

OCC board, president get family counseling

By Kathy Parrish
staff writer

The relationship between a college president and board of trustees is a little like a marriage.

And sometimes there's a breakdown between the two parties.

That's where James Tatum comes in. A board member for 26 years, the consultant works with both sides to help them better see each other's views.

"Whatever you do, is the board a part of that — appraised of it?" Tatum asked Oakland Community College President Robert Roelofs during the school's recent board retreat.

"The best way for boards not to be involved in administration is to be knowledgeable and participatory as far as possible."

A TRUSTEE at Crowder Community College in Neosho, Mo., Tatum raises

cattle and sells farm equipment for a living.

In his spare time, the past president of the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) also travels around the country helping improve the skills of fellow board members.

"Boards usually are very dedicated people with varying amounts of skills," Tatum explained. He pointed out that winning an election doesn't prepare someone to be a good board member.

"None of us can just walk onto a board, and the public needs to understand that."

MEETING WITH board members, Tatum helps the elected officials "take a good look at themselves with a view toward improving."

Recent OCC board meetings have shown a breakdown in relations between Roelofs and some board members, who are resisting his request for a

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year's contract extension. The president's contract is due to expire in June. Nevertheless, Roelofs received a very positive evaluation from the board last spring.

Much of Tatum's discussion during the Friday evening and Saturday session with OCC board members and the school's president was aimed at bringing out where they stand on different issues.

Included were such areas as the board's support of the president, the ethical behavior of trustees, how well the officials understand the workings of the college, and how members deal with complaints.

THE CONSULTANT stressed communication between both sides, just as there needs to be between marriage partners.

Told that the school's policy manual was reviewed by an outside consultant without the board's knowledge, he objected to trustees' not being consulted first.

"We're talking about a key issue in human relations here," said Tatum. "If a policy needs review, before you do it, there needs to be agreement over how to do it."

"Then no one is stepping on anyone else's turf."

Tatum outlined which decisions should be made by the administration and which by board of trustees.

"I often see educators on boards who want to run the school. Great potential for meddling exists when you're so expert you won't let someone else do the job," he said.

On the other hand, he has "found over the years a common feeling that administrators have all the knowledge

— and it's just not true."

TATUM HELPED the board draw up goals to work on in the next year.

But the most important emphasis was placed on trying to work together for those common goals.

And he applauded comments by both board members and the president that indicated they would try a little harder to see each other's views.

"I'm hearing a lot of powerful reasons to be pleased with the institution; also a lot of things to be concerned about," said Tatum.

"The board is made up of the persons on the board and the presidency is made up of the person who occupies the presidency," he said.

"You've got to work together, we don't know how long. The question is 'How do we do as well as well can for the time being?'"

Stress economic health — OU veeep

Oakland University's senior vice president would advise young faculty members seeking tenure to make themselves indispensable to the school.

And he believes the best way to insure Oakland's fiscal tenure would be to make OU indispensable to the state of Michigan. "Probably the single most effective step this university can take to guarantee its future financial stability is to link itself inextricably to the economic well-being of this region," Keith R. Kieckner said in a recent campus address.

The vice president was the final speaker in a Meadow Brook Seminars Revisited, a series of lectures by academic and business guests conducted as part of the university's 25th anniversary celebration.

DURING THE NEXT five years, Kieckner advocates OU emphasize economic development, involvement in the Oakland Technology Park, and more health-related research.

He called for increased attention to economic development, including more work with the state's largest industry, the automotive industry.

Kieckner also would like to see increased attention to the continuing professional education needs of area business and industry, more health-related research of the kind already undertaken by the university, a revised five-year program for certification of teacher education at grades K-12, and closer links between Meadow Brook Festival and Meadow Brook Theatre and the university's Center for the Arts, the unit that oversees student music, theater, and dance productions.

KIECKNER SAID the Meadow Brook Seminars guests left one sound piece of advice for OU — to lead from its institutional strengths.

He called those strengths a sound academic reputation, an excellent geographic location, and an undergraduate education grounded in the liberal arts regardless of student major.

Despite an increase in the current year's appropriation, Kieckner said years

of underfunding and appropriation adjustments have left the institution with an inadequate funding base for its activities.

He said the university must concentrate in the next five years on reducing the extent of university programs somewhat to help the quality of those programs. Before Feb. 1 he intends to offer specific academic restructuring to bring offerings into closer alignment with resources.

IN THE NEXT five years, he believes resources for instruction should be devoted to improving services given to existing programs.

Priorities are library allocations, replacement of laboratory equipment, more attention to academic and career advising, and more computer and data processing opportunities for faculty and students.

He called continuing professional education one of the institution's major opportunities and reaffirmed the institution's commitment to public service.

'Christian Politics' is topic

The Center for Pastoral Studies offers seminars next month on "Christian Politics" and "Spirituality of Work."

"Christian Politics: Whose Apocalypse is it Anyway?" will be conducted by the Rev. Gordon Judd, a staff member of Groundwork for a Just World in Detroit. Judd will look at the Book of Apocalypse in his seminar from 10 a.m.

to 3 p.m. Dec. 1 in Dombrowski Fieldhouse on the campus of Orchard Lake Schools.

Pre-registration fee is \$10 with a \$15 charge at the door. Orchard Lake Schools is located at Commerce and Orchard Lake roads, Orchard Lake. For registration information, call 682-4124.

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On hand will be several area chefs, including: Annette Tenerelli of Truffles, West Bloomfield and Baypointe Country Club; Chef Joseph Decker of the Golden Mushroom, Southfield; Shawn Conlik of Restaurant Douglas, Southfield; and Larry James, Livonia.

Workshops are limited to the first 50 participants, and samples will be offered by instructors.

Ray Brockel, author of "The Great American Candy Bar" will share the history of candy bars.

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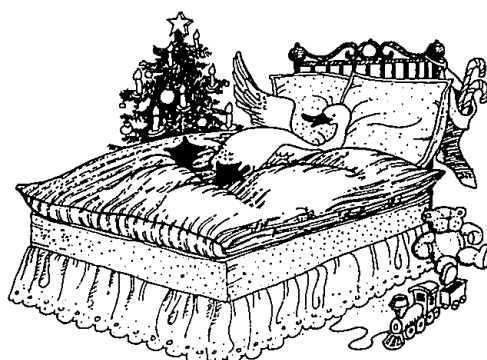
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