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College budget allows for expansion

By John L. Guerra Citizen Staff

Despite the national economic crisis and statewide budget cuts, Florida Keys Community College will receive an almost 5 percent funding increase it plans to use to expand staff, programs and capital projects.

Federal stimulus money and revenue from having more students helped boost the budget by \$433,000, to \$9.68 million this year from \$9.25 million last year. The college received \$479,262 in stimulus funds and projects an additional \$429,154 in tuition and student fees, to \$2.99 million from \$2.56 million.

Board Chairman Ed Scales said he thinks a projected 6 percent enrollment increase is too high.

"But I also questioned last year's predictions, which was 3 percent enrollment increase, and the state says the college enrollment increased 18 percent," he said.

The revenue boost was curtailed by other declines, such as decreasing property values, leaving the amount the state spends per student down from last year, to \$2,859 from \$4,115.

The budget would increase funding for personnel to almost \$6.6 million from \$6.33 million; operations to almost \$3 million from \$2.35 million; and capital projects to \$99,114 from \$78,385.

The board of trustees is expected to vote on the budget at its June 29 meeting, after getting a preliminary glimpse of it at a meeting on Monday.

More staff, classes

A salary increase of 4 percent, totaling \$191,000, is proposed for teachers and support staff. The college plans to hire four new full- and part-time faculty and six academic support positions to restore previous cuts, and create new positions for a dean of arts and sciences, executive director of accreditation, and executive director of student services.

The college plans to increase its number of classes available at the Marathon and Coral Shores facilities, and offer new diving certificates, including diving business and technology, commercial/work diving, fundamentals of professional diving, pro dive instructor, diving medical tech and research diving.

Continuing the expansion of the college's degree and certification offerings is one goal of the budget, which also includes funding for initiatives to bring the college more on par with other schools, such as reviewing enrollment procedures to remove roadblocks to students trying to navigate their way into the system. The college also wants to make it easier for students to apply for and win state and federal scholarships and grants. The budget includes funding to take over the troubled adult education classes from the Monroe County school district, including General Equivalency Degree and English for Speakers of Other Languages. However, the School Board recently said it plans to keep the programs, confident that new Coordinator Jeff Arnott is making the needed reforms. His predecessor, Monique Acevedo, was charged with stealing money from the program.

College President Jill Landesberg-Boyle wants to improve the electronic capability of the information technology on campus. The budget includes increasing the number of forms that can be filled out online and creating student e-mail accounts. The college also wants to enable faculty and staff e-mail access from off-campus and upgrade the system's e-mail calendar function so each party can see the other's schedule.

Capital projects



Stephania Riche, Fourth grade, Gerald Adams Elementary School

WEATHER FORECAST

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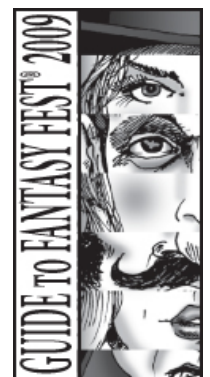
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The biggest capital project will be a \$4 million Marine Sciences Building, on which the college will break ground later this year. The new building will allow the department to modernize its program.

The college has budgeted \$250,000 for a new main entrance and plans to dredge the lagoon the dive program uses.

The student dormitories project is listed in the preliminary budget as a local jobs-creator, but the funding is not part of the budget because the college is not allowed to spend public money on it.

Two companies, Coastal Construction Co. and Student Suites, described their bids to the trustees on Wednesday. Student Suites proposed partnering with Hayes/Cumming Architects and Biltmore Construction to build the dorms and operate them independently of the college, but wanted the college to raise the \$8.3 million for the project. Coastal Construction has been invited back to talk more about its proposal.

"The successful candidate will design, finance, build and operate the dorms," Scales said. "The college 'gets paid' through increased enrollment" because providing housing through Coastal's dorms potentially would draw more students and thus more state community college funding.

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If the College has more funding, then it's time the Adult Ed
Submitted on Fri, 06/05/2009 - 7:35am

Program (costmetology, etc) is moved to the Community College. They will provide teachers, supplies at no cost to the School District because they have the money. Get on board, Acevedo and the School Board and give up some of that power you so dearly hang on to. Do something right for a change.

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