

Glen Oaks Community College building improvements reported

CENTREVILLE---At their January 12 meeting, Glen Oaks Community College Trustees heard a report from Nick Milliman, Director of Buildings and Grounds, saying the Honeywell energy-improvement projects completed in 2010 are going well and rebates of \$30,000 for lighting and boiler improvements are expected. Milliman said his department expects to begin a remodeling of the College Bookstore after graduation in May. The work will be completed in part by college maintenance employees and continue through July. Plans include a revamped bookstore incorporating “more of a mall store look” with large glass windows, said Milliman. The area will include new offices for the bookkeeping and accounting functions.

Marilyn Wieschowski, Chief Operations Officer, said the College Bookstore is one of the few “profit centers” for the college, “We forecast the changes to the store will result in as much as one-third more business for the college.” Wieschowski also provided the Treasurers Report showing present college revenues at \$5.6 million, which represents 48 percent of the annual budget. The revenue rate was approximately four percent lower than last year’s revenue at this time. Expenses are \$5.4 million, which represents 46 percent of the annual budget.

Dr. Gary Wheeler, President, spoke to the Trustees about the cost of college and the value of college. He said the cost of college is rising about six percent a year, at some points even faster than overall health care spending. In the next decade, as states cut financing for public schools, tuition at public four-and two-year schools are projected to rise even faster than they have in the last few decades. Using published charts, Dr. Wheeler illustrated that college costs are rising faster than either inflation or middle class wages, yet the value of college has never been clearer. An Education Pays chart demonstrated: If you want to earn more, learn more. Between 1973 and 2007, real wages fell 15 percent for non-high school graduates; stayed flat for high school graduates and workers with “some college”; and rose 18 percent for both college graduates and advanced degree graduates. Dr. Wheeler shared information saying, “In the last 30 years, technology and globalization have commoditized lower-middle class jobs. Technology ate into manufacturing work that could be done by robots, while globalization nibbled into menial service jobs that could be done by cheaper countries...The bottom and middle floors of the labor market aren’t as plush as they used to be, so workers need education to ride to the higher stories. And there’s the Catch-22. Although getting to the elevator has never been more important, getting a college degree has become more expensive after 30 years of flat wages falling behind education inflation.”

As Glen Oaks Community College looks at the possibility of a smaller tuition hike in 2011, Dr. Wheeler reminded the Board that Glen Oaks is consistently lower in tuition than most area community colleges. “We need to ensure that any tuition increase preserves the student’s access to an affordable high-quality education,” he said.

Wieschowski outlined possible tuition and fee increases but said the recommendation is for the lowest formula which provides for a 6.3 percent per contact hour increase, raising the resident/in district rate from \$80 to \$85. Dr. Wheeler felt the five dollar increase would be less of an impact on students and families. Some fees would increase by one dollar. “Increasing tuition is always a tough issue. We are not tying any increases to construction or remodeling. We are simply trying to maintain a high quality education with the latest technology, services, and personnel,” said Dr. Wheeler. Close to 77 percent of the college’s budget expenses are personnel related. The Board of Trustees expects to review the tuition and fee increase recommendations and make a decision at the March meeting.

In other action, the Trustees:

- Learned that the Dean of Students hiring committee interviewed five candidates and will bring two individuals to campus for further interviews. Dr. Bart Lerner, who has experience as a campus president with Argosy University, will visit from Phoenix, AZ on January 24th. Dr. Margaret Hale Smith, who has leadership experience with several Michigan community colleges, will visit from Jackson on January 25th.
- Learned of the resignation of Cynthia Copney, Director of the Upward Bound program. Ms. Copney has accepted a position as Associate Professor/Director of Student Support Services at Shepherdstown University in West Virginia.
- Learned that Glen Oaks Community College is exploring the possibility of a Early Middle College program for formalized college classes for dual enrollment students. College leaders joined other local educators in a visit to Mott Community College with an embedded early middle college program. “This is just a concept we are looking at and exploring,” explained Dr. Ana Gaillat, Dean of the College. Some early findings indicate students increase academic performance and achieve a degree under the model. Pat Haas, Chairman, added, “The dual enrollment opportunity is a great one for high school students. They can really receive a ‘jump’ with the classes no matter where they attend college.”