

# FOCUS: Oakland

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FREE

## Students leaders resign, leave Senate

### 42 students leave posts

You have asked us to address ourselves to the question of the Chancellorship of Oakland University. After much thought and discussion we have decided that we will abstain from doing that. As students we have found that we are alienated from the sources of information concerning Oakland University and, most importantly, from the sources of power. Our participation on committees and legislative bodies has been mere tokenism. We have been a rubber-stamp; we save the consciences of the faculty and the administration. But in the end we have no real power. We don't really count.

Because we feel this way we will abstain from commenting on the candidacy for the Chancellorship at Oakland University. We do not feel that we have ever had any real power that would give us the option to make a Chancellor for this University. On the other hand, we do have the power to break a Chancellor. We have no interest in doing that. We simply expect a Chancellor that will recognize the immediate and pressing demands on this campus--the need for education reform, for a student government that has real power, black students' rights and women's rights. We will look to the Chancellor that you choose to demonstrate a willingness to do this. From now on we will pursue these interests outside the structures that have been unresponsive to these needs in the past. You will find us there instead of on the Senate, The Commission on Student Life, The Assembly of Arts and Sciences, and other bureaucratic bodies on which we have been ineffective and frustrated. We hereby resign and submit the following proposals which we hope will serve as a common ground for discussion and endeavors in the future.

The Student Senators  
The Student Commissioners  
The Students on the Assembly  
The Students Activities Board



Mary Mattis reads resignations (Photo by Steve Schaffer)

In a dramatic move a group of 42 elected and appointed students resigned their posts Tuesday. The action came at the University Senate meeting when the student senators were asked how they felt about Provost O'Dowd as a possible chancellor.

Speaking for the students involved, Mary Mattis explained that there was a great feeling of frustration growing with the inadequacy of the existing structures of University government. She cited the lack of real student power, stating that student representation was "tokenism," and that they acted only as a "rubber-stamp" saving the consciences of the faculty and administration.

Miss Mattis emphasized that this action was in no way a reflection of student feelings concerning the chancellorship of Oakland University." The students, she said, were abstaining from comment on the issue. It was felt that the only effective vote the students could have on it was a negative one, and they had "no interest in doing that."

As Miss Mattis spoke, a "package" of suggested reforms were turned over to the senate. Among these were educational revisions university government, women's rights, and black's rights. As she concluded the four senators walked out followed by some forty members of the audience.

The resignations included about 90% of the student held offices on campus. They included all four student senators, all student members of the Student Life Commission, most of the Student Activities Board, most of the Assembly of the College of Arts and Sciences, and students on the University Senate Committees.

The actions originated in a series of meetings during the last two weeks. At these the elected leaders and other interested students came together to discuss their views on the selection of a new chancellor. Gradually the sentiment arose that a need existed for a total restructuring of university government, and a close look at many areas of university life. Based on that need, it was decided that massive resignations were in order.

The implications of the walkout are still unclear. All student government bodies have ceased operations indefinitely.

Mass rallies are scheduled for Monday at 3:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

## Varner resigns to take Nebraska job

Oakland University Chancellor Durwood B. Varner will be leaving Oakland on February 1 to take up the

ten years was long enough for one man to remain "president or chancellor of a single campus." Chancellor

University) and all it has come to be in these first ten years."

