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Photo by Steve Dykes

New University Pres. Paul Olum, following the announcement of his appointment: "I don't intend to do anything different."

Promises to fight for funding

Olum wins University presidency

By SALLY HODGKINSON
Of the Emerald

Paul Olum anxiously paced his office Friday morning, waiting for the announcement he knew was coming.

When the word came that he was officially president of the University, Olum grinned and hugged his secretaries.

"I can't think of anything more profound to say than I'm delighted," he said.

A five-minute conference call meeting of the State Board of Higher Education was all it took to end a nine-month search and unanimously appoint Olum president. Soon after, Olum was facing 14 microphones and tape recorders as the press waited expectantly for quotes from the 62-year-old president.

Olum spent most of the impromptu press conference extolling the virtues of the University. Although the institution has a few internal "nagging problems" such as athletics, Olum said he rates the University among the top 20 public institutions in the country.

Olum said his general goal is to "take a very good university and make it into a great university."

Although the quality of the faculty and academics is good, Olum said he'd like to boost the quality of University students.

He wants to attract Oregon's best students by offering excellent academic programs.

But the quality of the institution "hinges on a reasonable level of support" from the Legislature, Olum said, citing studies that show the University,

when compared to schools with the same general quality, is 20 to 30 percent underfunded.

One of his responsibilities as president will be to secure support for the University by impressing the people of Oregon with the school's quality, Olum

said.

Olum took over as acting president last July when William Boyd left the presidency to head the Johnson Foundation in Racine, Wisc.

Making it clear from the beginning that he would like to

drop "acting" from his presidential title, Olum then said "I don't intend to be a caretaker president. I expect to act like I'm going to be here for a long time."

Now that he is president, Olum said, "I don't intend to do anything different. The only thing different is that I can relax now."

Olum said he enjoys the challenge of the presidency.

"I like to fight. And fortunately I already know what the pressures are," he said.

As the 13th president of the University, Olum will receive a yearly salary of \$61,368 and an expense allowance of \$4,068. He will also be offered residence in the home the University maintains for its presidents.

Before becoming acting president, Olum was vice president for academic affairs for four years. Olum was dean of the natural sciences at the University of Texas at Austin from 1974-76. He was also professor at mathematics at Cornell University for 25 years.

Olum said he plans to stay at least five years in the presidency.

"Less than that isn't fair to the University.

"I want to look back and say, 'That's a terrific place. I helped build that, and it made a difference that I was there.'"

Harter blamed for slush fund

Former University basketball coach Dick Harter may have been involved in a secret travel agency account used to bring player Felton Sealey from Boston to Eugene in violation of NCAA rules, according to court testimony Friday.

The possible connection of Harter to the secret fund — set up without University administration knowledge — surfaced during the trial of former assistant basketball coach Ron Billingslea on theft charges.

Billingslea is charged with stealing \$1,680 in state funds through a Bronson Travel agency account in his name.

Harter left the University in 1978 to become head basketball coach at Penn State.

According to testimony, Sealey apparently received an extra flight from Boston to Eugene during efforts to recruit the basketball player.

Sealey ended his University playing career last month.

The travel account was funded with refunds from unused airline tickets purchased by Billingslea for recruiting travels and charged against the athletic department account, officials have said.

Lane County assistant district attorney Darryl Larson contended that the account had

been set up to finance improper recruiting practices and was a "laundering" operation in which unused airline tickets were turned into money.

Billingslea's defense attorney Larry Roloff did not dispute the fact that the former assistant coach received two checks in April 1978 from the travel account totaling \$1,680. But Roloff told the jury Billingslea had no intention of laundering money, and that he felt the checks had been authorized.

Billingslea was quoted in court by police investigator Roy Foster as saying that he did not open the travel account in his name. Billingslea told investigators that it is conceivable Harter and a travel agency employee set up the account without telling him, Foster said.

Revelations of secret travel accounts are not new to the University. Several football players were penalized last year by the National Collegiate Athletic Association and Pacific-10 officials for receiving airline tickets from another secret travel agency account set up by University football coaches.

Billingslea's trial will continue at 10 a.m. Tuesday.