

# OCC race

## Pappas won't run, 2 seek his 4-year seat

By Pat Murphy  
staff writer

Two active candidates with diverse backgrounds will vie for a four-year term on the Board of Trustees at Oakland Community College (OCC) in the June 11 election.

Richard A. Blonde of Rochester Hills and Jay B. Shah of Pontiac are running against each other to succeed Edward H. Pappas, an incumbent who is not seeking re-election.

"I said I would probably not seek re-election last September when I was appointed to the board," Pappas said Tuesday, less than 24 hours after Monday's deadline for filing nominating petitions.

"It was a difficult decision because I am very committed to OCC. But I just have too many other obligations," he said.

Pappas, a lawyer with Dickinson, Wright in Bloomfield Hills, is active with the Oakland County Bar Association.

in addition to being chairman of the planning commission in the Village of Franklin where he lives. "I also want to spend more time with my family," said Pappas, who with his wife has two boys, ages 10 and 5.

BLONDE AND SHAH each said he did not know Pappas would not seek re-election. Each filed nominating petitions with 50 to 200 signatures by the 4 p.m. deadline Monday.

Two incumbents also filed for re-election. Douglas H. Wakefield and Sandra L. Rittler each filed for six-year terms and will run unopposed in the June election.

There are seven members on the board of trustees which constitutes the policy-making body of OCC which has five campuses and 28,000 students.

Blonde, 34, is a 1973 graduate of Andover High School in Bloomfield Hills. He has been a student at OCC

and said he is six classes short of obtaining three separate degrees at the school, one in business administration and two in data processing. He and his wife, Debbie, have two children.

Shah, 43, has an engineering degree from Shivaji University in Bombay, India; a masters degree in civil engineering from Wayne State University and another master's degree in business administration from the University of Detroit.

He is vice president of corporate development of Spalding, DeDecker & Associates Inc., Madison Heights.

Shah is a member of the Oakland County Economic Development Commission and the Planning Commission of Waterford Township. He and his wife, Bharati, have two children.

BOTH CANDIDATES say their respective backgrounds have prepared them to serve on the OCC board.

Blonde said he knows OCC as a student and as a businessman. "I can make contributions that will benefit students as well as taxpayers," he said.

Blonde ran for the board of trustees in 1988 and was one of 13 candidates competing for the four-year position eventually won by Edith Gonzales. He finished ninth.

Shah said several employees at his engineering company also attend OCC to supplement their professional careers. "I understand the philosophy of the school and the needs of students," he said.

Whoever wins the seat must be prepared to spend a considerable amount of time on OCC business, according to Pappas. "The board is scheduled to meet one night a month, but the job demands much more time," he said.

The biggest problem on the OCC horizon, Pappas said, is obtaining the funding needed to maintain quality



Richard A. Blonde



Jay B. Shah

programs.

"We hate to raise tuition," he said. "Maybe the answer is in more state funding. A tax hike is one possibility, but not a viable one."

Pappas has served on the OCC board on three separate occasions. He was elected to a four-year term in 1982, but did not seek re-election.

In August, 1987, he was appointed to fill the unexpired term of the late Earl Anderson. He served the remainder of that term, but did not seek re-election.

Last September Pappas was appointed to the board to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Edith Gonzales, who moved to another area.


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