

MMMC's nursing program to double in size

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When Mid Michigan Community College's Herbert D. Doan Center in Mt. Pleasant opens next spring, the school's nursing program will double in size, the school's president told Clare County commissioners on Wednesday.



CAROL
CHURCHILL

Carol Churchill also told commissioners during a regular meeting that enrollment is steadily increasing at MMCC and that the state's lagging economy is driving more people to seek training or re-training at the school, which has campuses near Mt. Pleasant and Harrison.

"Mid is obviously just right at the forefront of economic development in this area," Churchill said, adding that enrollment increased 13 percent at MMCC this year.

Once the Doan Center is open -- plans call for the building to open this spring with a few "test" classes during the winter -- MMCC will be able to offer allied health, physical therapy assistant and medical lab assistant programs, and will have a lab facility that is "desperately needed," she said.

Churchill, who was introduced by former county commissioner Julie Murphy, a financial aid advisor at MMCC, told commissioner she wanted to speak to them to open up communications between the two entities.

Churchill discussed with commissioners the increasing enrollment, how the Doan Center will impact the college and how the school is tuition-driven because voters have not supported efforts to raise the original millage from the 1960s.

"We are very, very tuition dependent because we do not have that millage support," Churchill said.

Enrollment must increase 6 percent a year just to cover payroll costs at the school, Churchill said.

While MMCC got an additional \$50,000 in appropriations from the state recently, the school relies heavily on tuition, donations and out-of-district tuition from students taking classes at the Mt. Pleasant campus.

"In district" tuition applies only to students within Clare and Gladwin counties, Churchill said, and two-thirds of the school's students pay out-of-district tuition, bringing about \$1 million.

Revenue from students taking classes at the Mt. Pleasant campus is vital for MMCC to be progressive, Churchill said.

When asked by Commissioner Don David about how the school's roughly \$17 to \$18 million budget is maintained, Churchill explained that the college is dealt a "double blow" in obtaining revenue from the state.

When formulas were developed for providing funding for community colleges, they were based partly on community support through millages, Churchill

said.

Since MMCC is still collecting roughly 1.223 mills from the original levy, the school receives less financial aid from the state than some other community colleges, Churchill said.

When asked about other revenue sources, Churchill told commissioners that MMCC is aggressive in applying for grants and has an active foundation that seeks donations for scholarships and endowments.