"It may well be," he

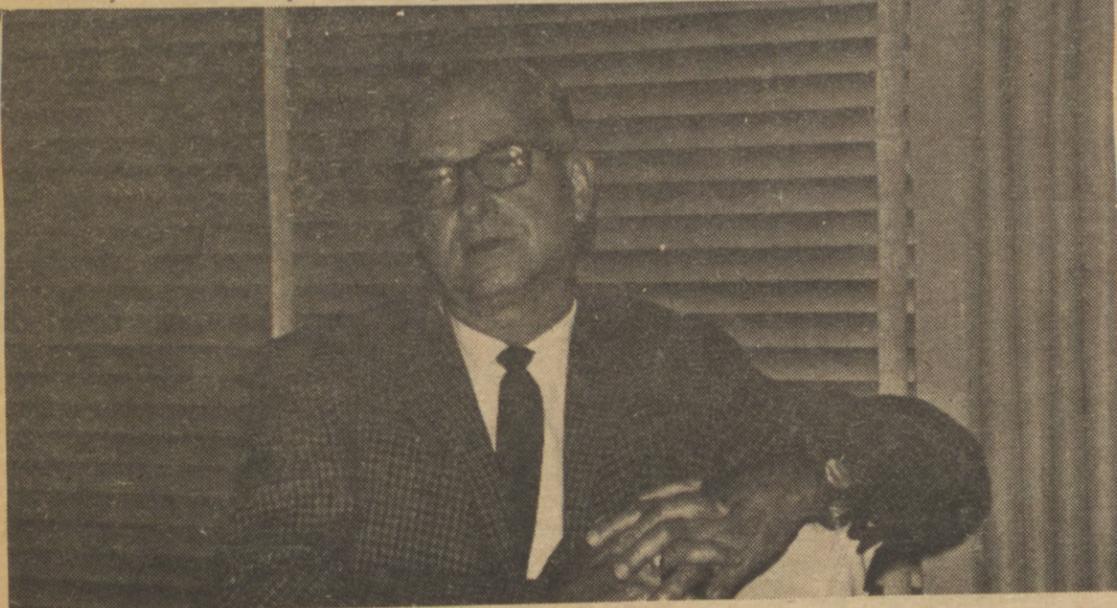
## Board to pick chancellor today

Decisions of far-reaching significance for the future of Oakland University may be made today by the Michigan State University Board of Trustees at their January meeting in East Lansing. Oakland's complete separation from MSU and the selection of a new Chancellor to succeed Durward Varner are among the issues being brought before the Board for consideration. These two key issues are interrelated.

Last year the State Board of Education concluded that the independence of branch campuses is in the best interest of higher education in Michigan. At its December 12th meeting the MSU Board of Trustees issued a resolution concurring in this position and stating its support for Oakland's independence. The Board decided at that meeting, however, to wait for sixty days before taking further action. Three days after the Board meeting Chancellor Varner announced his resignation. Some faculty members and administrators close to the independence move regarded Varner's personal influence as crucial and speculate that his leaving at this stage might be an obstacle in the path toward independence.

FOCUS: Oakland talked to several people in key administrative positions to find

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(Photo by Dick Keller)

job of chancellor of the University of Nebraska system.

Varner has held the position of chancellor of Oakland since the start of the university in 1959. In the last ten years OU's enrollment has grown from 570 to 5,800 and is currently seeking independence from Michigan State University.

Despite his attachment to Oakland University Varner decided to accept the position at University of Nebraska because he felt that

Varner voiced his feeling for Oakland University last October when it was rumored he would be chosen president of MSU.

In an exclusive interview with Focus: Oakland last October the chancellor said that he felt an emotional commitment to the faculty, staff, and general community at Oakland.

"Our commitment is here," he said, "We preferred to be at Oakland."

Chancellor Varner still has "a strong emotional commitment to it (Oakland

said, "that our greatest contribution has been made, and that now is the time for new leadership to provide the energy and creativity for the next decade."

As of February 1 Varner will be the chief administrative officer of the entire University of Nebraska system. The state colleges in Nebraska were recently merged under the leadership of one chancellor.

The system now includes three campuses; the main campus in Lincoln and two in Omaha.

editorial

# Filling the Void

an interview with . . .

Within the next few hours, the MSU Board of Trustees will take some action on the choosing of a chancellor, 1970 version. A lot has been said during the last two weeks on the subject, little of which has done much to shed light on the subject. We will attempt to improve on this situation here.

The Board has several options open to it today. One is to appoint someone acting Chancellor, and proceed during the next few months to pick their own man for the job. They could name someone acting Chancellor, sit back and wait for a new Board to be named for an independent Oakland University, and let them grapple with it. They could name a permanent Chancellor. The varia-

tions are many.

The responsive action, as we see it, requires painstaking honesty on the part of the Board members. Oakland clearly desires and needs independence. No attempt should be made to fill the position on more than an interim basis. The Board would be severely hurting this university if they took advantage of the situation and forced upon a lame-duck university a man not of its own choosing. Further, this school is immersed in one of the most tumultuous periods in its history. It needs, first, a man who can carry it through the present crises level with the least amount of difficulty, and second, the best possible man for the long haul. They may be

one and the same person, but it is totally assinine to decide before a careful search has been made. The Board's decision, then, should be merely to select a temporary Chancellor, and leave the question of permanent leader to the new Board of an independent Oakland.

