

Cabrillo board approves layoffs

By GUY LASNIER

The fiscal ax fell at Cabrillo College Monday afternoon, leaving several academic and sports programs to be reduced or eliminated next fall.

The governing board, expressing its regrets, voted 6-1 to approve President John Petersen's recommendation to cut 14.3 full-time faculty positions beginning with the fall semester. Layoff notices will go out beginning today.

The number of individuals losing their jobs will be considerably greater than 14 because, according to law, part-time teachers must be let go before full-time tenured faculty. And several of the programs cut use part-timers.

In addition, 13 teachers have chosen to retire early which means that at least 28 fewer full-time teachers will be teaching when Cabrillo opens on Aug. 29. A total of 35 to 40 teachers, both full-time and part-time, could lose their jobs.

The entire construction and drafting departments will be eliminated including four full-time teachers, and nine part-timers.

Seven intercollegiate sports programs, half of what the college offers, will not be available next school year. An art history teacher, one drama teacher, one teacher each from dental assisting and dental hygiene; a German teacher; a health sciences teacher; an anthropology teacher; and a replacement dance teacher have been cut from the budget. The intake counselor at the stroke center has been eliminated as has the entire adaptive food service program, which trains handicapped persons in culinary arts.

The laid off tenured teachers will retain rights for 39 months to be rehired.

An overflow crowd of teachers and students jammed Cabrillo's Sesnon House as the governing board considered Petersen's recommendations. Several persons pleaded with the board to spare particular programs and teachers. Each plea was greeted with rousing cheers and applause from the audience.

Several persons stood at the rear of the room with signs proclaiming "Save Wilma" referring to Wilma Marcus, a Cabrillo drama instructor since 1978. The women's basketball team watched from the lobby.

Petersen recommended the

layoffs as part of a plan to cut \$1.2 million in expenses from Cabrillo's 1983-84 budget based on the assumption that the college will receive the same amount of state funding next school year as it received this year.

The layoffs are expected to save \$800,000. Other cuts are planned in classified staff and administration. Petersen said one-half of an administration position will be cut.

"The \$1.2 million cut is to just stay even," Petersen said. "There are no cost-of-living increases planned next year."

Petersen blamed California voters for Cabrillo's predicament, beginning with Proposition 13 in 1978 and continuing with negative votes last November on state inheritance taxes and income indexing that cut potential state funds.

"We are dealing with not just a decline of the economy but also a decline of the will of the public to support the public sector," Petersen said, his voice rising in anger. "Those on whom we have depended have not been too dependable of late," he said.

He said it was ironic that the cuts are coming at a time of unprecedented demand on college programs and called the cuts heartbreaking and an erosion of opportunity for the community. Nonetheless, Petersen said the layoffs were necessary.

Several speakers, while acknowledging the need for reducing expenses, asked the board to look elsewhere to accomplish this and pledged to work for alternatives to avoid the layoffs. Trustee George Couch, who cast the only dissenting vote, asked that the board delay action for a month to allow time for consideration of alternatives.

John Pollard, an instructor in the construction technology department, suggested that the program be suspended for a year or two. "To cut back, that's one thing," he said, "but to completely drop a program..."

Other teachers and division chairmen told the board that the cuts would decimate their programs. Judy Slattum, a drama teacher, said the loss of Wilma Marcus would "crush the drama department program totally."

Peter Varcados, chairman of the social sciences division, said the loss of Tim Ruckle, the anthropologist slated to lose his job, would "reduce by 40 per-

cent the lower division anthropology courses" the department can offer. "Don't discard this person for a short-term, one semester saving," he told the board.

Ron Berry, vice president of the student senate, said he had seen a constant erosion of the college, its buildings and its programs. "Now it's people who are being affected in a very real way," he said. "And I want to know why."

H.P. Zeiler, the astronomy instructor, brought a standing ovation from the audience as tears brimmed in many eyes.

"The golden egg has been replaced by the tin cup; the goose having been dispatched at the polls a few years ago," he said. "If you are here for Phyllis Levine, stand for Wilma Marcus. If you are here for Wilma Marcus, stand for Tim Ruckle, If you are here for Tim Ruckle, stand for Christina Marx..."

"Stand for them all," he said.

Before voting against the resolution, Couch said the cuts were mild compared to what he had expected. "The results (of elections) lead me to believe the public wants more not less of what we're doing today. The only hope we have is to politicize," he said. "Send a message to Sacramento."

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Dagmar Gottlund, who has been at Cabrillo since 1970, made a plea for preservation of the German Department. She is one of 17 or 18 teachers scheduled to be laid off at Cabrillo.

Photo by Sam Vestal