

# NEWS

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## **Board passes reduction budget**

It's a budget that had to be written with an axe. A budget which was devastating to everyone, including those who prepared it and those who voted for it. A budget that had to eliminate the college's 1992-93 deficit and projected '93-'94 deficit through over 100 immediate layoff notices and numerous cutbacks to student services.

In the end—amid chants of "Shame! Shame! Shame!" from the 100 in attendance at City Centre—the College Board reluctantly voted 9-2 for the 1993-94 budget of \$79.5 million.

Board member Stephen Huddart expressed the "no-other-choice" exasperation of many of his colleagues: "The government means what it says," Huddart told the students, employees and others. "I believe that this Board can be far more humane in dealing with this situation than any trustee (the government would appoint)."

Board member Margo Massie, who voted against the budget along with Irene Policzer, refused to follow the Ministry's directive to make the cutbacks: "I think this government is blackmailing this community. I've heard all these threats (from the ministry) that 'if you don't do this KEC will close...we'll take all of your FTEs and give them to another college.' This government has its own agenda and they're using dirty tricks to pass this agenda." (Board member Cenen Bagon also spoke against the budget motion, but due to a previous commitment had to leave before the vote was held).

The bottom line staffing reductions are these:

**College Administrative Services**—2 FTE (2 Admin.)

**College Resources**—23.17 FTE (1 Admin, 19.17 VMREU, 1.5 LFA Term Librarians, 1.5 VCCFA/LFA on-call auxiliaries)

**Continuing Education**—2 FTE (1 Admin, 1 VMREU)

**City Centre**—40.2 FTE (26.7 VCCFA, 1 Admin., 12.5 VMREU)

**King Edward Campus**—58.8 FTE (44.3 VCCFA, 1 Admin., 13.5 VMREU... 30.5 VCCFA non-hired)

**Langara**—17.6 FTE (14.6 LFA, 3 VMREU)

The Board also passed two amendments to the budget motion. One called for a 50 per cent reduction in materials and laundry fees at City Centre, to be offset by increased revenues from evening parking at City Centre and KEC.

The second amendment called for administration to continue discussions with the VCCFA regarding productivity improvements. The amendment, in part, read: "...administration to continue with the bi-partite Enhanced Program Delivery Committee, and subsequent to the outcome of this process, to prepare such amendments to this budget for the Board's consideration no later than the October meeting. These amendments will consider tuition and other fee changes as well as a review, with the Ministry, of the period for deficit repayment and

a review of the allocation of resources among campuses and divisions.”

VCCFA spokesman Frank Cosco asked the Board to delay passing the budget until the productivity issues can be resolved.

“We are prepared to make concessions,” said Cosco. “Don’t use the big hammer to get us to knuckle under. We’re prepared to co-operate.”

Most of the speakers laid the blame with the government.

“Our members, students and the community are being used as a political football by a government that has turned its back on the people,” said VMREU Acting President Michael Carney. “Don’t knuckle under to Victoria; don’t be their pawns.”

Student leaders also told Board members to fight the government.

Michael Fergusson of the City Centre Student Association: “This government has abandoned education. If you pass this budget there won’t be much of a college left.”

Rodney DeCroo of the Langara Student Union: “You don’t understand that there are people with problems who can’t wait for a year once they’ve made this kind of decision (to attend). Meanwhile, you’re trying to kick drugs. Meanwhile, you’re trying to end an alcohol habit. Meanwhile, you’re trying to break with your former acquaintances. A lot of these people don’t get a second chance, they don’t ever come back.

“You’re talking about a human crisis here. You can’t do this.”

And Manuel Salinas of the KEC Student Association: “The people at KEC want to do something with their lives rather than a life of crime. If you take the money from the college, you’ll have to invest it in correctional services.”

There were some positive notes. President John Cruickshank suggested that the college will take a second look at trying to save the KEC Learning Centre, perhaps using funds that will be saved as the result of employee suggestions to cut costs.

And later, Fred Wyley, Vice President of Finance and Administration, pointed out that the budget begins to lay a long-term groundwork for the future success of the college.

“The lay offs are certainly devastating for those involved, but if we achieve productivity increases the budget will provide protection for our FTEs and therefore increased access to the college,” said Wyley. “What people should realize is that our target within the budget framework is to produce 400 more FTEs at KEC than we did last year. This budget has been carefully crafted to protect our future funding and therefore the very future of the college.”

The Employee Relations Department will be offering a financial and re-employment seminar to those being laid off. The purpose of the seminar is to assist individuals with the variety of financial considerations which they must address, as well as to provide them with practical guidelines for their re-employment concerns. Details will be announced as soon as they’re finalized.