

# OU board to revisit tuition hike today

By Tim Richard  
staff writer

Oakland University trustees will hold a special meeting at 5 p.m. today to discuss the political fallout from OU's recent 10-percent tuition increases. The meeting will be in the Oakland Center on campus in Rochester Hills.

"The purpose is to bring the board up to date about a series of discussions that have taken place regarding the university's tuition rates for 1988-9," according to a brief

statement from John DeCarlo, vice president for governmental affairs, general counsel and secretary to the board of trustees. OU officials would not comment on the possibility of a tuition rollback.

But Gov. James Blanchard in Lansing last week said OU trustees may roll back tuitions. "I think they're considering it, but I wouldn't want to commit them," he said at a ceremony for the Michigan Education Trust.

The OU board, on a 4-1 vote, approved the year's second increase,

totaling 19.3 percent, on July 26.

THE SPECIAL OU meeting follows by two weeks a head-to-head session between trustees of 13 state universities and Gov. James J. Blanchard.

The trustees and Blanchard agreed that student tuitions generally are too high, and a new formula for spending state higher education money may be in the works, according to OU trustees Phyllis La Googasian and Patricia Hartmann.

Blanchard has suggested that he may use his line-item veto power

over the higher education budget bill on universities which hiked tuition too much.

THAT ONE-HOUR meeting occurred Aug. 2 in the governor's residence, and both sides did about the same amount of talking, the trustees said.

"We may be on the brink of something," said Googasian, of Rochester Hills. "It was the first time since I had served on the Oakland board for trustees to come together. Each of the 13 boards has acted totally independently of the other."

"He gets his messages through aides, and we get our information secondhand," agreed Hartmann, of Birmingham.

Blanchard called the Aug. 2 meeting after a series of double-digit tuition increases prompted him to say trustees are "indoctrinated" and needed to be "deprogrammed."

OU's increases were among the state's highest. OU has a total general fund operating budget of about \$55 million and 12,000 students. Trustees of the University of Michigan, Michigan State and Wayne

State universities are elected; the others are appointed. Googasian is a Blanchard appointee, and Hartmann was picked by Gov. William G. Milliken.

"We share the governor's concern about tuition," said Googasian, who with her husband George has put two children through college.

"The governor's upset. He made that very clear. I share the governor's concern about tuition. I get angry every time I have to vote for that increase. But we haven't any alternatives."

## One year later, Flight 255 claims drag on

It may be another full year before the survivors of Flight 255 victims settle claims against Northwest Airlines and the plane's manufacturer.

"The question is the percentage of fault between McDonnell Douglas (manufacturer) and Northwest," said Richard F. Schaden, an attorney for the estates of several victims.

Schaden, of the Birmingham firm of Schaden, Feldman, Lampert, Katzman and Tiecher, said Northwest points to structural failure, but the manufacturer blames pilot error in failing to extend the wing flaps, causing the crash on Sunday, Aug. 16, 1987, which claimed 155 lives.

"In a multi-district litigation like this, the (U.S.) Court of Appeals appoints a five-man committee to consolidate it," said the Birmingham attorney, who is part of the panel along with lawyers from Washington, Denver and Phoenix. He was

reached last week in his firm's Denver office.

A TRIAL is set for next summer before U.S. District Judge Julian Cook in Detroit.

"In a case like this, two years is not out of the ballpark (for settlement)," Schaden said.

Some six of the 154 claims have been settled, he said.

"None of mine are settled," he said.

The airlines declined to reveal terms of the settled claims.

Schaden pointed to a Rand Corp. study which showed that for a salary-earning male the average award is some \$400,000-plus, while for a non-salary-earning woman it is some \$200,000-plus.

"That's old data. The numbers are higher today," he said, pointing to one \$7 million award in the Dallas airport crash of several years ago.

A PUBLIC vigil will be held starting at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, the first anniversary, almost to the minute, of the second-worst crash in U.S. history and the worst in Michigan history.

