

New dean appointed

BY JOLENE POWELL
Jambar Editor

The appointment of the new dean to the Colleges of Arts and Sciences has stirred up some controversy among the committee that chose the finalists.

One member of the search committee praised the decision, another disagreed, and another expressed surprise.

The committee, made up of YSU faculty members, student representatives and community members, narrowed the candidates from the 93 that applied to four finalists. The finalists included Dr. Robert Bolla from St. Louis University, Dr. Harry Gafney from City University of New York, Dr. Harold Omes from Southern Utah University and Dr. Carol Blackshire-Belay from Indiana State University.

According to Dr. Paul Peterson, search committee chair, the four finalists were narrowed down to two top candidates. These two candidates' names were then passed on to Dr. Tony Atwater, university provost, and Dr. David Sweet, university president. These two administrators chose Bolla. Blackshire-Belay was the other top candidate.

Peterson said, "Bolla brings a very strong interdisciplinary background to YSU, with experience in both humanities and sciences. This is important to the College of Arts and Sciences."

"Bolla has a breadth of new experiences to move the university to a new level," said Peterson.

Bolla also has an interest in general education courses and is "strongly committed to the first year student experience" he added.

Dr. Victor Wan-Tatah, another search committee member, disagrees with this assessment of Bolla. Wan-Tatah said he thinks Blackshire-Belay was the more qualified candidate.

"Blackshire-Belay was more versed with general education requirements than Bolla. We missed out on a big opportunity by letting Blackshire-Belay go. Her credentials were more compelling and luminous than Bolla's," said Wan-Tatah.

Wan-Tatah also said he felt the odds were stacked against Blackshire-Belay from the beginning and one of the reasons for this adversity is that Blackshire-Belay is a black female. Wan-Tatah added that for a university that claims to promote diversity it must not really matter.

According to the affirmative action plan from the office of equal opportunity, YSU hires in accordance with federal and state affirmative action and equal opportunity laws. The plan also says YSU's hiring procedures are "designed to ensure that YSU makes a 'good faith' effort to employ the best qualified and diverse administrative-professional staff."

However, according to the office of Equal Opportunity six of the seven deans of the colleges on campus are white. The

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seventh dean is Asian and is the interim dean until Bolla starts on July 1, 2002.

Yet other members of the search committee remain neutral. Dr. Nathan Ritchey said, "We were very fortunate to have two great candidates. I

looked forward to working under either one."

Ritchey did say he was a "bit surprised about the decision given the diversity issues."

One of the committee's two student representatives,

who wishes to remain anonymous, said she would have preferred Blackshire-Belay, but Bolla will do a good job too.

Bolla is the former chair of the department of biology at St. Louis University. According to YSU's candidate search com-

mittee, Bolla received his Ph.D. in zoology from the University of Massachusetts in 1967.

Bolla is replacing retired dean Dr. Barbara Brothers. Brothers retired last July. Dr. Ikram Khawaja has been interim dean since July 1, 2001.