

Semester Update

*April 22, 2003*

Colleagues -

Even as we are engaged in an intense budget-cutting process, I am pleased we can look back on an academic year full of faculty and student accomplishments, and strong staff support. Together we remained focused on our commitment to our core mission of educating an ever-growing student population.

I am proud of all we have accomplished - individually and together - that supports making Oakland University a place for undergraduate and graduate students to receive an education unlike any other. Our academic year, as usual, was filled with excellent examples of the distinctive OU education - proving that the classroom is just the beginning of the Oakland experience.

### **Inspired Faculty**

On Thursday, April 17, hundreds of faculty and other distinguished guests gathered to honor 20 of our colleagues for excellence in teaching, scholarship and service at the faculty recognition luncheon on Founders' Day. We also paid a special tribute to four faculty members who received the 2003 Excellence Awards. Each year, the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee, and the University Research Committee honor faculty whose teaching and research efforts have achieved singular praise or recognition. Please join me in congratulating:

Mary T. Stein, associate professor, teacher development and educational studies, SEHS, who received the Teaching Excellence Award.

Nan K. Loh, professor, engineering, SECS, who received the Research Excellence Award.

John V. Seeley, assistant professor, chemistry, CAS, who received the New Investigator Award.

Phyllis Wolfe White, special lecturer, music, theater and dance, CAS, who received the Excellence in Teaching Award.

I was also proud to announce and recognize our newest Distinguished Professor, Paul Tomboulian, professor, chemistry, CAS, for his preeminence in university service and his long and successful record as a scholar and teacher. Please join me in thanking Paul for his dedication to so many generations of OU students.

The work of Oakland University professors, and the grants from prestigious organizations and partners in business and industry, shine a well-deserved spotlight on the high-caliber

research, scholarship and creative endeavors that constantly take place in our community. I will highlight only a few examples:

OU's Eye Research Institute received a five-year Vision Research Infrastructure Development Grant from the National Eye Institute. This \$1,054,905 award will support two laboratory research modules: Ocular Ultrastructure, and Cell and Molecular Biology. ERI also will purchase a real-time Polymerase Chain Reaction machine and establish a Microarray Analysis Facility. Nine OU researchers will be involved: Frank Giblin, Sitaramayya Ari, Barry Winkler, Shravan Chintala, Kenneth Mitton and Andy Goldberg from the ERI and John Reddan, Anne Hitt and Sheldon Gordon from the Department of Biological Sciences.

Amanda Bryant-Friedrich, from the Department of Chemistry, received a National Science Foundation grant for CAREER C-3'-Nucleic Acid Radicals: Generation and Mechanistic Investigations. This \$405,000 grant will help integrate education and research, lay the foundation for future research in the study of oxidative damage of nucleic acids and support a program to direct members of underrepresented groups toward careers in the chemical sciences.

Mark Metzler, from the Department of History, received a \$61,635 grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Fulbright-Hayes Faculty Research Abroad Program for a project titled "Stabilizing Japanese Capitalism: Japanese and American Visions, 1945-1952" at Tokyo University's Institute of Social Science for the 2003-04 academic year.

Christian Wagner, from the School of Engineering and Computer Science, and Barry Turett, from Mathematics and Statistics, received a \$99,687 grant from the National Science Foundation for an Automotive 2020 Scholarship Program to increase the number of college students entering the high technology workforce in computer science, engineering, mathematics and statistics. Through the program, students will take an interdisciplinary course on professionalism and ethics in technology and get involved in summer internships with local industries.

For more information about faculty research grants, visit the Board of Trustees website, then select Archived Agendas and review items that recommend accepting grants to Oakland University.

### **Quality Academic Experience**

The strength and quality of our faculty has the greatest power to help Oakland become a university of distinction by 2010. There are so many examples of how our faculty members are bringing the distinctive experience to life. For example:

U.S. News and World Report ranked the Oakland University/Beaumont Graduate Program of Nurse Anesthesia as sixth in its 2004 study of the best U.S. graduate school programs. This impressive recognition closely follows the program's citation in the Federal Register as the only nurse anesthesia program in the United States to receive a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services for program development

(\$300,000). Congratulations to all in the School of Nursing for the hard work required to create an exemplary and nationally recognized program!

Oakland students in OU Associate Professor of Engineering Hoda Abdel-Aty-Zohdy's course "Very Large Scale Integrated Circuits for Multidisciplinary Biotechnology Designs: Systems-on-a-Chip" recently collaborated with students and faculty from four other institutions to develop electronic systems that mimic biological functions. Through this course, in which students essentially create components of a digital human, teams developed portions of components for a bionic arm, eyes and nose as well as a hearing aid. OU is one of the first five universities in the nation to offer such a course. For more information about this innovative course and the OU professor who helped develop it, see [The News @ OU](#).

The Department of Rhetoric, Communications and Journalism once again worked with other departments on campus to bring us part two of Writing Across the Curriculum. This session, led by Bill Condon, a nationally known scholar in Rhetoric and Composition, and currently Professor of English and Director of Campus Writing Programs at Washington State University, continued the discussion about how a collaborative program that teaches writing across disciplines contributes to a distinctive undergraduate experience, and how through this effort, Oakland could offer a rare and valued advantage to our students.

Oakland students in history, political science, English and other areas of study had the rare opportunity to hear acclaimed historian and Pulitzer Prize-winning author David McCullough discuss early American politics, the writer's craft and presidential leadership at a series of special seminars held the day after his speech at the inaugural College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Lecture in the Humanities on April 10.

