

Community colleges

Chance of big cuts from state level on rise

By J. Dana Haynes
Of The Print

After nearly a month of fighting, the special session of Oregon's congress is no nearer balancing the state budget than ever. And according to Karen Prouty, Community Colleges of Oregon Student Associations and Commissions lobbyist, the fate of the 13 colleges is now worse than ever.

Last week, the legislation voted down a proposed income tax surcharge by a margin of 26-34; a move that almost assures a decisive cut to the colleges, according to Prouty.

"I think there will definitely be cuts, anywhere from 10 to 15 percent," she said.

In early January, Governor Vic Atiyeh's proposal to slash community colleges by 11 percent prompted a rally on the steps of the capitol building that drew more than 1,000 students from all over the state.

"Clackamas Community could withstand major cuts, but we're one of only three schools that could," Prouty said.

Of the 13 schools, Clackamas is rated number two on monetary stability. Clatsop County Community, in Astoria, is number one, thanks

to a \$1.7 million carry-over from their 1980-81 budget.

On the other end of the spectrum is Southwestern Oregon Community in Coos Bay, Treasure Valley Community in Ontario, and Chemeketa in Salem. These three schools are in dire financial straits, even without any budget cuts.

Chemeketa's problems stem from problems in Marion County, explained Doug Moxley, vice president of that school's student government.

"Chemeketa has a large campus and enrollment, but the county's recent fiscal crisis left us with an unexpected debt of \$600,000," Moxley said. "A major budget cut on top of that would hurt us a lot."

It is estimated by CCOSAC that Chemeketa would lose up to 50 full-time faculty positions if the legislature goes through with the cuts.

The defeat of the tax surcharge represents a subtle change in the legislature's attitude toward the community colleges, Prouty suggested. "We're losing our support down there," she said.

The Democratic Party has been primarily behind the colleges and in favor of the sur-

charge. In last Wednesday's session, seven democrats voted against the surcharge.

Leading the opposition against the colleges is Rep. Vera Katz.

"Katz doesn't believe in 'hobby' or self-improvement classes," Prouty said. "She wants the community colleges to teach the basics."

Katz is co-chairperson of the House Ways and Means

Committee, and is considered to be a highly influential person in Salem. "She's not so influential; she's just loud," Prouty said.

However, the colleges still have considerable support in the government. Those who have spoken out in favor of leaving the colleges' budgets untouched include representatives Barbara Roberts, Fred Heard, Joyce Cohen, Mary

Burrows and Darlene Hooley, who is the representative for this College's district. With the exception of Burrows, the above mentioned are all Democrats.

The special session was called to eradicate Oregon's deficit. According to the state constitution, it is illegal to maintain deficit spending. How long it will take to pare down the budget is unknown.

Financial Aid plans workshop on forms for next Tuesday

A workshop for completion of Financial Aid forms will be held Feb. 16 at 9 a.m. and Feb. 24 at 3 p.m. Both sessions will be held in CC 101.

Kathy Scheer, financial aid specialist, will explain how to properly fill out financial aid applications. The workshop is open to all interested students filing for assistance.

El Donna Pruitt said, "Financial aid applications are not as easy as one might expect."

She said, "The workshop will show applicants how to avoid making errors in filling out the form.

"Errors can add weeks on to your getting the news about your eligibility."

It is important to get the financial aid forms in early this year. "There is less financial aid to be allotted than last year, and it is first come first served in financial aid," Pruitt said.



Staff Photo by Duffy Coffman

BREAKING SOIL, Bob Coon prepares the sidewalk between the Tri Met bus stop shelter and the Community Center exit.



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Page 4



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Page 6