



STAFF BULLETIN

ARCHIVES



January 21, 1970

This special issue of the STAFF BULLETIN is being published to report on last Friday's meeting of the MSU Board of Trustees. News accounts of the proceedings varied greatly in emphasis and detail, and obviously none could report all the proceedings that might be of interest to the University community.

TESTIMONY PRECEDES O'DOWD APPOINTMENT AS CHANCELLOR

The motion naming Donald D. O'Dowd Chancellor followed a series of presentations by OU faculty and staff, a presentation by representatives of a student delegation, and discussion by trustees of the appointment and the question of Oakland's independence.

The first formal motion considered by the board was made by Warren Huff, and called for the appointing of an acting chancellor for OU. Because there were a number of persons present to speak on the subject, MSU President Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., turned to those groups, recognizing first a delegation headed by Associate Professor William Sturmer (political science), chairman of the OU Senate Steering Committee and assistant provost. Sturmer opened with a statement summarizing the sentiments of nine of the major components of the campus as strongly in favor of having O'Dowd appointed Chancellor. He then introduced the following members of the faculty-staff delegation, each of whom made a brief presentation to the board: Admissions Director Glen Brown, president of the Administrative-Professional Association; University Librarian W. Royce Butler; Associate Professor Joseph Dement (English), president of the OU Chapter of the American Association of University Professors; Betty Hansen (book center), acting chairman of the steering committee of the Clerical-Technical Employees Association; Professor Edward Heubel (political science), elected member of the OU Senate Steering Committee; James Oates, official spokesman and chief negotiator for OU Employees Local 1418, AFSCME (AFL-CIO); Mary Schultz, director of Alumni Relations; and Professor Robert Simmons (modern languages), vice president of the OU chapter of AAUP.

Among the statements submitted by these spokesmen in support of O'Dowd's appointment, Professor Heubel reported an informal poll showing 71 per cent of the faculty favored O'Dowd for chancellor, with the remaining 29 per cent including abstainers and those not contacted; Professor Dement reported a mail poll of AAUP members showing 72 per cent for O'Dowd; Brown indicated 110 of 119 members of the A-P organization signed a petition supporting O'Dowd's appointment; Butler reported 18 of 21 librarians signing a similar petition; Oates reported 128 of 176 members of the hourly employees local had signed a petition for O'Dowd; Mrs. Hansen indicated that 78 per cent of the clerical-technical staff had signed such a petition; and Mrs. Schultz submitted a supporting statement approved unanimously by the OU Alumni Council.

Sturmer cited resolutions supporting O'Dowd for Chancellor by the OU Senate, passed by a 37-6 vote, and from the OU Foundation Executive Committee. He also presented

a Senate resolution reaffirming its desire for Oakland's independence at the earliest possible date, and not later than January 1, 1971. Sturmer noted that the statements of support for O'Dowd represented all campus groups but the students. A resignation statement submitted to the Senate by 37 students who had held various elective positions read in part: "You have asked us to address ourselves to the question of the Chancellorship. After much thought and discussion we have decided that we will abstain from doing that. . . We simply expect a Chancellor that will recognize the immediate and pressing demands on this campus--the need for educational reform, for a student government that has real power, black students' rights and women's rights."

Three students--John Springfield, Mary Mattis and Stuart House--addressed the Trustees, asking that a search and selection process be set up to identify a Chancellor and that the committee be made up of at least 50 per cent students. They reported petitions to that effect signed by about one-fourth of the student body. In their comments they noted they were not anti-O'Dowd, but were concerned with the lack of a search and selection process. The students also voiced support for independence for the University.

A vote on Huff's motion for the appointment of an acting chancellor was defeated 5 to 3, with Huff, Frank Hartman and Clair White voting in favor. Kenneth Thompson then moved adoption of a resolution calling for the appointment of O'Dowd as Chancellor, effective February 1. Blanche Martin seconded the motion, and Stephen Wisbet, Frank Merriman and chairman Jon Stevens stated why they would vote for it.

In discussing the motion, Trustee Hartman said the proposed action would be unfair to educational leaders of the state who were not approached about the position. He listed as possible candidates Peter Clancy, director of the Mott Program for the Flint Board of Education; Jack Lambouts, vice president of Northern Michigan University; Ira Polley, former state superintendent of public instruction; William J. Early, superintendent of the Flint schools and former Rochester superintendent; and Jack Breslin, executive president of MSU. The motion to name O'Dowd as Chancellor was then passed by a 5-3 vote, with Huff, Hartman and White opposing.

The MSU Trustees then asked that an appropriate resolution be drawn commending Chancellor Varner for his ten years of outstanding service to Oakland and to the State of Michigan. It was also proposed that he be extended the title of Chancellor Emeritus. Although there was no official action taken on independence for Oakland, there was considerable discussion on the question throughout the meeting. At its December meeting the board adopted a resolution approving independence in principle, but calling for a meeting with the Regents of the University of Michigan to review the question of independence for branch campuses. In a news interview following his appointment, O'Dowd said he will seek board action on the independence issue at the trustees' February meeting.

Related to the appointment of a new chancellor, the University Senate on January 13 adopted a resolution noting that independence for the University would mean that a Chancellor named by the MSU board would serve only until a new board of trustees were established at Oakland. The resolution subscribed to the principle that the new board should seek the advice of the faculty, staff and students in the search and selection of the chief executive of the University.