



OU NEWS

O'Dowd takes SUNY post

Oakland University President Donald D. O'Dowd will become executive vice chancellor of the State University of New York January 1.

O'Dowd's appointment was announced by the executive committee of the SUNY Board of Trustees at a meeting today (Friday) in New York City. The SUNY system, with 64 campuses, 340,000 students, and a budget of just under \$800 million, is the largest university system in the country.

O'Dowd, 52, has been chief executive officer at Oakland for nearly a decade. He was named OU chancellor in February, 1970, by the Michigan State University Board of Trustees. When OU became independent later that year, the newly appointed OU Board of Trustees named O'Dowd the first president of Oakland University.

Prior to his appointment as chancellor, O'Dowd served as chief academic officer at OU under Oakland's first chancellor, D.B. Varner. O'Dowd joined the OU staff in 1960 as associate professor of psychology and assistant to the dean of the faculty. He was named dean of the university in 1961 and provost in 1966. The title of dean of graduate study was added in 1968.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, David B. Lewis, chairperson, said the board accepted, with regret, O'Dowd's decision, but added that the board certainly can understand O'Dowd's attraction to the SUNY position.

"We can take pride that his new duties are not only a professional challenge for him, but a reflection of the leadership skills he demonstrated at Oakland," Lewis said.

"Oakland has been very fortunate in having two extremely capable leaders during its history. President O'Dowd is leaving a rich legacy, as did Chancellor Varner before him."

"The board extends to Don and Jan best wishes and gratitude for giving so much of themselves to Oakland," Lewis said.

Lewis praised O'Dowd's leadership of Oakland during the 1970s, citing particularly the development of a 15-year plan in 1978, continued enrollment growth throughout the decade, and a substantial broadening of the curriculum.

Enrollment grew from 8,000 to more than 11,000 students during the 1970s, a decade which saw little enrollment growth throughout the state.

During O'Dowd's tenure as president, Oakland initiated its first doctoral programs (engineering and reading) and added significantly to the number of masters' degree programs. At the undergraduate level, a School of Nursing was added, as were a Center for Health Sciences and a Center for Career and General Studies. Many new majors and concentrations also were added in the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Human and Educational Services.

The Board of Trustees will work toward assuring continued progress and a smooth administrative transition, Lewis said.

A native of New Hampshire, O'Dowd earned his undergraduate degree at Dartmouth College and his doctorate in social psychology from Harvard University. He was a faculty member and acting dean of freshmen at Wesleyan College before coming to Oakland in 1960.

He and his wife, Jan, have four children.

In moving to SUNY, O'Dowd will be rejoining former Michigan State University President Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. Wharton, now chancellor of the SUNY system, was president at MSU from 1969 to 1977. One of his first acts as MSU president was to recommend to the MSU Board that O'Dowd be named chancellor at OU.