

NEWS

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VCC employees are being asked to find ways to improve the college's efficiency, or face substantial layoffs.

In two separate meetings Monday--first at Langara and then at the Queen Elizabeth Playhouse--all employees received the same message: the only way to soften the blow of up to 200 layoffs will be through innovative measures to reduce VCC's budget deficit. That deficit, which stood at \$2.1 million on April 1, will climb to about \$9 million by April 1, 1994 without improved efficiencies and reduction in faculty and staff. The Ministry has said that the deficit must be eliminated by April of 1995.

"We are asking employees to help find ways to reduce the costs of delivering education while continuing to serve the same number of students," said President John Cruickshank.

"The college is facing serious financial difficulties and we can no longer look to the government to solve all of them. What's needed is some creative thinking--and sacrifices--from both the unionized staff and management."

VCC Board Chair Bob Smith said the College is faced with an "intractable" problem that will see some degree of layoffs.

"We are obliged as a Board to operate this institution in such a way that the budget is balanced. It is the opinion of the Ministry that VCC has been dealt with not just generously, but over generously. There will be no bailouts.

"The Minister has said that if we don't produce FTEs (for which the College is funded)

then those FTEs will be transferred to institutions in the Lower Mainland that have excess capacity. He has made it very clear that fiscal goals are not to be achieved at the expense of students and that he has the full support of the cabinet in his position."

Smith added that Perry has promised to terminate the appointments of the board members and appoint a trustee if measures are not taken to eliminate the deficit.

The meetings were told that the deficit is growing by \$575,000 per month, and that ownership of the projected \$9 million total deficit would be assigned equally to the new VCC and the soon-to-be Langara College. (Acting Langara CEO Linda Holmes said that Langara will appeal that division of the deficit).

In the event that other measures to reduce costs can't be accomplished, the worst case scenario for the loss of jobs is as follows (all losses in Full-Time Equivalents):

City Centre

33	VCCFA jobs
7	VMREU/Admin. jobs

KEC

37.5-40	VCCFA jobs
24	VCCFA people not hired
10-12	VMREU/Admin. jobs

Langara

39.5	LFA jobs
16.5	LFA temporary jobs
4	non-replacements
9	VMREU jobs

Continued on the other side...



College Resources

7-18	Jobs
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Continuing Education

2	Administrators' jobs
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There is also expected to be a net reduction in Administrative Services resulting from Langara's separation. International Education will see a "rationalization"--or reduction--of services to visiting students.

In total, the worst case scenario could affect over 2,000 student FTEs.

A critical factor in reducing the deficit--i.e., whether the government will pick up severance costs--is still unclear, although Perry seems to have left the door open to some level of relief. In a June 10 letter, Perry wrote: "I would be prepared to review a request should there be cause for considering some exceptional circumstances related to severance."

In the same letter, Perry reiterated that only an additional \$850,000 to the base budget would be available for "covering the administrative costs of (Langara's) separation." This amount would provide for only a partial separation of VCC-Langara on April 1, 1994.

The College received a further setback last week when the Ministry disallowed a 125 per cent multiplier in counting student contact hours. The extra percentage was used to reflect non-assigned, unscheduled time that instructors work in ABE and ESL programs.

Several short and long-term measures for reducing the deficit were presented to the meetings.

One suggestion from Cruickshank calls for all employees to work without pay for two

weeks this year and next. Requiring employees to pay for parking is another short-term recommendation.

Cruickshank also called for increased service delivery to the College by instructional programs. This may include the Culinary Arts Program operating the KEC cafeteria, the Building Services Program undertaking janitorial services or the Graphics and Printing Production Programs handling the College's printing needs.

Examples of long-term solutions were:

- * Reduce instructional delivery costs through such measures as less release or professional development time;
- * Reduce service costs; using less paper is one of potentially hundreds of small ideas that would add up;
- * Adjust the profile mix to offer more programs that tend to be better funded than others;
- * Increase space utilization to accommodate more of CE's revenue-producing classes.

The timetable for taking action is short. This week will be devoted to receiving budget-reducing ideas from employees: contact your supervisor or phone the ideas into the Exchange Line on Local 7099. On June 22, the Board's Co-ordinating Committee will meet with the Minister, and on the following day there will be a public meeting of the full Board to consider the alternatives. On the following day "consultation and notice" will begin with the unions, although ideas to reduce the impact will continue to be sought from employees.



There were complaints at both meetings directed at the government.

At Langara, Journalism Instructor Gerry Porter said Langara was being singled out for political reasons. Said Porter: "We (Langara) were the first college in B.C. to go to Victoria and rattle their chains about education. We asked them to take care of the college-wide shortfalls, which have basically been handled by Langara, and they are punishing us now.

Porter said the government has increased its education funding by 10 per cent this year and is currently "pouring million of dollars into the University of Northern B.C., which doesn't serve one student."

"This is bare-knuckled politics. I ask you (the Board) to go public and say this should not be done."

Langara Instructor Michael Sharzer criticized the 50-50 split in ownership of the deficit: "The formula does not adequately fund the ESL and vocational portion of our program mix and therefore money that would have been generated by Langara's program profile was used to support all of the programs of this College. This is not a debt that we (Langara) incurred."

At the afternoon meeting, Auto Tech Instructor Dennis O'Neill also blamed this and previous governments for being shortsighted.

"Training programs can't be treated in the same way as others. They cost more (in equipment) to operate, but those apprentices are out there 10 months of the year earning an income and paying taxes. The more this college grew, the more high cost programs it

cut. And now we can't pay for what's left. We're here to train people, not to put them out on the street to collect welfare."

Smith agreed, at least in part: "I am aghast at what the party I have supported is doing to public education. And as voters we will all do everything we feel we must. But it is clear to me that the government is not fooling around and that's the issue before us now."

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Update on Langara CEO position

Since April 1, 1993, Linda Holmes has been acting CEO at Langara, reporting to the Board. She will act in this capacity until the position has been filled. The Search and Recommendation Committee has a candidate short-list and will begin interviewing next week. The process is expected to be completed by the end of July.

If you have any comments or questions, please send them to Chuck Poulsen, Manager of The Exchange, in care of College Administrative Services.