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# HASTINGS LAW NEWS

Special Edition

Hastings College of the Law

San Francisco, California

April 20, 1987

## Faculty Critical of Board Action

By DAVID DANIELS  
Editor-in-Chief

Chairman of the Board Harold Dobbs met with the faculty last Friday to discuss the hiring of consultant Robert Kerley and the proposed reorganization of the college's administration. According to Acting Academic Dean Gail Bird, the meeting was "essentially informational," but many faculty members expressed "deep concern" over the proposed reorganization plan.

The meeting was described by Bird as "courteous on both sides," but another faculty member told the *Law News* that Dobbs was "arrogant" and "condescending" to the faculty and that faculty members expressed outrage at the Board's failure to consult with the faculty over the proposed changes.

Professor Samuel Thurman, Chairman of the Faculty's Executive Committee and former Dean of Stanford Law School, met with Dobbs on Thursday and "made it quite clear that the faculty is to have a significant role in any restructuring of the college." According to Thurman, the faculty expressed unanimity on this point at the meeting on Friday.

Although the Board has not revealed the specific outlines of the plan, the *Law News* has learned that, under Kerley's present ad-

ministration at least, student services (including admissions and records), administrative services, physical plant services, development and personnel have all been removed from the supervision of Dean Bert Prunty and placed under the direction of a "chief financial officer" (Kerley) who reports directly to the Board (see chart below).

The reorganization appears to be an attempt to separate financial matters from academic affairs, and this has sparked strong faculty criticism. "Fiscal management exists solely to support academic purposes" stated Dean Bird "and I don't see how the two can be realistically separated." Executive Committee Chairman Thurman also expressed doubt that "clear-cut distinctions" between academic and financial matters could be made, but went on to state that the proposal was "sketchy" and that more detailed information was necessary before it could be analyzed.

proposal was not provided to the faculty by Chairman Dobbs at Friday's meeting, according to Dean Bird, because the Board's deliberations

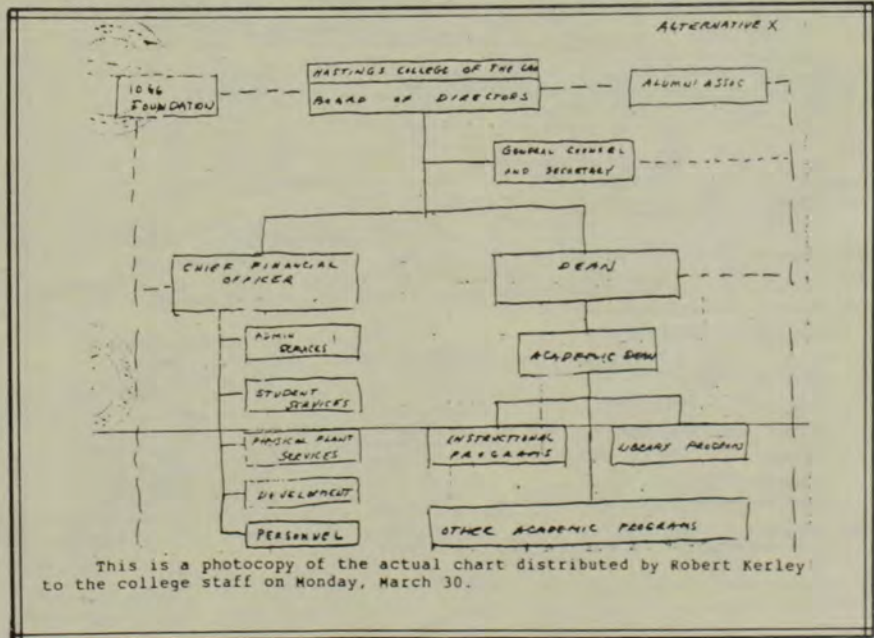


Board Chairman Harold Dobbs

were conducted in executive session. Dobbs did tell the faculty that they would be more fully informed

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Detailed information on the



## SPECIAL EDITION

This is the first in what will probably be a series of special editions of the *Hastings Law News*. The question of the reorganization of the college (as reported in the April 14 issue of the *Law News*) is of great importance to students, faculty and staff, as well as to the future of the college as a whole. The *Law News* is committed to providing the Hastings Community with coverage of this reorganization and will do so through this medium until the matter is resolved. The next regular edition of the *Law News* will appear May 5th.

# EDITORIAL

The Law News has consistently been outspoken in its support of the College and its Board of Directors. We have defended actions of the Board which others have criticized and we have attacked those who levied the criticisms. We have trusted the Board to act in the best interest of the College. We now believe that our trust has been misplaced.

