

WPCC lobbying county to hike president's pay

By SUSAN USHER
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Western Piedmont Community College trustees are seeking a substantial increase in the county salary supplement paid to the president of the college.

The college has been working since August to find a replacement for former WPCC president Dr. Gordon C. Blank, who resigned to take a similar job in New York state.

The Burke County Board of Commissioners now offers a supplement of \$5,000 for the position. County Commissioner James Gordon says WPCC trustees are seeking a \$20,000 supplement.

A \$20,000 supplement would be the highest paid to any community college president in the state. Supplements across the state range from \$16,185 at Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte to zero at Sandhills Community College. The statewide average local supplement for community college presidents is \$9,000.

W. Stanley Moore, chairman of the college's presidential search committee, said Wednesday a supplement between \$5,000 and \$15,000 higher than the current amount is needed to attract a high-quality candidate for the job.

The college trustees, chaired by E.W. Phifer Jr., plan to go to the commissioners with a formal request for more money, but are first talking individually with each commissioner about the need for the increase. Moore said all commissioners will be contacted by early next week.

"We are trying to establish a relationship with the county commissioners asking what we might reasonably ex-

pect for what we think is one of the better institutions in the state," Moore added.

The college is now seriously eyeing two out-of-state male candidates for the job, Moore said, both of whom hold doctorate degrees, and have previous educational administrative experience, and meet the selection committee's requirements for the job. One is a native of an adjoining state, the other is a resident of an adjoining state.

Neither candidate will be invited for in-depth interviews with the selection committee, Moore said, until the committee has a definite salary figure with which to negotiate.

"We can't go out and start talking turkey unless we know we have a reasonable expectation of being successful," he added.

The salary the college had to offer, he said, would have to be better than what the candidates are now earning.

Gordon said Wednesday he was told a top candidate for the job was the provost of a Texas woman's college or university drawing a salary of \$42,000, and that WPCC would like to offer him between \$45,000 and \$46,000.

"They were talking about a \$20,000 supplement," Gordon said. "The state share would be a little over \$26,000. They were hoping to offer the gentleman more than he is making now.

"The concern I had," Gordon said, "was that the Board of Education would probably come back and ask if you're going to pay this for 1,400 to 1,600 students while the superintendent (of public schools) is getting a \$6,000 supplement for 13,000 students at 25 campuses and 1,200-plus employees.

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"In terms of responsibilities, it didn't look good to me," Gordon said.

Moore would neither confirm nor deny the specifics mentioned by Gordon.

Gordon said Moore and Dr. Phifer have talked with him about the matter.

Johnny Pons, chairman of the Burke County Board of Commissioners, said he had not yet been contacted, while board member Charles Winters said it was a personnel matter which should not be discussed at this time. Board member Robert Netherton said he had been unofficially approached, and board member James Cates could not

be reached for comment.

The most the state will pay an out-of-state candidate for the WPCC job is \$26,532.

It is the third step of a seven-step state pay scale. The state has separate salary schedules which take into account the degree held, years of experience and the size of the community college. The most anyone holding the WPCC presidency in 1978-79 could earn from the state is \$31,532, regardless of how long he or she had held the job.

Supplements offered by nearby community colleges include \$9,000 at Isothermal Community College at Spindale, where the former head of the community college system, Dr. Ben Fountain, recently assumed the presidency and \$8,500 at Caldwell County Community College and Technical Institute.

Moore said he doesn't know what the college's chances are of obtaining the increase it wants, but he said, "that will be reflected in the desperation of their (the commissioners') desire to see that we get somebody that would be a credit to Burke County and to Western Piedmont Community College."

Twelve community college presidents in the state earn more than \$40,000 a year. Moore doesn't know what their starting salaries were in their current positions.