

Budget Development

January 29, 2002

Colleagues,

Welcome back to a new semester! I trust your holiday break was rewarding and restful, although it probably seems like a distant memory by now. Over break, I had some time to reflect on how far we have come over the past several years and on our prospects for progress during this semester and beyond. Despite national and state economic troubles, Oakland's future is promising, to say the least. And, with your continued hard work and creativity, we should see significant advancements in the near term.

There are several reasons for this, primary among them being the collective intellectual power of our faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends. Recent efforts to advance our teaching and learning mission have resulted in notable achievements, including:

- * National accreditation of the university and 36 school and program accreditations
- * Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching recognition of OU as one of the country's 110 doctoral research-intensive universities
- * dozens of new research projects and partnerships with business, industry, government and the community
- * the addition of many new degree programs
- * U.S. News and World Report ranking of Oakland among the top national public universities

For more on our recent achievements, you may want to check out several areas of the university's website: the new "Year in Review" section on The News @ OU page (which should be posted later this week), the "Spotlight on OU" section on the About OU page, and the "Registry of Distinction" on the Faculty and Staff news page.

The addition of new programs, and new faculty to teach and engage in important research, scholarship and creative endeavors; the addition of new facilities to improve the quality of teaching and learning; and maintaining the quality of our incoming students - even while enrollment increases - all this is the result of the commitment of the university community to make Oakland even better. I see this commitment in our successes, and I see this commitment when I talk with faculty, administrators, staff, students, alumni, partners and friends. As the sign says on Walton Boulevard next to the new student apartments, Oakland is "a university on the move."

But, as we all know, without a goal, movement alone does not necessarily mean progress. That's why our shared 2010 vision is vital to our success (you can find the 2010 Profile on the "About OU" Web page). With the profile as our goal, we are now beginning to put into motion the planning mechanisms that will take us from where we are today, to where we want to be in eight years.

Just last week, Interim Provost Moudgil asked deans, department chairs and program directors to review a report from an esteemed consulting organization, the Washington Advisory Group, whose members visited campus last year to assess our Vision 2010 thinking. The WAG made the case in its report that Oakland's true strength, and true potential, could be found in providing a distinctive undergraduate education - instead of attempting to become known for several niche areas - by 2010.

We are now asking the campus to review the WAG report in light of our desired characteristics - our 2010 Profile - and to think about strategies that various units might employ to create and promote a distinctive undergraduate experience. You can get a copy of the report from your dean, department chair or vice president. I urge you to share your ideas with your colleagues and with your unit leadership.

Once we begin to think about new initiatives, the need for strategic funding becomes ever more apparent. That is why I spend a lot of my time working to develop partnerships and to increase our resources - to keep the university community excited about our mission, and to enable the community to make positive changes.

Increasing general fund resources is certainly more difficult when the economy is lagging. We read about state revenue shortfalls almost daily, which, coupled with our desire to hold down student tuition increases, create a difficult budget development scenario for us. Budget allocations/reallocations supporting Vision 2010 will receive priority.

Our deans and vice presidents met in late December to address budget development and to prioritize allocation objectives for the coming 2002-03 fiscal year. I think we are all pleased with the results, which will involve the university faculty and staff in developing unit funding requests based on our 2010 Profile and the allocation objectives. Prioritized unit requests will be matched to resources, and the university's 2002-03 budget will thus develop.

I encourage anyone interested to take a look at the allocation objectives that came out of the retreat, as well as the budget development process itself - you can find them on the "Administration" page on the website. As you will see in the timeline, units need to be working on their budget requests over the next several weeks. You will also see that decisions on funding priorities will be communicated back to the units at various points in the process. This is an important change from past practices, and should be beneficial. (Current year allocations, by division, are also included on this Web page.)

Of course, the general fund is not our only source of revenue. Private giving contributed nearly \$8 million to our mission last fiscal year. Recent gifts from friends have helped us launch new initiatives, fund professorships and scholarships, and in general improve the quality of Oakland's educational experience. I will share more news about philanthropy at Oakland in future messages.

These are exciting times for our university. I invite you to share your creative ideas with

me, and your unit leadership, during the 2010 planning and budget development processes. As always, I look forward to working with you as the year develops.

Gary Russi