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EMBA helps Beaumont's Physician President build leadership skills and bridge gap between doctors and administrators

Dr. Luke Elliott's dual roles as medical staff president of Beaumont Hospitals, Grosse Pointe, and as a family physician at Shorepoint family practice, professionally complement and parallel each other in many ways. Yet, it is the differences and complexities between the two positions which have brought new focus and challenge to his life.

"I want to bridge the gap between administrators and doctors," Elliott said. "In my role as medical staff president I serve as an administrator, but I think and act like a doctor. I realize it's sometimes hard for a doctor to understand the administrator's point of view, but to truly serve our patients; the communication between the administration and doctors must be stronger. It needs to be a collaborative effort."

As a believer in lifelong learning, Elliott turned to Oakland University's Executive MBA program in Health Care Management to learn the business and leadership skills he needed to promote better understanding between administrators and physicians.

"I wanted to learn business nomenclature and understand the mind of the business man," he said. "I've always been mission driven, and as a doctor, my mission is providing for the medical needs of a community. But to fulfill any mission, you must first finance that mission, which means understanding business and learning how everything impacts the bottom line. OU's Executive MBA program is helping me to see things from that business perspective."

This new business perspective also brings practical benefits to his everyday life. "When I read the *Wall Street Journal*, I now understand how global financial news can have implications on my own life. Most importantly, as a board member of the Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries, I can look at their balance sheets in a more logical way and help them to achieve their objectives."

Elliott, who chose the Executive MBA program in OU's School of Business Administration because of its "reputation as a business school, its respectable value and its affiliation with Beaumont Hospital," finds the intense program very challenging, but believes it is a path he was destined to take.

"There are more and more doors opening for me within administration, so whatever I am doing, I must be doing it well. But to be an effective leader, I must learn to do it even better," he said, adding, "My new schedule is tough. I had to cut back on my physician hours and sacrifice some family time, but the end result will be worth it."

Only one semester into the intense 21-month program, Elliott appreciates the EMBA's personalized approach. "The teachers are incredibly caring and have the ability to teach a very complex subject so that a simple doctor, like me, can understand," Elliott said, who was impressed with Balaji Rajagopalan, associate professor, MIS and faculty director, graduate programs and CIBRE research, and Donna Free, coordinator, Executive MBA program, for their caring attitude towards students.

He also eagerly learns from his EMBA peers. "The students come from so many different vocations, and provide very different perspectives on a subject that the fellow students provide another form of learning," he explains.

Elliott, who dreams of developing a more trusting interdependent relationship between hospital administrators and doctors, encourages other doctors to learn more about business principles and procedures. "Such knowledge broadens our world view, helps put financial data in perspective and provides a well-rounded understanding of how health care operates within our medical community."

*The Executive MBA (EMBA) at Oakland University's SBA prepares highly motivated professionals to become dynamic global business leaders and offers two different but complementary concentrations in Health Care Management and Information Systems Leadership. Learn more at the upcoming information session Friday, March 19 at 5:30 p.m., 238 Elliott Hall. For more information, contact Monica Milczarski at (248) 370-2059, e-mail milczars@oakland.edu or visit the **Executive MBA** Web site.*

SUMMARY

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