

EDUCATION

College support continues during pandemic

By **RON SEYMOUR**

The Daily Courier

Oct 1/20

Community-minded businesses and individuals gave generously to the Okanagan College Foundation over the past year despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, foundation representatives are somewhat concerned about a potential drop in donations as the pandemic drags on.

"As the economic impact of the crisis unfolds, we are seeing a shift in donor confidence and capacity," Helen Jackman, the foundation's executive director, writes in a report to the Okanagan College board of directors.

While donations may decline, the need among students for financial assistance through foundation grants is likely to increase, Jackman says.

"As we look ahead to 2020 and beyond, we anticipate financial challenges for many in our community, not least our students," she says. "These awards will become even more important."

For the year ending March 31, donations to the foundation were \$1.8 million, the same amount as the previous financial year. Just over \$1 million in scholarships and bursaries were awarded, compared to \$843,000 during the previous year.

The foundation is the fundraising arm of

Okanagan College, generating revenue outside the institution's core government grants. Money collected by the foundation is used principally for student scholarships and bursaries and capital projects.

It currently has assets of \$17.6 million compared to \$15 million in 2019.

Notable recent donations include \$500,000 in March from the Stober Foundation toward a \$5-million campaign for the new Health Sciences Centre; \$1 million from the Jacobsen family toward the new Automotive Trades training facility in Kelowna; and \$250,000 plus a Cessna airplane from Robert Foord, CEO of Kal Tire, to the college's aircraft maintenance program.