

8-4-2016

Good Stewards

Eric F. Spina
University of Dayton, efspina@udayton.edu

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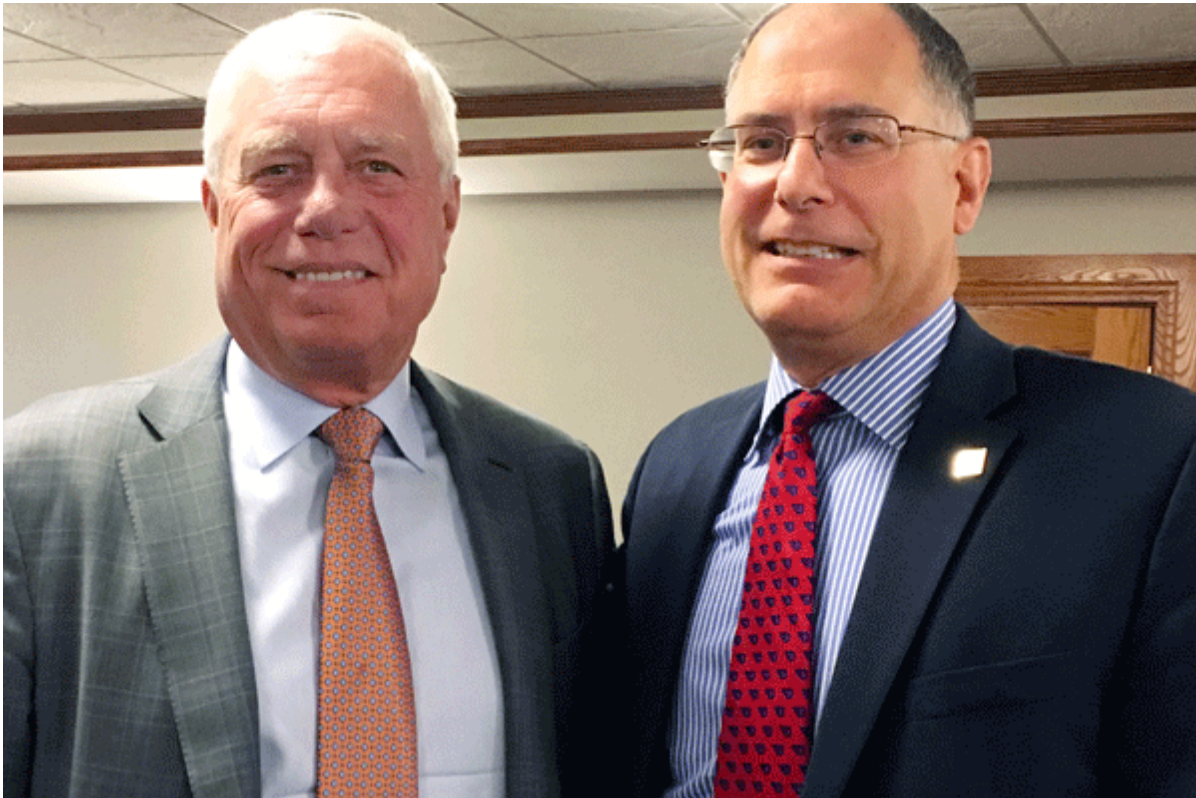
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Thursday August 4, 2016

Good Stewards

By Eric Spina

As I discerned whether to pursue the University of Dayton's presidency last year, I looked at whether this was a university that truly works collaboratively, takes risks and strives for greatness.

Watching the University of Dayton's board of trustees navigate through the presidential search — in partnership with faculty, staff and students — I quickly learned that UD's foundation was strong. The board acted with care, listened attentively and respected a diversity of opinions throughout the process.

I recently met with new board chair Dave Yeager and the board's executive committee to begin framing our work for this year and beyond. I left that first meeting with deep respect for our trustees, their commitment to our community of learners, and the level of expertise they bring.

Lay and religious, entrepreneurs and teachers, they are not unlike the eclectic group Blessed William Joseph Chaminade brought together after the French Revolution as the basis for the Society of Mary. They care deeply about our mission and our future.

The best leaders model the behavior they value. With outgoing chair Steve Cobb '86, chairman of Henny Penny Corp., I witnessed a compassionate, patient, savvy Marianist leader who sought and valued a variety of perspectives. With Dave Yeager '75, chairman of the board and CEO of Hub Group Inc. in Chicago, I admire his thoughtful, deliberate style. He's a strong listener who led the presidential search in a manner that met with respect from the Marianists, faculty, staff, students and alumni. Father Marty Solma, S.M., provincial of the Marianist Province of the United States, continues to serve the board in the critical role of vice chair, bringing a focus on mission, passion for community building and a caring concern for all members of the University family.

I have begun meeting one on one with trustees to get to know them, gain their perspective on the University and receive their best advice for a new president. I am committed to seeing all of them within the next two months, and know I will be in a better position to serve Dayton as a result.

All great universities stay true to their mission as they adapt for the times. As faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends take the next year to develop an aspirational vision for the University of Dayton, I am confident the board of trustees will help us respond courageously to the myriad challenges facing higher education and support our path to excellence.

This is a board of bold thinkers and prudent risk takers who realize we have a special obligation to use our research, scholarship and creativity to make a positive difference in the world. They are serving the University of Dayton with skillfulness, dedication — and a can-do spirit — as we strive for greatness together.