

# Choice: tax hike or poorer quality colleges

By Tim Richard  
staff writer

David Adamany, president of a beleaguered Wayne State University, says Michiganans must support a modest tax increase to preserve higher education, even if politicians are afraid of it.

"I'm giving you a choice: poorer quality higher education or a tax increase," said WSU's eighth president, who was inaugurated Aug. 1. "Obviously, I don't recommend poorer quality higher education."

Adamany (pronounced "Adam-annie") was interviewed recently on the Channel 7 "Spotlight on News" program.

"THE PEOPLE must not be under-estimated. The people are not fools," said the Wisconsin-raised lawyer and political scientist.

"I would not like to be the public official in this state who destroys what it has taken a century of Michiganans to build. The people of the state can afford, in a crisis time, to meet the cost of preserving schools and colleges which have taken a long time to build and which are among the three or four best systems of higher education in the country."

"So often, public officials get behind the people. We had a temporary (1 percent) income tax increase last year during the Milliken Administration. It expired Oct. 1. While there was a lot of crying in Lansing about the tax issue, there was very little crying from the public. When the tax expired Oct. 1, very few people noticed much change in their paychecks."

A former Wisconsin secretary of revenue and an acknowledged expert in campaign funding, Adamany cited a New Detroit Inc. poll which showed 61 percent of suburbanites and 63 percent of Detroiters would prefer "modest new taxes" over further cuts in services.

ADAMANY IS far from alone in advocating new taxes. The University of Michigan has begun a similar campaign, contending that depression-caused cuts in state funding have shifted the burden of supporting the university to student tuition (see chart).

The Wayne State president is particularly concerned about his 30,000-student city institution, however, because "we're a little more fragile as an institution (compared to Michigan and Michigan State) because we are relatively young (since 1956) as a state university. We don't have as much research as the older institutions. Research brings in the dollars that are not tied to a state budget."

For example: "In the last three years, we've lost 24 faculty members in the College of Engineering... Those faculty members carry with them, out of the state of Michigan, grants worth roughly \$7 million."

Wayne is having trouble attracting new faculty. "We are issuing notices just this month to 100 of our young faculty that we will not be able to renew their appointments this year. This is the third year in a row... that we have thinned out the ranks of the young very badly." Because of the possibility of layoffs and the lack of ability to offer first-rate



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laboratories and special equipment, Wayne is "no longer a leading competitor" in luring new faculty.

ONE BY ONE, Adamany was asked about alternatives to increasing the state's 4.6 percent personal income tax or 4 percent sales tax. His replies:

• Eliminate some state colleges? "If we eliminated the two smallest colleges in this state, the money we would have would be less than the cuts made at Wayne alone. One you would lose, Saginaw Valley, has 85 percent of its students commuting. It's not as if those folks would pick up and go to a dorm in a university setting. They're adult students and working students."

• A state coordinating board for colleges, as advocated by gubernatorial candidates James Blanchard and Richard Headlee? "I was vice president of a 10-campus system in California. To coordinate 19 campuses, we had a 300 staff people in the central office. They taught no students and produced no research. If we're going to have coordination, I prefer coordination by the Legislature because that process is done less expensively and by the elected representatives of the people."

• Tuition increases? "As the state has cut back (aid to colleges), we've already been raising tuition. For the average undergraduate, (Wayne State) tuition is now \$1,971. That is the third highest tuition in the nation among public research, doctoral, universities. The first highest in the nation is the University of Michigan... We've already gone to the students for an unconscionable fare. I'm especially concerned at Wayne because so many of our students are working, so many are poor."

• Greater efficiency? Wayne runs classes from 7:30 in the morning until 11 at night. "We are one of the most efficient of public institutions." But equipment expenditures have been slashed from \$2.5 million in 1974-5 to \$1.3 million in 1981-2. Wayne has increased class sizes, "but you burn good people out. We're beginning to see the signs of that — great discouragement, class sizes too large to be

effective, students waiting longer to get the courses they must have."

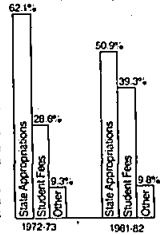
• Look hard at social services, which have increased steadily in the last 20 years in exactly the same proportions as college appropriations have decreased? "If people are genuinely stricken, aid unemployed, and face the winter without heat, I as a human being would prefer to pay a little more in taxes so that those people don't have to suffer."

• More alumni contributions? U-M has "log-casting alumni and gift support. We have a little

**1982-83 Tuition and Fees  
National Rank  
Of Major Public Research Universities**

University	Tuition	Rank (most expensive at top)
University of Michigan	\$2,144	1
Pennsylvania State University	2,118	2
Wayne State University	1,971	3
Michigan State University	1,889	4
Rutgers University	1,675	5
University of Cincinnati	1,671	6

**THE SHIFTING BURDEN**  
U-M General Fund Revenues  
Percentage Share by Source



of that (6 percent of alumni contribute to Wayne), but have not yet built up." Lawyers, doctors and engineers are good prospects, but Adamany said many Wayne graduates are in lower-paying occupations such as teaching and social work.

"MICHIGAN HAS gone from ninth in the nation to 33rd (in per capita support of higher education) and from 19th in percentage of personal disposable income to 38th," Adamany said.

"South Carolina and Alabama are doing better than we are in supporting higher education. We are in the bottom quarter of states in appropriations for higher education."

"The problem is not that colleges are inefficient, wasteful, duplicative or too numerous. The problem is that Michigan's commitment to colleges has just died in the last 10 years."

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