

Courant.com

President's Term Changed College

By REGINE LABOSSIÈRE

Courant Staff Writer

December 30, 2007

Just take a look around at the campus and the make-up of the faculty and you'll know what President Jonathan Daube has done for Manchester Community College, his colleagues say.

They list the diversity of the faculty, the construction of a new building for Great Path Academy and the improved campus as some of Daube's greatest achievements during his two decades of presiding over the college.

Daube, who retires in June, said he will remember those successes fondly, as well as his many friends at the school.

"I just have a feeling it's enough; quit-while-you're-ahead sort of thing," Daube, 70, said recently.

On top of the shelves and desk in his office, the many photos of three small children — one girl and twin boys — tell of a reason for his departure.

"I have grandchildren and I really do want to spend time with them. I really do want to watch them grow up," he said.

He added, "There are other things I want to do before I'm decrepit."

Daube, who is one of the longest-serving presidents of a community college in the state, announced his retirement the day after graduation in May. His colleagues said the news was bittersweet.

"We've known each other a long time and I have great admiration and respect for him both as a person and as an educator," said Toni Dolan, a chairman of MCC's regional advisory board. "Of course, I recognize that he's given 30 years of his life to community colleges and he's gone above and beyond what anyone could expect. I was a little saddened that he would not be there anymore."

Dolan called Daube her mentor.

"One only needs to look at where MCC was 20 years ago to fully appreciate where he has

taken the college, in terms of not just the facility but being a president who cares about the students, who cares about the faculty needs and balancing that with the institution as a whole," she said.

Dolan said Daube helped lead the charge to bring Great Path Academy, a magnet school for high school juniors and seniors, to MCC to help reverse the high drop-out rate in town. The school, which is already at MCC, will move soon to a brand new building on the campus.

Another of Daube's achievements is the change in the faculty over 20 years.

"The single thing I'm most pleased with is the kind of hiring we've been able to do," Daube said, explaining that he's responsible for about 90 percent of the hires and interviews the finalists for each position.

"I think we have a very good facility and staff now," he said.

Thomas Bavier, dean of administrative affairs, said Daube pushed for the hiring to focus on different cultures, religions and ethnicities.

"I think one of his most important and lasting contributions to MCC is to focus the college attention on the importance of affirmative action and diversity among faculty and staff to create a climate and a culture that welcomes and embraces the differences among faculty and staff," Bavier said.

Then there is the look and design of the campus.

"Let's face it, back 20 years ago, it was the Lowe Building, the Bicentennial Bandshell and the lower campus, which was made up of those supposedly temporary buildings down there that lasted 20 years," Dolan said. "Now it's a beautiful campus with state of the art facilities and now the construction of [the Great Path Academy]. From a facilities point of view, it's miles from where it was."

Bavier said the school has invested about \$65 million in the buildings and technology in the last seven years. Daube's colleagues say those investments have helped attract more students who wouldn't have considered attending MCC years ago, such as more students ages 18-22 and more people who live throughout Greater Hartford.

"When he came to the college, we were rather provincial and local. I think he had a vision of us beyond just being this local, almost neighborhood, college and he was able to bring that about," said longtime friend and faculty English Professor Michael DiRaimo.

Dolan said the search advisory committee began searching for Daube's successor in October. The school hopes to name a successor before Daube's last day, June 30, and the board of trustees will make the final decision.

The school is planning a farewell reception for Daube at the college in May. Soon after that, Daube will begin his retired life.

Daube has three grown children with his wife, Linda. Born in England, he said he will be the chairman of the development trust of the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, his alma mater. He will also teach a course on community colleges at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. And he hopes to do a little writing and traveling. For a long time he has dreamed of visiting India.

Daube has ideas about the future of MCC, but he will take those with him when he leaves the college.

"No institution is perfect, but I think that's up to my successor — look at the place a little differently, I hope, and see things I didn't have the imagination to see," Daube said. "I hope it's someone who's strong and imaginative."

Contact Régine Labossière at rlabossiere@courant.com.

To view a video interview with Jonathan Daube, and see photos of construction around campus, visit www.courant.com/mcc.

Copyright © 2007, [The Hartford Courant](#)