

# Cabrillo frustrated by FEMA's red tape

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The Federal Emergency Management Agency has agreed to pay for only a fraction of the earthquake damage at Cabrillo College, the college board of trustees was told last night, and at the same time is applying pressure for the college to buy earthquake insurance.

John Roberts, the college's vice president in charge of business, told the board that FEMA inspectors had filed 47 reports of damage to the college, totalling \$2.8 million in repairs.

Of those, he said, 25 have been approved, for a value of \$290,000.

Meanwhile, the college's own inspectors estimate the damage from the Oct. 17 earthquake at between \$6 million and \$7 million.

Roberts said the major point of disagreement is the estimate of costs to remove asbestos ceilings in the college and replace them with new ceilings. FEMA says \$2 million will do the job; Cabrillo says it will take no less than \$5 million.

Another point of contention is the Sesnon House, the old mansion on campus, which was being used before the quake for administrative offices and non-profit arts and charity organizations.

The college considered the Sesnon House safe until the earthquake, when safety officials said the quake had revealed that it would need structural repairs in order to be usable. FEMA, however, has said it will pay only for what Roberts calls "patch and plaster jobs" to restore it to its pre-quake state.

Cabrillo estimates it needs more than \$1 million to restore the mansion, but FEMA has said it will pay only \$56,000.

Nor would FEMA likely pay for the demolition and removal of the building, because it doesn't figure the damage equals more than 50 percent of its worth.

The college expects to appeal the agency's decisions on both the Sesnon House and the asbestos removal.

"We feel we have a sound basis for all our claims," Roberts said. "These are not frivolous things."

Another snag Roberts has run into, he reported, is that FEMA has said it will suspend funding all repairs that cost more than \$10,000 unless the college makes a commitment to buy earthquake

insurance or gets the state to verify in writing that earthquake insurance is "not reasonably available."

Earthquake insurance covering up to \$5 million in damage, Roberts told the board in answer to their questioning, would probably cost Cabrillo about \$57,000 a year.

The college has applied for the required state verification, and is waiting for a response.

Roberts reported that the college had run into FEMA red tape elsewhere as well. Following FEMA instructions, for example, Cabrillo submitted time cards and payroll records detailing labor costs for cleanup after the quake. The amount was \$66,000. FEMA has said it will decide what the value of the cleanup work was, regardless of how much Cabrillo paid for it. FEMA's estimate: \$20,000.

In other matters last night, the board:

- Voted 5-0, with trustees Nancy Matlock and Helen Palmer absent, to lease portable buildings for the administrative offices displaced from the Sesnon House.

They voted to put the portables on a piece of land that had long been the planned spot for a non-profit center to house the Santa Cruz County Symphony, the Cabrillo Music Festival, the United Way of Santa Cruz County, and other organizations.

The other possible site was near the early childhood education and nursing program buildings. After meeting with representatives from those programs, the administration agreed that the spot should be reserved for a possible child-care center.

- Approved a five-year plan for the years 1991 to 1996.

The board voted 5-0 again to approve a list of construction priorities to submit to the California Community Colleges office. Top on the list is a \$550,000 project to remodel the campus restrooms for easier access by disabled people. Funding for the restroom renovations is already included in the governor's budget, and is almost sure to be approved.

Other projects on the list include a \$900,000 plan to remodel and expand the food service technology instructional space, which is also included in the governor's budget.

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