

VCF CABRILLO KP 9/19/87

Cabrillo near breaking point

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Cabrillo College is getting close to the breaking point when it comes to parking and funding, college President Robert Agrella said yesterday.

The school's enrollment is at an all-time high, with more than 12,000 students, he said. More students on campus means more cars being crammed onto Cabrillo's limited lots, Agrella said at a meeting in Santa Cruz of the Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business (COLAB).

On the surface, it may appear that increased enrollment would mean more income for the college, but that's not the case. Three-quarters of the students are enrolled part-time, and since the state bases its payments to community colleges on class attendance, it takes several part-time students to bring in the state funding that would come with a full-time student.

More people need more services and bring more cars that

need parking, and that hasn't been matched by an increase in state funding.

Agrella also lamented the fact the Cabrillo receives one of the smallest payments per student of any community college in the state, because the payments are based on the college's tax level at the time Proposition 13 was passed.

Cabrillo officials and students are concerned about proposed cuts in federal financial aid to students, Agrella said. The aid may be cut almost in half, he said, which would mean \$500,000 less available to Cabrillo students.

The amount spent on personnel costs at Cabrillo is "dangerously high," Agrella said — 84 percent of the budget goes to salaries and benefits. Part of the reason for the high percentage, he explained, is that 70 percent of the Cabrillo faculty are employed full time. Full-time instructors are more expensive to the college than part-time instructors.

When personnel expenses reach the 87-to-90 percent

range, he said, an institution is all but paralyzed in terms of making changes or doing anything new.

"I'd like to see it at 70 percent," he said, "but unless we get a funding change, I can only see it going higher."

Despite the funding problems, Agrella said Cabrillo has maintained an outstanding record, particularly when it comes to preparing students to transfer to four-year colleges and universities.

Agrella also reported yesterday on the success of the Watsonville center opened at La Manzana last month. With enrollment of 525 students, the center has proven far more attractive to students than college officials had expected.

The success in Watsonville has led Cabrillo officials to think about someday opening a similar center in the San Lorenzo Valley, Agrella said. Like Watsonville, the San Lorenzo Valley is a population center that Cabrillo could best serve by offering local classes, he said.