

Small is better

College defies stereotyping

By SUSAN LEINOFF

On the banks of Orchard Lake lies a small private liberal arts college that defies stereotyping.

St. Mary's College, founded by a Polish priest in Detroit in 1885, has managed to avoid typical problems plaguing other small schools: declines in enrollment, decreases in student achievement and increases in tuition.

To the contrary, the traditional four-year institution's enrollment actually rose 9 percent this past semester. The

GM student wins honors

James Kolhoff, a freshman at General Motors Institute, has been named to the dean's list for the spring semester. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Kolhoff of Farmington.

Managers earn county diplomas

Two Farmington Hills city employees were among those receiving diplomas from a course in county management put on by Oakland University.

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present freshman class entered with record test scores, and tuition costs amounted to less than any other private school in Michigan.

Now that Dr. John Gutowski, 37, is about to wind up his first year as dean and his time to reflect, he decided to share his views on what makes St. Mary's thrive.

Probably his biggest surprise deals with discovering so much diversity in such a small school. And a school that doesn't get much smaller than St. Mary's.

To the contrary, the traditional four-year institution's enrollment actually rose 9 percent this past semester. The

Mary's with 250 students and a 40-per-cent faculty.

"OF THE PEOPLE here, there are many points of views, personalities and teaching types," said St. Mary's, less formally, less of need to follow models," said Gutowski seated in his mail-topped desk in the modestly furnished administration building off.

"At big schools, everyone is expected to tow the academic party line. But here, there's a much more profound sense of individuality and commitment to teaching on the part of faculty members," he added.

Gutowski is speaking from experience since he's had his share of university involvement. For seven years before coming to St. Mary's, he taught English and folklore and directed folklore archives at Wayne State University.

After receiving his undergraduate and masters degrees from Wayne, Gutowski completed doctorate studies in folklore at one of America's largest daily drive.

higher-learning institutions, Indiana University.

In addition to being an expert on "Turtle Day in Churubusco, Indiana," which was the subject of his dissertation, the Hamtramck native is considered a leading authority on Polish-American folklore. He said he sees St. Mary's as another kind of study.

"I OCCASIONALLY attended conferences here, and when this opportunity materialized, it seemed like a challenge," he explained. "It was something different."

"People ask all the time, 'What does a dean do?' Well, I have to know a lot about different things. That's why my folklore training becomes very helpful because I'm an interdisciplinary person."

Taking the job turned Gutowski, who lives with his wife and young son in Detroit across from Belle Isle, into a long-distance commuter. But he doesn't seem to mind the 60-mile roundtrip daily drive.

John Gutowski, who has chalked up one year as dean at St. Mary's College, says life on the small campus can't be stereotyped. (Staff photo by John Stano)



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