

University president vows to reach out to community

By LETHA D. WILLIAMS

Joseph Champagne brought his western boots, slight Texas drawl and first-day jitters to work Monday.

For the first time since he was named Oakland University's (OU) president on Dec. 9, Champagne tackled briefing sessions, the press and an influential new position.

"It's an awesome kind of feeling, because you recognize that whatever happens in this university is your responsibility," the former University of Houston associate vice president said.

But even on the first day in his North Foundation Hall office, Champagne made decisions. He promised to restructure the university's administration, and to "build a bridge of understanding" between OU and the community.

Unofficially arriving on the Rochester-area campus in February, Champagne recognized the university's stretched financial situation.

Like other publicly supported institutions — especially in Michigan — OU is feeling the economic whiplash of a head-on collision with state and federal budget cuts.

Champagne said he thinks OU should look toward more private funding — endowments that may offset revenue reductions that cause tuition hikes.

THE CURRENT market value of OU's endowments is \$1.5 million, according to a university spokesman.

That's small compared to private universities.

But Champagne knows private individuals and corporations won't invest in OU "unless they understand what's happening."

So the 42-year-old psychologist intends to be an "external president." He plans to act as a liaison between OU and the community. And he hopes to convince the community, through academic and cultural programs, that OU is a worthy cause.

"I will devote most of my time to university development," Champagne said, "to relating the university and the community."

Studying OU's administrative structure Monday, Champagne said he was "uncomfortable" with its design. He prefers a "lean administrative structure" with only a few individuals reporting directly to the president. And he promised changes.

"That doesn't mean, necessarily, that people will be let go," he added. "But there will be some reorganization." Champagne said that university administrators, skilled in specific areas, should make more independent decisions.

"It becomes very easy for a president to mess up a university if he meddles in things that some other officer could handle better," Champagne said.

THE FATHER of two daughters was among nearly 300 applicants considered for OU's top job. The selection

process was complicated when State Attorney General Frank Kelley filed suit against OU's board of trustees.

Staff members of the Oakland Sail, OU's school newspaper, and a political science professor requested Kelley's investigation into the matter. They alleged that trustees violated the state's Open Meetings Act by conducting candidate interviews in closed sessions.

Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Alice Gilbert allowed the closed sessions to continue. But Oakland Sail staff members said trustees were so secretive about the selection that reporters had to "stake out" secret meeting rooms in airport hotels.

Champagne commended the Oakland Sail reporters, and the then editor, Gail DeGeorge, for their "tenacity" in getting the story.

In a special Oakland Sail edition published hours before Champagne's appointment was announced, the newspaper staff predicted the outcome. But Champagne said trustees were right in "protecting the confidentiality" of the candidates. If their home universities discovered they were up for a new appointment, they would become like "lame ducks," Champagne said.

"MOST ALL university president selections are done confidentially," he added.

"But I will support (the Oakland Sail's) kind of investigative reporting," Champagne said. "I think the students did a good job."

The son of a textile plant manager, Champagne said hopes for a medical school at OU are not unreasonable. But they are premature, he said.

"I would not be opposed to the establishment of a medical school here at Oakland — provided it does not detract financially from the (existing) academic base," he said.

"But I think the timing is probably ill conceived," he added.

In the meantime, Champagne will encourage the university's performing arts, athletics and cultural activities. He believes they will form a common ground which will attract private investors and endowments.

In his inaugural speech, slated for March 19, Champagne said he will "try to set the tone for what I hope to steer the university toward in the next few years."

"I hope it will stimulate some debate," he added.

He wants to help build OU's already national reputation by making it more efficient. And Champagne admits that won't be an easy job.

"But I do think it's a do-able job," he said. "Otherwise, I wouldn't have come here."

Champagne replaces Donald O'Dowd, who left OU in December, 1979, to become executive vice-chancellor of the State University of New York.

OU's Vice-Provost, George Matthews, had been serving as interim president.



"It's an awesome kind of feeling because you recognize that whatever happens in this university is your responsibility." (Staff photo by David Frank)

Farmington to participate in academic conference

The 12th annual conference of the Michigan Association for the Academically Talented (MAAT) will be March 26 at Weber's Inn, Ann Arbor.

Participating will be members from the Farmington Association for Children with Exceptional Talent (FACET). FACET is a MAAT affiliate. The group is composed of parents with children whose IQ's are above 133.

Dr. Nicholas Colangelo of the Uni-

versity of Iowa, author and nationally recognized expert in counseling for gifted children, will conduct the morning seminar and present the keynote address.

Conference fees are \$12 for members and \$15 for non-members. The fee includes lunch. Those interested must register by March 14 by calling Eric Fleischer at 481-1182.

OCC professor to speak on pain

Dr. Jude Cotter, a Social Science professor at the Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College, will discuss hypnosis and pain control at the Michigan State University second annual conference on pain. The conference, sponsored by the MSU Graduate School, will be held on March 8 in East Lansing.

Cotter, of Farmington Hills, who received a doctorate in education from Wayne State University in 1970 and re-

cently completed a PhD in psychology at the University of Florida, wrote his dissertation on the various methods of pain control which utilize participating family members in the process. At the MSU Conference, Cotter will emphasize the need for a holistic approach to aid patients suffering from chronic pain.

Effective counseling must be both individualized and personalized, according to Cotter.

Cotter uses individual and group hypnosis to demonstrate the effectiveness of relaxation and the positive aspects of post-hypnotic suggestion to reinforce personal and professional goals. Certified by the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis, Cotter employs hypnosis as part of his therapy when treating patients suffering from chronic pain.

Cotter, an OCC professor since 1965, teaches a course on "Marriage and the Family" which he developed at the

Orchard Ridge Campus. He is also interested in the psychosocial development of teenagers. Some of his findings were presented last year at Harvard University as part of a national symposium entitled "Quality Sex Education, Counseling and Therapy — What Is It?"

Cotter is continuing his research and plans to have his new book, "Love, Sex, and the College Student," published this spring.

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