oaks Community College expects some rough financial water ahead as they navigate the rapids of coming Michigan legislation. In their Wednesday, May 11 morning meeting, Dr. Gary Wheeler, President, said the college's Fiscal Priorities Committee is discussing areas where money can be saved.

"The bill passed by the House calls for a 15 percent reduction in state education aid to community colleges. The final Senate version may be less, perhaps seven percent? If it remains at 15 percent we are looking at a \$360,000 loss in education funding. At Glen Oaks, 78 percent of our college budget is in personnel related costs. And many categories of spending are things we can't take money from without harming quality education. So we are holding off on any faculty and employee union negotiations until we know more from the State of Michigan," said Dr. Wheeler, adding that health insurance is a major part of the equation, so discussion includes encouraging employee groups to consider insurance providers like the PPO now used by administrators.

Board Chairman Pat Haas said the changes going on now are a sign of the times, "If you read newspapers at all you know that the situation (economy) has gotten worse. We (the Board) will do all we can to help. Glen Oaks Community College has had a good record of financial stability."

The Board set June 8, 2011 for a Public Hearing on the Glen Oaks Community College fiscal 2011-2012 budget. Notice of the public meeting, as part of the June 8 Board Meeting, will appear in local newspapers.

Marilyn Wieschowski, Chief Operations Officer, reported total revenues year-to-date were \$10 million, representing 87 percent of the annual college budget. This revenue rate, as a percentage of the budget, was about six percent lower than last at this time. Expenses year-to-date were \$9.2 million, representing 79 percent of the annual budget. Wieschowski said she is monitoring property tax revenue which was \$4.2 million at the end of April, or \$540,000 lower than the same time last year. On the expenses side, Wieschowski said payroll and fringe benefits are \$6.8 million through April 2011. That figure is \$226,000 lower than last year at the same time. The difference is due to increasing benefit costs and employee salary raises in July 2010, off-set by retirees and fewer part-time faculty. Payroll and benefits are 75 percent of total college expenses. As of April 2011, fringe benefits were 32 percent of the total payroll related expenses, whereas in April 2010 they were 29 percent.

In other action:

- The Board was introduced to the 2011-2012 Presidential Scholarship and Dean Scholarship recipients from area high schools. Presidential Scholarships award \$4,000 for a two year period for students maintaining a 3.5 grade point average. The Dean Scholarship awards \$2,000 for a two year period for those maintaining a 3.0 grade point average. The recipients for 2011-2012 are: Presidential Scholars Rick Hayden of Cassopolis, Kylee Schlabach of Centreville, Nicole VanderSchaaf of Three Rivers and Nicole Wilson of Three Rivers. Dean Scholars are Ryan Bowen of Sturgis, Breanna Eveland of White Pigeon, Madason O'Connor of White Pigeon, Kaitlyn Vrydaghs of Constantine, Trista Bernheisel of Colon, Megan Delp of White Pigeon, and Alex Wells of Colon.
- The Board will receive a report from Dr. Wheeler in June on possible changes to the Tuition Waiver guidelines for senior citizens attending classes at Glen Oaks. The present policy has been in place since the start of the college and may not accurately reflect present day costs. Some community colleges now offer discounts or reduced rates for senior citizens, some have

set the age from 60 to 65, and some make the tuition waiver on a classroom space available basis.

- The Board accepted the resignation of member David Locey. Mr. Locey has served as Treasurer for several terms and will be greatly missed. A nomination to complete his term will be made at the June meeting.
- The Board was reminded of the current remodeling of the College Bookstore. The store has been moved this summer to the Dresser Auditorium in the Business Development Center.
- The Board was informed by Dr. Wheeler that he still does not have the full details about the Trine University proposal with St. Joseph County. “I understand some changes to the original proposal have been made, but I have seen nothing in writing.”
- The Board was reminded of the graduation program at 7 p.m., Friday, May 13 in the gymnasium, as well as nurses pinning ceremony at 10 a.m. Saturday, May 14 in the gymnasium and medical assistant’s ceremony Saturday afternoon in the Nora Hagen Theater.