

OU honors students for writing excellence

Onkland University's Department of Rhetoric, Communication and Journalism recently honored student winners of the 1996-1997 Writing Excellence Awards Contest.

Undergraduates submitted papers written as assignments in Composition I and Composition II. Students were honored Nov. 13 during a luncheon at historic Meadow Brook Hall. First place winners received \$100; second place \$75 and third place \$50.

Recognizing the winners were OU President Gary D. Rust; Dagmar Cronn, vice president, Academic Affairs; and provost; Mary Beth Snyder, vice president, Student Affairs; David Downing, dean, College of Arts and Sciences; OU trustee Louis-Grech Cumba and Ann Nicholson; Wallis Anderson, chair, Department of Rhetoric, Communication and Journalism, College of Arts and sciences, and the students' instructors.

"We were impressed by the skillful and thoughtful writing in the more than 70 papers submitted," said Ronald Sudol, professor and selection committee chair.

"The winning papers represent an impressive variety in style, format, voice and subject. They were a pleasure to read."

The winners:

In the exposition and narration category for papers written in Composition I:

First place — Aaron Abdullah of Bloomfield Hills, "River of Dreams;" Second place (tie) — Sheri Wargnier, Harrison Township, "Mental Disorders: Definition Versus Life," Matthew DeWitte, Negaunee, Mich., "What Time Is It Anyway?" Third place — Michael DeLorean, Bloomfield Village, "The Parking Lot Battlefield."

In the research category for papers written in Composition II:

First place — Kathleen I. Bethell, Rochester Hills, "Giving It All Away, Private Book Collectors as Public Benefactors," Second place — Leah Beth Inabnitt, Troy, "An Argument For The Ordination of Women in the Catholic Priesthood," Third place (tie) — Beth Kouba, Sterling Heights, "A

Solar and Wind Powered Future," Cynthia McGee, Warren, "Parental Involvement Essential for Children," and Liv Rainey, Farmington Hills, "Homosexuality and the College Environment."

November elections wait for Senate OK

BY TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

School elections would be held in November instead of June under a package of bills awaiting state Senate action.

"It will dramatically increase voter participation," predicted Sen. Loren Bennett, R-Canton, sponsor of one of the bills.

"Elections should be limited to a few days each year," said Sen. Glenn Steil, R-Grand Rapids, lead sponsor of the package. "Voter turnout needs to be increased, and we must ensure that voters are fully aware of the issues before them."

In general, the bills seek larger voter turnouts by moving school elections to November. Currently, June voter turnouts are as little as 3 percent and, unless there's a major controversy, rarely more than 15 or 20 percent.

They also seek to reduce the number of special elections on money issues.

School districts are expected to resist the call for November elections, particularly in even-numbered years when partisan issues and constitutional amendments crowd the ballot.

At last count, Michigan has 555 K-12 school districts and 57 intermediate districts (sometimes called county service areas). They held 1,074 millage elections in 1994 and 641 in 1995.

The bills would:

- Require that school elections be held in November beginning in 2002. At least one school board member would have to be elected in every November election.

- Place conduct of school elections in the hands of cities and townships. No longer would school districts conduct them or have to pay for them. In some areas, voters would go to their city or township precincts for all elections, not a separate school precinct.

To municipal clerks' worries that their election burden would be increased, Bennett said, "As a former township clerk, I don't see it as a problem — just a matter of printing additional ballots. Steil added that the change "would free schools to focus on educating our children."

- Limit school elections to three dates each year: one in April, one in August and the November general election.

- Require the school district seeking approval of a bond issue to include on a ballot proposal the estimated annual tax cost.

- Require the ballot language to include the per-pupil and per-classroom costs for the facilities for which the bonds are issued.

- Hike the cost of special elections by requiring the school district to pay the city and/or township 105 percent of the actual cost of conducting a special election.

Conducting special elections is a virtual science among school districts. For example, March is considered a good time to run a money proposal. Tactics include phone banks that target "school people" such as parents and school employees.

The House has worked on a different set of ideas but produced no bills for floor action.

House members have talked of reducing the number of total elections to three or four a year and requiring schools to use one of those elections for money questions.

Historically, Michigan has run school elections mostly in May and June, so that newly elected members could vote on the budget before the fiscal year starts on July 1.

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