Cabrillo board backs salary increase for classified employees

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APTONS — The Cabrillo College board approved a 4 percent increase in total compensation for classified employees.

The raise, which the district and the Cabrillo Classified Employee Union agreed on in July, will cost the college $135,000 in ongoing general fund allocation and a one-time expenditure of $390,000 through 2015, according to the Negotiated Agreement for 2013-15: CCEU and District.

The college employs 203 classified employees — those who work jobs in areas that don’t require teaching credentials such as student services — out of about 850 employees.

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In addition, classified employees are paying half of the 0.6 percent increase in health benefits; the district is paying the other half, said Alta Northcutt, president of the union.

“IT'S NOT NECESSARILY A GROWTH mode but a stabilized mode,” said Jill Gallo, a member of the union. “What I feel like is one of the biggest changes in contract negotiations is a decrease in the way we're being compensated.”

Still, these changes may signal sunnier days ahead, Northcutt said.

“I think it’s long overdue,” she said. “As far as morale, I think that people are finally feeling the sense of, we’ve been giving back for so long, we can finally stabilize things and see some kind of growth in our checks.”

These changes contrast with June 2012, when eight classified employee positions were eliminated or reduced. Among the eliminated employees was Stephanie Stainback, an instructional assistant and president of the college’s union.

The college employed 238 classified employees in 2012 and 254 in 2011, Northcutt said.

The June 2012 layoffs were part of the college’s attempt to trim more than $2 million from the 2011-12 budget to keep from entering 2012-13 with a roughly $5 million deficit.

The college spent nearly $44 million on salaries in 2012, compared to $45 million in 2011, according to the college’s 2012 salary database.

The college’s economic climate shifted in November with the passage of Proposition 30, which will provide Cabrillo with $700,000 in restoration funding from the state.

The $98 billion budget proposed by Gov. Jerry Brown includes $197 million for the state’s 112 community colleges.

In light of Prop. 30’s voter approval, the college also lifted a hiring freeze for the 2013-14 school year and added nine new faculty positions.

“Prop. 30 was really helpful,” Northcutt said. “People's support showed that funding education is worthwhile.”

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