For the office of temporary Chancellor, we urge the selection of DONALD O'DOWD, Univeristy Provost. His qualifications are not crystal clear. Apparently, he is exceedingly capable in the handling of academic programs. He is unknown in student life matters for all intents and purposes. For that matter, he is virtually unknown to students, period. But, because of his position as Provost, he can most easily step in and fill the void. As Provost he has been in the middle of most major decisions. Further, he has been the role of acting Chancellor when Varner has been out of town. He has the feel of the job. There would be the shortest conceivable period transition, a highly desirable situation at a time of imminent crisis. The student government is in shambles. Independence is pressing. A budget is due soon. Legislative pressure will be greater than ever. Oakland needs a man who can step into the job as rapidly as possible. Don O'Dowd is such a man.

FOCUS: What do you see as the most important issue facing Oakland today?  
O'DOWD: It's an issue that we have been concerned about for a long time, one that Chancellor Varner has stated rather succntly as how to grow gracefully. Then the question comes, what are the mechanisms by which we can do this? One of them that I think is important is the small colleges. I think we need additional inner colleges, rather varied in curricular and personnel characteristics, which continue the policy of assembling small groups of faculty and relatively small assemblages of students around some problem or project area.

FOCUS: What other methods do you see for handling this problem?

O'DOWD: My view is that we need additional curricular options in the future, and some areas that happen to be of particular concern to me are the urban study program, probably environmental studies, which are related to the first, but often are distinctly organized, and I think some work in the media fields. By media I mean the combination of the verbal, aural, and visual arts which combine both technical skills and artistic skills as well as practical interactions with people in the world.

FOCUS: Do you think Oakland should move towards a more specialized type of program, setting up more training type programs? When you get into media, you are talking in more specialized terms than has been done in the past.

O'DOWD: No, I would see these as very much multidisciplinary organizations. They would be professional, but I think History is a professional field today, as is Psychology. They would be less specialized than most of the liberal arts subjects, as I see it. These would be fields which would bring together specialists of a wide field of training and probably would involve people with a different kind of training than is now characteristic of academic faculty, not necessarily involving people with a PhD. You might have lawyers, city planners, environmental specialists who are

practitioners--able, bright people whose primary activity has been to work in these areas in communities who now would come to a campus to put together some kind of a teaching program, a training program, and an action program. This would create a whole new kind of curricular opportunity.

FOCUS: Several people on campus this year have suggested the idea of setting up a new program under which one received just a liberal arts degree. What do you think of this type of thing?

O'DOWD: I've been in favor of this for a long time. This proposal has emerged and has been submerged several times over a number of years. I happen to be a product of such a program. I took, as an undergraduate, what was called a modified major, that permitted me to take major level courses in four different departments toward a degree, and I regret that Oakland has never had that type of free-wheeling option for its students. I thought it an excellent preparation for being an administrator, at least, because it gave me at least a reasonable acquaintance with a variety of different academic disciplines that, had I had a regular pre-professional undergraduate major, I would not have had.

FOCUS: Are you basically satisfied with our present academic program and the directions that it has taken? Do you see the need for reforms?

O'DOWD: I am satisfied with what it has accomplished and I do think it needs continuous change, reform, elaboration, and improvement. I think given the resources that we've had, the people that we've had, and the pressures we've operated under, largely pressures of phenomenal growth, that we have attained what we have has been pretty remarkable.

Although people are concerned, FOCUS: If you become Chancellor, do you see yourself initiating action toward any academic reform or changes of any significance?

O'DOWD: Well, the point of initiation is real the University Senate and I would hope to work with some of its key committees trying to express some concerns

## Now You See It, Now You Don't

For the umpteenth time in seven issues, you see a very different looking version of FOCUS: Oakland. We preferred the more readable magazine format you saw before. We changed for only one reason--it's a helluva lot cheaper to print a newspaper than it is a magazine. You will be seeing some innovations in style in the coming issues, as we will do everything possible to make a tabloid newspaper that's interesting, relevant, and easy to read.

After this issue, it will be two weeks before we publish again. The University has not seen fit to grant or rent office space to student publications as yet, severely hampering our operation to date. Much of our time has been spent hassling with various administrators on this point.

As we go to print, it appears that we will have an office within a week. To finish straightening this out, and to pull ourselves together, we are stopping publication temporarily. We'll be back--as a weekly tabloid, concerning ourselves with issues relevant to students and faculty at this University.