The vigil will be held on the embankment of Middlebelt Road under the I-94 freeway where the jetliner came down. Northbound Middlebelt will be closed at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday to accommodate the service.

Participants should tie a red cloth or red ribbon on the driver's side mirror as a sign to parking attendants.

Parking will be available in the Budget Rent-A-Car lot on Merriman Road near the airport.

SOME SURVIVORS have adjusted, but Schaden said, "The Surowitzs are having a terrible time."

Joanne Surowitz, then 18, was to start at Michigan State University in

fall 1987. When the crash occurred, the West Bloomfield High graduate was on her way to the West Coast to visit her parents, Mr. and Mrs. David Surowitz, who had moved there.

Families who lost a breadwinner have a "pretty gruesome time," Schaden said.

While survivors of some victims are willing to discuss their difficulties, others are not.

An upset father of another area victim said, "I don't want to discuss it. It's very difficult. Your call is ill-advised. Newspapers are better served by not making such a call."

BESIDES THE Surowitz case, Schaden is handling the cases of:

• Kenneth Bell, 28, of Canton Township. A General Motors employee, he was on his way to a testing facility in Mesa, Ariz.

• The Briggs family of Scottsdale, Ariz. — Don, 43; his wife,

Sharon, 42; and children, Matthew, 13, and Megan, 8. Mr. Briggs was a GM employee who formerly worked in Warren. Mrs. Briggs has a mother in Southfield. They had vacationed at Walloon Lake.

Other victims who were residents or former residents of the area were:

• Eric Mazade, of Grosse Pointe Park, who spent 23 of his 24 years in Franklin Village and whose parents are now in Florida.

• The Thorell family of Glendale, Ariz. — Larry, 33; his wife, Laura, 28; and daughter, Krista, 1. Larry Thorell was from Troy and worked on flight controls for a commercial airline. Laura Thorell had just attended a 10-year Rochester Adams High reunion.

• Stuart Stoner, 31, free-lance marketing consultant from Bloomfield Township.

• Lawrence Sills, 33, family doctor from Scottsdale, Ariz., on his way

back to his family after working in a northern Michigan summer camp. He was raised in Franklin, and family members live in the area.

• Robert W. Gaines, 70, retired engineer from Rochester Hills, on his way to Phoenix to visit a friend with whom he had worked at Ford Motor Co.

• Harry Brown, 51, Canton Township resident for 10 years. He was on a business trip and had just visited his injured daughter in a hospital.

• Carol Cohen, 25, formerly of Canton, working in Phoenix and engaged to basketball star Nick Vanos, 24.

• Wayne Mickelson, 43, of Scottsdale, Ariz., and one son, Daniel, 18. The senior Mickelson grew up in Rochester Hills and moved to Arizona some five years earlier. They were returning after a fishing trip to East Jordan.

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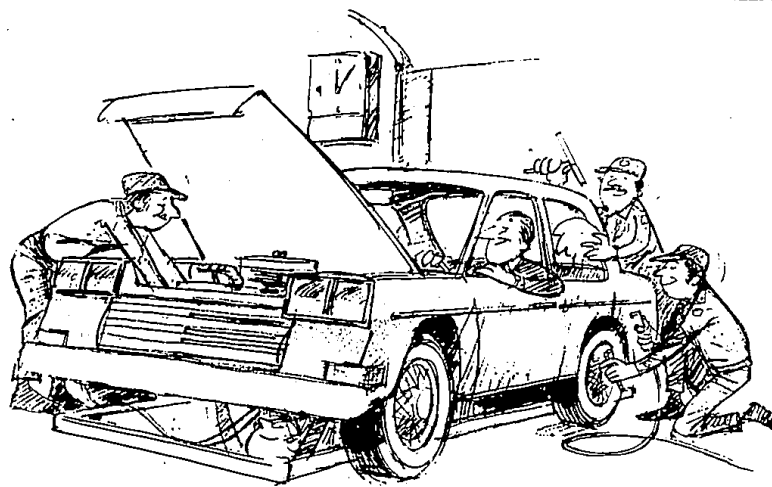
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