Our dedicated faculty members continue to integrate research, mentoring and life experiences with classroom coursework at every opportunity. A new publication, "Pushing the Boundaries," distributed to full-time faculty members last week, captures excellent examples of the awe-inspiring work under way at Oakland University. The stories highlighted in this publication clearly demonstrate how OU's visionary faculty members across the disciplines are helping us reach our goal to become a university of distinction by 2010. Due to budgetary restrictions, distribution of this publication is strategically limited. However, I encourage those who didn't receive a copy to check in with their Dean, Department Chair or Vice President to review it.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to OU's new dean of the School of Nursing, Linda Thompson, who will join us on August 1. The work of the search committee is also to be commended for their accelerated search and focus on top-quality candidates. Interim Associate Dean Catherine Vincent's work this academic year handling the day-to-day operations of the school and liaison responsibilities with OU administration helped the school maintain its excellent reputation, ensure continuity and will assist in a smooth transition. Please join me in thanking Kate for a fine job.

## **Student Focus**

All these wonderful accomplishments and experiences support the sharp focus Oakland University, and each one of us, has on our core mission of educating students. And that focus makes their education inside and outside the classroom distinctive, including:

Earlier this month, Oakland named the 2003 recipients of its most prestigious student honors, the Alfred G. Wilson and Matilda R. Wilson Awards and the Human Relations Award. Please join me in congratulating our senior honorees: Dennis O'Conner, Biology major, who received the Alfred G. Wilson Award, Ashley McGhee, Sociology major, who received the Matilda R. Wilson Award, and Ashli Bobo, Journalism major, who received the Human Relations Award. Watch The News @ OU for more details about their outstanding academic achievement, commitment to improving campus life and involvement in the social problems of the community and society in general.

OU's Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) team, sponsored in large part by SBC, was one of five out of 804 teams to make it to the finalist round in two national competitions, one on business ethics and the other on financial independence. Oakland's team, which focuses on inspiring middle and high school students from groups underrepresented in higher education, will find out the final results at the national competition in Kansas City in May. To read more about the team's fine work, check The News @ OU.

Two School of Health Sciences students from the Industrial Health and Safety program recently earned national awards from the American Society of Safety Engineers. Bobbie Schaefer, a junior, received a \$5,250 scholarship sponsored by UPS, and Stacy Ruby, a senior, was awarded a \$3,375 scholarship from Ford Motor Company.

Our student-athletes continue to excel in Division I competition:

Oakland University's men's swimming and diving team captured 17 points at the NCAA Championships to place 27th in the country, the highest finish ever for the Golden Grizzlies. Five members of the team represented Oakland, including junior Sean Broadbent, freshman Scott Dickens, senior Doug Drazin, freshman Eric Lynn and sophomore Chris Sullivan.

Chris Sullivan is also one of the fastest swimmers in OU history. His times in the 50 and 100 free of 19.63 and 43.62 set new school, pool and conference records at the National Independent Conference Championships and currently he ranks sixth in the nation in the 50 free.

OU junior Mike Helms recently was named an honorable mention All-American by the Associated Press for his outstanding season with Oakland's men's basketball team. Oakland's first Division I All-American also finished third in scoring among NCAA Division I players with a 26.9 points-per-game average after leading the nation in this category for a long stretch beginning in late January. OU players Mike Helms, Rawle Marshall and Courtney Scott led the nation in scoring for three players on the same team.

### Power and Systems Restoration

Our Campus Facilities and University Technology Services staffs deserve high praise and our appreciation for their fast work in restoring power and systems to the university after a weekend outage following the early April ice storm. Campus Facilities coordinated efforts with the power company and vendors to restore power and heat for the start of a busy week, while our UTS staff members were on call immediately to assess possible damage and prepare to restart our systems when power was restored.

And, I extend a special thank you on behalf of the community to Chief Lucido and the OU Police Department for their exemplary work in quickly and safely clearing campus the Saturday of the power outage and for their strong presence on campus throughout the outage, keeping our campus secure.

The patience everyone demonstrated while power and communication issues continued to hamper east campus was also very much appreciated.

### **Fund Raising**

While still in the early stages of our first comprehensive capital campaign, I'm pleased to report on recent gifts that are helping us advance our mission.

Meadow Brook Theatre received two corporate gifts to sponsor recent productions. One from DaimlerChrysler Corporate Fund to sponsor the Shaw Festival's "Candida," which ran January 8 through February 2. This was the only stop the Shaw Festival made in the U.S. and was the fourth-highest-selling show in OU's history. The second gift, from Lear Corporation, sponsored the Theatre's "Wait Until Dark," which ran March 19 through April 13. We appreciate the ongoing support of both organizations.

Norma Oberhauser, a longtime friend of OU, gave a \$25,000 gift for the Norma Oberhauser School of Nursing Endowment for Instructorship. The fund will be available to nursing faculty interested in enhancing their teaching skills by attending workshops, conferences and other continuing education courses.

On Founders' Day we had the good fortune to dedicate the new Crittenton Hospital Medical Center Multimedia Laboratory in the School of Nursing. The highly interactive lab, a generous gift from Crittenton, offers cutting-edge learning tools that already are providing a myriad of hands-on learning opportunities for our nursing students to perfect their skills. Through this valued laboratory and through the practicum and internships available at Crittenton, our students are exposed to unique, real-world learning opportunities. We're pleased that Crittenton shares and supports our vision of preparing students for the workplace and society.

### **OU: A University of Distinction**

As we wind down the winter semester and prepare for invigorating, inspiring and challenging spring and summer sessions, I thank everyone for their hard work, dedication and continued focus on our mission. Our faculty and staff members, collectively and individually, are the reason Oakland University is well on its way to delivering an

undergraduate education, complemented by the strength of our graduate programs, that is unlike any other.

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