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# Donald O'Dowd

## University Provost

of mine and hopefully to see where my views are in agreement with theirs. But I can only do this through the established mechanism in the university. I surely am interested in curricular changes, as many other people are, and I'd like to add an input to the situation and will certainly do so whether I'm Chancellor or not. Probably as Provost I would be in a much better position to do so, and that I regret.

**FOCUS:** What do you see as the student's role in planning curriculum?

**O'DOWD:** Philosophically, I think the student should have every opportunity to make comments on and proposals for the curriculum that they can conceive and make arguments for. I think it's a very important learning experience to do so. In terms of the mechanical role of student in designing the curriculum, I suspect that that is fairly severely limited by the Senate structure that we now have.

**FOCUS:** Do you agree with the Senate structure that we now have, or do you feel that there should be greater student representation involved?

**O'DOWD:** I would say that additional student representation would be a good thing for the Senate. Judging on the Senate in the past two years, I think the student Senators have made very valuable contributions to the development of University policy.

**FOCUS:** Do you feel that Oakland is in any way rac-

ially tense at this point? **O'DOWD:** I have no firsthand experience of this because of having been away, but certainly many people have asked me about this and surely are implying to me that there is a problem in this area that needs rather rapid attention.

**FOCUS:** What do you see as the mechanisms in this instance?

**O'DOWD:** I don't know that anyone has every come up with a good general proposal for the for the solution of racial problems. What I would have to do is assemble the best minds and the most experienced people in the university and ask their advice. In a way, construct a task force to give careful, thoughtful, and intelligent attention to the problem and attempt to work out solutions which will bring about an improvement in the racial relationships within the campus.

**FOCUS:** Do you feel that Oakland provides a relevant education for the Black student?

**O'DOWD:** I don't know what is the educational ideal for Black students. My guess is that there are several educations relevant to a variety of different Black students. I'm sure there is enough variety of needs and ambitions and hopes and aims that there is probably not a single curricular answer for any group of students on this campus.

**FOCUS:** We mentioned the Senate briefly a few minutes ago. What do you see as the overall role of the

student in the governing of the university, expanding that post the Senate?

**O'DOWD:** We should, wherever possible, call upon students for advice and guidance in the development of university policy. I'm also aware that wherever we have tried to do this, it turns out to be extremely hard to identify students who can give advice or students who will accept the responsibility once they have been appointed. I don't know how we resolve this problem, I think we just keep trying to find students who are willing to make a contribution and deep respecting the degree of involvement they want to make. Sometimes they are extremely helpful, other times they seem not to want to spend much time on the issues.

**FOCUS:** Why do you think this is the case?

**O'DOWD:** It's hard to identify them first, because we just don't have a highly elaborated student culture, which is organized in terms of a student government and a whole range of 300 student government committees, and so on. So there isn't a natural place to turn for students have academic obligations, jobs that they have to fulfill, families if they are commuter students, to whom they have obligations--it's just very hard for them to maintain their interest given all the competing interests.

**FOCUS:** Oakland's had a history of handling some legal violations internally rather than taking them off campus to the outside authorities. Do you see this unofficial policy as sound?

**O'DOWD:** This is an area that I have not had any opportunity to have any involvement with, and I know it's a pretty tangled area. I guess I have to consult and talk with people before having any definite attainment. Philosophically, I'm sort of committed to minimizing the university's role in many of these traditional areas of student relationships. But that may not be practical. **FOCUS:** During the last couple of years, the philosophy of the in loco parentis has been less and less prevalent. Do you view this as a healthy trend? What do



Photo by Steve Schaffer

you see as the university's role in the area of parental rules and such?

**O'DOWD:** I hope the university could find ways of building the structure of rules and obligations hopefully to protect the rights and the integrity of the individual students, at the same time giving as much freedom as is possible, while respecting the needs and desires of many students for a great deal of the time managing their own lives.

**FOCUS:** After independence is achieved, do you feel that there should be a student or students on the new Board of Trustees?

**O'DOWD:** The appointments

to the Board of Trustees are for eight year terms, and it seems to me that that is not reasonable to appoint a student. Yet the life of the term is set by the Constitution of the State of Michigan and can only be changed by a vote of all the people of the state. Therefore it is very unlikely that the term of the Board of Trustees will change and it is very unlikely that a governor or a legislator would approve making an appointment of a person whose commitment to the area is not yet established. So I don't think it very likely that students will be on the Board.

