

Legislature from page A5

While new to lobbying, Black does know Lansing's inner workings. "It's helpful," said Sen. Bouchard, "to have somebody focus on that role."

The Senate's money man is John J.H. Schwarz, R-Battle Creek, chair of the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on universities. He is a graduate of UM and Wayne and is a folk hero among university types.

"The Carnegie rankings," Schwarz said, "were never meant to be a source of funding classifications. I oppose a funding formula and always have."

"The way it's done is not hard-knuckle politics. It's incremental

(a few percentage points each year) and political. We haven't done a bad job."

Favoring a formula is retiring Wayne State University President David Adamany, a one-time Wisconsin state budget officer. Adamany would like the Legislature to write a funding formula for universities before term limits take effect (1998 in the House, 2002 in the Senate) and cause the Legislature to raise its institutional money.

In Lansing, Oakland County has an image of being a 900-square-mile Bloomfield Hills, its streets paved with gold. Russi and colleagues at neighboring Oak-

land Community College are fighting that, with outreach programs to Pontiac and visible participation in King-Chavez-Ross Parks programs.

When budget time was done in Lansing, OU wound up with \$4,293 a student, a 5 percent increase. Seven universities got more, seven less.

OU's 10-year strategic plan calls for "more emphasis on graduate education without compromising undergrad programs," including a doctoral program in mathematics.

"We will survive," said Russi. "However, at what cost and to whom?"

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"do a lot more" in the way of programs. Nevertheless Tomboulain believes that students are getting a "terrific bargain."

OU is growing in more than just buildings and programs. It's student body is growing as well, with projections of up to 15,000 by the turn of the century. Schlaybaugh, who works in the Bloomfield Hills office of the Dykema Gossett legal firm, said it represents the highest percentage of growth in the state among universities.

Once that level is hit, "we want to pause and decide how much larger we want to become," Russi said, adding that OU has done a capacity study. Despite plans to enlarge student residence units, the student body will largely remain made of those who commute from work or home from the tri-county area, Russi said. Currently, 10 percent live on campus.

The location and name of the university - Oakland - is at once its greatest strength and its biggest weakness.

The Oakland Technical Park, a garden of industries that have sprouted under a plan devised in part by the university, has brought about many partnerships between business and education, particularly with the Chrysler Corporation.

"Oakland has a distinguishing feature because of its location," Russi said. "We have better educated graduates because they can integrate liberal studies with professional studies."

Frequently those take the shape of internships by students, engineers and business professors, who then come back to teach what they have learned from the information sharing process.

Faculty members, however, sometimes complain about the Oakland in the university's name, and even wonder if it should be changed.

Professor Tomboulain said that it is "a matter of image in terms of getting enough funding" for the university.

Oakland has received much recognition and deserves it, according to a former dean of the business school, Ronald Horwitz, who now teaches at the university, said OU is one of only three in

the state with an accreditation by the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business.

The university's "greatest asset is its location. But north Oakland (county) remains free from the spotlight that U-D or WSU got," Horwitz said. Frequently, he added, the college gets confused with Oakland Community College. "It's very frustrating (that) people can't make the distinction."

That's just one of the growing pains.

Russi exhibits a peaceful presence at Oakland. However, faculty and staff pause after praising the university. They explain that there is still dissatisfaction over the way Russi was appointed, pointing a finger at the board of trustees. Russi was unexpectedly appointed at a summer board meeting when fewer students and faculty, who said they wanted to be notified of the search process, were on campus.

The method outlined by the board for a presidential search lead to a lawsuit, which remained closed to the public and university community until the very final stage, is still in court.

There's a top growing pain - a thorn that Russi pledged to snip the afternoon he was appointed by being a good listener. These days he spends four informal breakfast meetings a month with students and staff. Student body president Garick Landsberg said Russi has kept his pledge.

"He meets with me every two weeks. He is accessible," he said. Tomboulain suggested that the ire over Russi's appointment may be due in part to his predecessors, a situation which he said may take some years to mend.

Professor Kevin Andrews, a member of the faculty Senate Steering Committee, said he "continues to be concerned about the board. Russi will not be president forever ... Will there be a repeat? There's not a lot of contact between the board and the faculty."

But Schlaybaugh insists that the decision to appoint a president was the board's ultimate legal responsibility, and he said that the faculty does participate in committees and send reports to

the board.

There are other growing pains. Howell notes that more than half of the enrollment is made up of women over the age of 25.

"They bring a lot of experience from life to the classroom. That's very healthy and very good," she said. She believes the university needs to establish a child care center, for men as well as women.

Schlaybaugh said that a child care center is currently available through the education department, but he added that the concept of one at night was interesting.

For Local 1925's Forgette, the recently concluded negotiations were troubling.

"There is no reason it should have taken that long," she said. "Russi is doing an excellent job, but somewhere down below there is a breakdown ... Our members are all excited about the direction (of the university). Things are moving so rapidly."

Another growing pain is a concern among some faculty and students that there isn't enough classroom space available at peak periods. Paul Bissonnette, vice president for finance and administration, said the university's growth is a "double-edged sword" as it tries to keep pace.

"We try to be one step ahead of demand," he said. The business school will have "major new teaching space," he said. Bissonnette said the university also has a price tag associated with it.

To help keep pace, the university began three years ago to devise budgets two years into the future.

"Our intent is to deliver a quality education," Bissonnette said. "It can be painful when it has a price tag associated with it."

The impact of budgeting early aids the university, he said, and it also allows students to know their tuition costs sooner.

Ultimately, growth and growing pains come down to one thing: the education of students. In that respect, and for his personal self-growth, OU has been a worthwhile experience, according to Landsberg, now a senior. "It seems like a private school atmosphere," he said.

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president.

The fact that OU is now looking for a vice president, rather than a president, did not significantly change the fact that interviews for a top administrative position by a search committee must be public in compliance with the open meetings act.

"The vice president is the second highest executive position at the university," said Ronayne. "If we were talking about a position (teaching or administrative) to be filled by the president (rather than the board), I might reconsider my position. But this is a top-level post to be filled by a decision by the board of trustees."

OU's attorney had argued the main issue is whether or not the search committee - selected to interview the candidates - is a

public body and thus subject to the open meetings act.

Duerr argued that because the search committee was appointed by Russi - rather than by the board of trustees - it was not a public body and not subject to the open meetings act, as was the case in the rulings cited.

If the distinction is not recognized by the courts, said Duerr, even routine university matters might be construed as subject to the open meetings act and thus open to public.

Sosnick said he understands the board's concern, namely that applicants, for president or vice president, might require or request confidentiality. Trustees had argued OU would likely lose highly qualified candidates if their names are not confidential,

at least in early interviews.

Ronayne said the purpose for public interviews was to allow the public as well as any search committee to review "qualified" candidates. Any candidate who objected to his or her name being made public - because it might jeopardize a current position - may not be qualified, said the attorney.

"That candidate might not be truthful or might not have excelled at his or her current position," he said. "The public's business should be conducted in public," he emphasized.

The search for a vice president began last October, shortly after Russi - who was acting president and vice president for academic affairs - was hired as president. Trustees had hoped to fill the vacancy this summer.

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