

# Regional district in no mood

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The regional district has said "no, no, no" to a requested \$2-million contribution for the new Centre of Excellence at Okanagan College in Penticton.

Directors at the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen rejected a budget proposal Thursday to provide \$2 million over three years to the college's \$5-million fundraising campaign. The board also said no to holding a referendum on the question, or making a commitment for such a vote during the November 2011 election.

Bill Schwarz, RDOS director for Okanagan Falls-Kaleden, said the regional district was in effect being asked to force taxpayers to help pay for the project, rather than contribute voluntarily to the fundraising.

Schwarz also rejected suggestions that the RDOS should partner with the federal and provincial governments in the project. He said it would be more like a shotgun wedding, noting neither of the senior governments had asked for RDOS participation.

The provincial and federal governments have approved \$22.6 million towards the \$28-million project, leaving the Okanagan College Foundation to raise the remainder.

The new 7,000-square-metre Centre of Excellence will provide space for more than 800 students in a variety of programs, many of which will focus on new trades and technology training in sustainable building and renewable energy conservation. The building is due to be completed by March 2011.

The RDOS board voted 14-4 against OK College's request.