### Board Meeting Cont. from page 1

out what they believed the Board would be most likely to do about these matters. Most of them felt that the Board in naming a Chancellor would act in accordance with the wishes of the University, as expressed in a University Senate resolution passed on Tuesday which endorsed the appointment of Oakland's Provost O'Dowd.

A separate resolution approved by the University Senate Tuesday asks the Board and the other pertinent state authorities to "grant autonomy to Oakland University at the earliest possible date, and not later than January 1, 1970." The administrators canvassed were hopeful that the separation of Oakland from Michigan State would be initiated by the Board of Trustees

at its February meeting or, perhaps, even at today's session. Most believed the selection of the Chancellor would not influence the independence bid, appearing confident that, in any case, the Board would take action in line with the philosophy it expressed in December. But a few of them refuse to take anything for granted with so much at stake. If by some chance the Board of Trustees retreats from its independence position, the University will look to its Chancellor for leadership in achieving separation.

Regardless of who is named Chancellor, it is generally expected that he will offer his resignation to the Oakland Board of Trustees when independence is attained.



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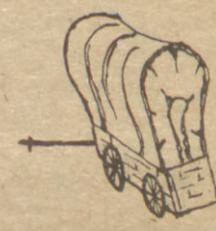
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# a r t s & m e d i a

## Film as Art

Those of us who have been involved with the Classic Film Series feel the need to present some explanation as to our motives and purpose in creating it. In most general terms, our purpose is to develop a more vital film culture and a more educated awareness on the Oakland campus.

That the film is a unique art form and needs to be dealt with on its own critical terms seems to us to be a self-evident truth. Our experience, of course, has been that depressingly few people accept this idea and that self-appointed critics of the medium rarely step beyond such exercises as star listings, plot summations, literary comparisons, or sociological analyses of films as they relate to their place and time.

We feel that the outstanding schedule of films we have assembled, along with our efforts to provide background and context for them, can be instrumental in making you a "film buff" -- a "cinemate" as well as a literate person. We seek to provide fine films for the appreciative audience and develop appreciation among the indifferent or skeptical.

Beginning with the premise that the film is art, we further assert that the director

is the artist. Granted that films at best are a cooperative effort beset with limitations and contaminations (an imposing technological component, the demands of men of business, the tastes of mass audiences, to name a few) and that all of these evils appear to take their clearest form in a familiar entity called "Hollywood." But, the more we view films, the more firmly we become convinced that many directors have been able to find the proper conditions and the sympathetic collaboration necessary for full expression of their talents and/or have been able, by strength of their own personal vision, to transcend the myriad practical problems of film making. As with painting, literature, music, or any of the other arts, the mark of the creative artist, whether he works in Hollywood or Paris, is unmistakable.

French critic Andre Brazin explained this whole concept thusly: "Author & Subject -- Work." As he saw it, for the true artists of the medium, the personal factor is crucial and constant; the numerous and constantly non-artistic variables are, for all practical purposes, denied. This, then, suggests a pattern of considering directors

in terms of their total output and of considering individual films in terms of their director, an idea that is universally accepted in the other arts, of course.

Not only is film an art and the director its artist, it appears to us that film will be the 20th century art. It is the only art form to be created and wholly developed within historical times (largely within the 20th century); with the exception of

music, no other art form is available to the whole world at once exactly as it was first created; and no other art form has had such a large audience.

Not only is film able to incorporate the other arts, it adds to these elements the techniques of editing and camera movement which are the very essence of the medium. It is these two aspects of the film which enable it to reproduce the human mental and visual processes and to manipulate time and space in ways unknown to the other mediums.

Perhaps these ideas begin to explain the rapid development of interest in films which is most evident among youth--as an editor of *Psychology Today* (July, 1968) points out, "This is the generation that goes to the movies to find out whether to read the book." Robert Corrigan, Dean of the School of Arts at New York University, further asserts that "Film is unquestionably the dominant art form for everyone under the age of thirty-five, and every college campus in the country attests to the fact."

Experimental film makers are accepting the challenge of this new medium and are pushing forward on all fronts in an attempt to expand the definition of film



(Photo by Don Hudson)

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