The predecessor of the current Board is accused of having diverted \$800,000. of scholarship funds to the purchase of real estate. Instead of replacing the misappropriated money, the current Board is devoting \$50,000. to the hiring of outside counsel and another \$96,000 (according to the San Francisco Examiner) to the hiring of Robert Kerley. If the Board had used this money for the repayment of the misused scholarship funds, almost 20% of those funds would have been replenished by now. Instead, certain members of the Board appear more interested in creating an expensive smokescreen to conceal their own wrongdoing than in serving the interests of the College.

The entire Board must accept responsibility for the acts of its Chairman, and Chairman Dobbs has shown himself to be self-interested, irresponsible and arrogant. Dobbs has stated that he has "no responsibility" to justify the actions of the Board to students, faculty or the tax-paying public. We are left to wonder whether Dobbs answers even to the Almighty. Surely Board members must realize that such an attitude on the part of their chairman does no credit to them or to the school as a whole.

Not only have the recent actions of the Board been sullied by the self-interested motives of Chairman Dobbs and made suspect by the deliberate veil of secrecy cast over them by resort to closed meetings and lack of communication, but the wisdom of the actions themselves must be called into question. Attempting to separate financial and academic affairs will inevitably lead to limitations on academic freedom and a decline of academic standards. The present Dean is a member of the faculty; and, as such, his first commitment is to the academic affairs of the college. Turning over the management of the college to a bureaucrat who has no obligation to the faculty and reports directly to a Board that has proven itself to have little regard for either faculty or students will prove to be a serious mistake.

Despite recent events, the Law News does not advocate the dissolution of our independent Board of Directors. We continue to hope that the Board will set its own house in order by repudiating its Chairman and by making a full disclosure of the reorganization plan and the motivation behind it. We look forward to the day when students, faculty and the public can again have confidence in the Board's integrity.

## Faculty Critical of Board

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following the closed session of the Board scheduled for this Wednesday.

Although the scope of the reorganization plan is becoming more clear, the motivation behind it remains obscure. Sources in the administration and on the Board have stated that the reorganization represents an attempt by Chairman Dobbs to shift the blame for past improprieties onto Dean Bert Prunty.

Former Hastings Dean Marvin Anderson, now residing in Honolulu, shares this view and is quoted in the Recorder as saying that Dobbs and General Counsel Max Jamison are deliberately attempting

that both Dobbs and Jamison were "fully informed" of the transactions that took place in the 1970's and are now "lying through their teeth." Anderson called

Dobbs and Jamison were "fully informed"

Dobbs and Jamison "pygmies who have not even the integrity to admit to their responsibilities" and suggested that the present controversy is the result of a personal vendetta against Prunty.

Ex-Dean Anderson:

Dobbs and Jamison are "pygmies who have not even the integrity to admit to their responsibilities."

to undermine Dean Prunty in order to protect themselves. Anderson stated

Professor Van Kessel, a member of the Faculty Executive Committee, stated that the faculty does not know the reasons behind the reorganization and are "relying on the good faith of the Board." Van Kessel said that the faculty expects to be consulted after the meeting of the Board on the 22nd. When contacted by the Law News, however, Board Chairman Dobbs stated that he had "no responsibility to provide any rationale for the Board's actions to anyone."

## Dean Prunty denies wrongdoing

In a statement released to San Francisco newspapers by his attorneys, Dean Bert Prunty denied any wrongdoing in connection with the purchase of property by the college prior to his tenure as dean. Prunty also read a statement to the faculty at its meeting last Friday in which he asserted that "all the decisions I have made have been in the best interest of this school and of our students."

The following is the complete text of Prunty's statement to the press:

"The public statements made by Chairman Dobbs and some other members of the Board concerning the current inquiry into Hastings' financial management are both inaccurate and misleading. The inquiry by the Attorney General was directed to matters in which I was not involved. They occurred before I was Dean of this school, at a time when Mr. Dobbs was chairman of the Board Finance Committee, and the current General Counsel, Max Jamison, was also a member of the Board.

"I have engaged in no action which was not in the best interests of this law school and consistent with my responsibility as Dean. To suggest otherwise is outrageous. Undoubtedly there are some procedures followed and decisions made which both I and the Board would do differently today. We are all capable of improvement and none of us has perfect judgement.

"I have made every effort to assist the Board in the current inquiry and to respond to suggestions for improvement in procedures. I am proud of the progress made by the law school under my administration, and intend to continue to serve the college and this community."

### HASTINGS LAW NEWS

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