

Trustees sweeten the pot for president

Sweet inks new contract with YSU, will give back \$6,106 of pay raise

LEONARD CRIST | *The Jambar*

President David Sweet will continue to hold the top administrative position at Youngstown State University through June 2010 and receive a pay raise under a new contract unanimously approved last Tuesday by the



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YSU Board of Trustees.

The contract, retroactive to July 1, 2004, sets Sweet's base salary at \$209,626, a 3 percent increase. Sweet last received a raise in July 2002, which set his annual base salary at \$203,520.

Sweet, who was not on campus for Tuesday's meeting, told trustees that he will donate this year's \$6,106 raise to YSU, with the money going to the Andrew's Student Wellness and Recreation Center and needs-based scholarships.

Sweet will receive, for the duration of the contract, a pay raise each year of no less than 2 percent and no more than 4 percent, as dictated by the Consumer Price Index's federal cost of living adjustments.

Board Chair Larry Esterly said the extended contract will provide YSU with "the stability and benefit of Dr. Sweet's proven effective leadership through a set of years which will present unusual and dramatic challenges to the institution."

Specifically, Esterly mentioned the implementation of the campus wide technology plan, the continuation of the university's centennial capital fund-raising campaign, the implementation of the campus master plan, the celebration of the YSU's centennial in 2008, and a national accreditation review by the North Central Accreditation Association in 2007-09.

Esterly also said Sweet has accomplished much since arriv-

ing at YSU four years ago. Esterly cited ever increasing enrollment, the construction of the privately funded recreation center, an increase in campus research activities, the completion of the University Courtyard Apartments and the development of the Early College High School and Wick Neighbors Inc., initiatives.

In a statement released by the university, Sweet thanked the trustees for their continued con-

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confidence and said he looks forward to the future of YSU.

"We have made much progress over the past four years, particularly in the areas of enrollment, diversity and community partnerships. I look forward to working with the trustees, faculty, staff, students and the community to build on those successes," Sweet was quoted in the statement.

Esterly said the opportunity to review Sweet's contract came up after it became necessary to change language in his original contract with regards to travel and entertainment reim-

bursement. Sweet's previous contract was not due to expire until June 2006.

An April 2004 Jambar investigation raised questions regarding Sweet's travel and entertainment spending over an 18-month period. An external audit of his spending practices later revealed "no improprieties."

The new contract calls for Sweet to report his travel and entertainment expenses directly to the board on a quarterly basis. There is no fixed limit on spending, but Esterly said, "we expect to be rigorous in looking at those travel and entertainment expenses."

Another major change in the new contract is the phasing out of Sweet's annu-

al car and housing allowance.

Sweet receives annual housing allowance of \$52,615 and an annual car allowance of \$7,938, but over the next 3.5 years, starting in January 2005, these allowances will be eliminated, with the money gradually being rolled into Sweet's base salary.

Twenty five percent of the allowance will be rolled into the base salary on January 1, 2005, with 33 percent of the remainder being rolled in beginning July 1, 2005. Fifty percent of the remainder of the allowance will be rolled in beginning July 1, 2006, and the rest of the allowance will be incorporated into Sweet's

base salary on July 1, 2007.

The contract also calls for Sweet to be "compensated for any increase in local taxes resulting from the incorporation of the allowance into his salary."

Trustee John Pogue said the overall amount to the university will remain the same, but the change "does provide President Sweet with a modest adjustment in the sense he has a somewhat larger salary for the purpose of retirement calculation."

Ivan Maldonado, vice president of YSU-

Association of Classified Employees, the staff union on campus, said he felt the package offered to Sweet was more than generous.

He noted specifically YSU picking up any increase in local taxes resulting from the allowance roll over.

"Nobody has that here. That's pretty phenomenal. I don't think student employees get that," Maldonado said.

Trustee William Bresnahan said the elimination of the allowance will make Sweet's salary more

transparent.

"It provides additional clarity for all of us," Bresnahan said. "There's one number, we can all relate to that number."

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