

Lake Michigan College's \$17 million vision

Board seeks state help in building overhaul

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BENTON TOWNSHIP — Lecture hall renovations and heating, ventilation and cooling system upgrades lead a wish list of improvements Lake Michigan College is submitting for state funding help.

LMC's Board of Trustees approved the list this week as part of a \$16.9 million capital outlay grant application. If it succeeds, LMC will have to match half the amount.

LMC President Bob Harrison said that the college's proposal is one of three being recommended

for capital grant funding.

"They (the state legislature) will have to determine what they'd like to include in a bill. They've got a joint committee that does this, so they have to go through the (Michigan) House and Senate," Harrison said.

What happens next depends on how the legislature's calendar unfolds after the November general election, Harrison said.

"They could take up a capital outlay bill at that time, or they might wait until the first of the year, when a new legislature is seated," he said.

The college had already submitted a project list, but decided to fine-tune the numbers, "for inflationary dollars," he said.

The projects chosen reflect various needs at the

Napier campus, said Anne Erdman, LMC's vice president of administrative services.

Topping the list, in dollar terms, is the \$5.4 million renovation of LMC's two large lecture halls and Student Success Center.

The halls will be gutted, "and made into two floors, as opposed to one," Erdman said. "We'll still have lecture halls – but probably a little bit smaller because we don't need quite as large a space. That will allow us to capture the space above for the Student Success Center."

Next up is a \$4.3 million upgrade of the Napier campus's heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system – plus its boilers, chiller and air handling units.

"This was the number

one measure: 'what would be a good learning environment for students?'" Erdman said. "The HVAC system falls into that bracket because it's not just a sense of comfort, but it's (also) going to be used in the classroom."

The application budgets \$2.5 million for classroom improvements, including ceilings and lighting systems – \$2.1 million of that to renovate the Learning Resource Center.

"Every classroom that has not been refurbished on the Napier campus will be redone. The faculty will be involved. They're going to be telling us, 'How do you want it to be (configured) for the kind of teaching that you do in the classroom?'" she said.

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For example, some instructors may want to focus on group discussions, which will dictate the overall setting and furniture, “based on what type of teaching they’re doing in those classrooms,” she said.

Erdman said about 50 classrooms will be refurbished.

The Learning Resource Center project will focus on combining all the college’s various support services – such as its honors and transitional studies programs – under one roof, Erdman said.

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ANNE ERDMAN
VP of admin. services



HP file photo

Lake Michigan College Napier Avenue campus in Benton Harbor March 29, 2013.

ademic levels involved together,” she said.

Other projects include \$295,734 for miscellaneous classroom improvements that don’t fall into the bigger \$2.5 million project, and \$363,359 for a full-time adjunct and faculty service center, according to LMC’s meeting information packet.

However, no construction would likely happen before 2016 because LMC will still

need approval from the governor’s office to proceed, Harrison said.

“We’d hire architects to do the design work, and work with faculty, staff and students over the changes that we’re proposing – that takes about a year,” he said.

The governor’s office would then review the final documents, “and then say, ‘OK, go ahead,’ so there’s a ways to go,” Harrison said.