

Cabrillo beefs up Mexican-American funds

Cabrillo College trustees Monday took a long, hard look at the problems of the Mexican-American student, then approved a grant application to finance a program to alleviate some of those difficulties.

Trustees gave their approval to an application for \$85,000 in state Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) funds to beef up Cabrillo's offerings for Chicanos and other students from minority groups.

John Petersen, dean of student activities, said the largest single chunk of the funds will be used as financial aid grants to students.

"If we can't give the students financial aid, we won't be able to get them here," Petersen said. The grant application seeks \$30,000 to be split into 50 students' grants of \$600 each.

Petersen and Rudy Ortega, a Cabrillo counselor, agreed that recruitment of students from the Watsonville area is not as much a problem as is providing incentive to students once they have been recruited.

They said the EOP grant would provide funds for the tutorial program, for counselors, for a coordinator and additional faculty for ethnic studies courses, and to rent an off-campus center in Watsonville.

Petersen said several courses could be taught at the Watsonville center, which might attract students who might not be attracted to the mid-county campus.

Trustee Carl Conelly asked Ortega and Manuel Osorio, a student in charge of the college tutorial program, what are some of the problems that cause Mexican-American students to drop out of high school or to fail to do well in college.

"Education isn't made very interesting to the Chicano students," Osorio said of some high school offerings. "And the student is faced with the prospect of working for the almighty dollar and often drops out of school."

Ortega told trustees that many Mexican-American youngsters aren't taught necessary skills for learning and consequently lose interest in education before they even get to high school.

He also said that there is often a wide gap between high school counselors and students and that counselors frequently fail to generate any interest in education among minority students.

Ortega also said that several Watsonville High School students, including some juniors aged 18 or 19, have come to him and asked to be accepted into Cabrillo. He said they have asked him:

"Man, how can I get out of that high school?"

Osorio told the board he feels that if the state approves the grant application, Cabrillo College will be able to keep Mexican-American students in school once they are recruited. And he said the program will also help students continue their college education into four-year institutions.

In answer to a question from Conelly, Ortega said the ethnic studies programs aren't designed exclusively for minority students.

"For instance," he said, "the Mexican-American history course is primarily a course in the history of the American Southwest. This is a course of interest to all students."

In other business Monday Cabrillo trustees:

—Took a tour of the new Cabrillo Botanic Garden, the rhododendron and pine garden being planted near the north edge of the campus. An acre and a half of the 20-acre garden site has already been planted with rhododendrons, several of which were in bloom. Bill Nolan, Cabrillo journalism instructor who has planned and planted the garden, said most of the plants will be in bloom shortly. He said some of the rhododendrons already planted will eventually reach a height of 60 feet.

—Approved the suggestion of college president Robert Swenson that trustees, faculty, staff and student representatives get together next month to discuss alternatives for expansion of the college to meet the growing population. The May 15 meeting will be held at a retreat to allow participants to discuss the alternatives without the harassment of telephone calls and other business, Swenson said. Although trustees Ernest Dillon and Carl Conelly were skeptical about reaching a consensus at the meeting, Board Chairman Albert Rice said he felt "the interchange of ideas will help crystalize opinions and hopefully will lead to the elimination of some of the alternatives."

Armstrong, cartoonist Al Capp, newscaster David Brinkley and consumer advocate Ralph Nader are being contacted to speak on campus next year. Admission to the lecture series would be \$2 for adults, in an effort to make the series self-supporting, according to Tim Welch, dean of community services.

New York's Columbia University was chartered as King's College in 1754 by King George II of England.