RCC balances budget without tuition increase

Rogue Community College will hold the line on tuition next year with no new tuition or fee increases.

During its first meeting of the year, the RCC Budget Committee reviewed the 2014-15 general fund budget, proposed at $40 million. The general fund covers general operations and accounts for the majority of financial resources and expenditures. Principal sources of revenue include tuition, property taxes, and state funding from the state community college support

RCC’s budget is based on Gov. Kitzhaber’s proposed Community College Support Fund (CCSF) appropriation of $465 million for all of Oregon’s 17 community colleges, of which RCC is expected to receive approximately $8,356,163. That accounts for less than 21 percent of the general fund.

The RCC Board voted in March to keep tuition and fees flat in 2014-15 in response to the Oregon Legislature’s 2013 “Grand Bargain,” which allocated an additional $15 million to the CCSF, bringing the total investment to $465 million for the 2013-15 biennium.

“While this increase was welcomed and very much appreciated,” said RCC President Peter Angstadt, “it still does not restore the CCSF to its 2008 funding level, leaving the college without sufficient resources to ensure its continued advancement toward the state’s 40-40-20 educational attainment goals.”

The Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 253 in 2011, which revised the mission of higher education to meet numerical goals by 2025: 40 percent of Oregonians will have achieved a bachelor’s degree or higher, 40 percent will have earned an associate’s degree or post-secondary credential, and 20 percent or less will have earned a high school diploma or equivalent.

“Regardless of this challenge, the college is committed to student access and success and will continue identifying internal efficiencies and improvements,” Angstadt added.

In 2014-15, the property taxes RCC receives are projected to increase 1 percent or $112,928 over 2013-14, while tuition revenue is expected to decrease 4 percent in accordance with a similar projected decrease in enrollment.

“Over the past few years, RCC has experienced a gradual reduction in full-time equivalent enrollments,” explained Lisa Stanton, RCC budget and chief financial officers.

Revenue from taxes is projected at $11.4 million, about 28 percent of the budget, while tuition and fees are estimated at $14 million or about 35 percent of the budget. The general fund budget includes a $1.3 million transfer from the College Services fund and a beginning fund balance of approximately $4.3 million.

Expenditures are up slightly: 1 percent for personnel and 4 percent for materials and services.

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