

THE COLLEGE

Oakland University ○ College of Arts and Sciences Newsletter ○ Fall 2006 | Winter 2007

CAS THEME EXPLORES GLOBALIZATION

The College of Arts and Sciences is going global.

OU students are exploring the college's 2006-07 theme, Global Citizenship, through books, classes, lectures and special events. The topic is of growing interest and importance as a result of the dramatic increase in interaction between world societies that has expanded the connotation of the term "citizenship" beyond national borders.

To illuminate the theme, Kellie Hay, associate professor of communication and chair of the planning committee, notes that "the college and our committee wish to sponsor events that bring a number of perspectives together about the productive possibilities as well as the limits and perils of global citizenship." She adds that there are a number of views on globalization, making for a variety of possible presentations and perspectives.

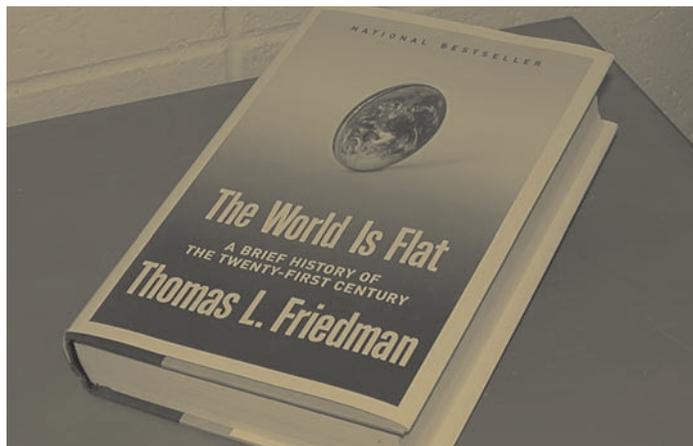
"When you talk about a topic all year it allows for a depth of study you wouldn't ordinarily have, and you see that many disciplines have something to say about it," said Michelle Piskulich, CAS associate dean.

Faculty members throughout the college are teaching theme-related courses. A number of the classes, including first-year rhetoric,

are exploring Thomas Friedman's book *The World is Flat*. Friedman, a *New York Times* columnist, describes the implications of a "flat" or "connected" world where reduction of trade and political barriers combine with technological advances to allow instantaneous business transactions with people around the world.

One of the first events during the fall was the Constitution Day discussion, "Immigration, Citizenship and the Constitution," held in mid-September. Associate Professor of history Todd Estes was among the panel members. "I talked about citizenship at the time of the Constitution in the 1780s," Estes said. "I hope I was able to provide a historical context for these modern-day issues."

Political Science Professor Vincent Khapoya, another panelist, called for a well thought-out, reasoned approach to illegal immigration. "As long as jobs are available here, people will continue to try to get here," Khapoya said. "What we need to come up with is a legal way for people to come, work seasonally and go home." Quick, seemingly easy "fixes" will not stop people from taking desperate measures to come here and work, he said. "The U.S. should act like the great nation it is by developing a solution that is



humane and thoughtful."

In October, Pulitzer Prize-winning newspaper columnist George Will presented the third annual Distinguished Lecture in the Humanities. During his presentation he addressed Social Security, health insurance, the economy, Wal-Mart and gasoline. "People say there is no bipartisanship in America, but there is a strong bipartisanship agreement to ignore these problems," he told the audience. Before his presentation, Will spoke to OU students about how to be successful in writing.

Additional theme related activities included the visits of Dusan Spasojevic from Serbia and Anastasia Bezverkha from Ukraine. Dusan was active in the Serbian Student Union and Otpor (Resistance), citizens' groups that helped overthrow Slobodan Milosevic in 2000. Anastasia was head of public relations for the Pora Youth Organization, which helped lead the protests of the Ukrainian Orange Revolution of 2004-05. While at OU, Dusan and Anastasia met with classes and spoke to students about their experiences.

Dikka Berven of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures arranged a presentation by Dennis Moore,

the public affairs officer with the Canadian Consulate in Detroit. Moore's talk, "The Canada/U.S. Relationship: Looking Beneath the Tip of the Iceberg," focused on the depth of the relationship between the United States and its neighbor to the north, and the amount of trade between the two.

Numerous other activities are under way. During Cultural Awareness Week 2006, for instance, Student Affairs presented a Global Market with food samples, crafts, music, dancing and table displays from around the world. The event was co-sponsored by 14 multicultural student organizations.

The Global Citizenship theme is part of the college's Celebrating Liberal Arts initiative, launched four years ago to illustrate how understanding the arts and literature, the sciences, the humanities and the social sciences enriches lives.

"I think our students have been connecting with the topics in a way they couldn't with just one lecture or presentation on a subject," Piskulich said.

For more information, visit the Global Citizenship Web site at www2.oakland.edu/globalization.



DEAN'S LETTER: DISTINCTION

Every story in this final printed edition of *The College* newsletter calls attention to our distinctive programs and a series of distinguished visitors, alumni and faculty.

The academic year opened with a spectacular visit by piano virtuoso Lang Lang. Then we learned that our distinguished alumna Regina Carter had been granted a coveted MacArthur Fellowship. Alumnus John Roman, television producer and filmmaker, spent a day working with students on OU's campus. Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist George Will, our Distinguished Lecturer in Humanities, spoke to students about writing and journalism, and to the public about the political scene.

A new feature called *Fully Equipped* spotlights CAS alumni whose productive professional lives reflect their arts and sciences preparation. In this issue we focus on two alumni whose professions would not have been predicted by their undergraduate degrees — Monica Emerson, a French major who now directs the diversity office for the DaimlerChrysler Corporation, and Nino DiCosmo, a political science major who now runs an international automotive enterprise.

We don't want to miss any opportunity to demonstrate that their ability to think, analyze, adapt and learn in any discipline or situation makes arts and sciences majors fully equipped for whatever professional opportunities arise. In future *Fully Equipped* columns we will spotlight graduates whose career trajectories illustrate the broad scope of opportunity for arts and sciences majors. Please send your nominations of alumni for future *Fully Equipped* columns to Stewardship and Events Coordinator Sandy Dykstra (dykstra@oakland.edu).

Because we have so many stories to tell, we will be converting the newsletter to an electronic format with the next issue. The online format will help us bring you more news more often, at lower cost.

You can read about our fall guests and alumni accomplishments in this newsletter and in more detail at www2.oakland.edu/cas. When you log on, you'll also be introduced to our new faculty, a talented group who promise to further our mission of bringing the best arts and sciences education to Oakland students.

To support our efforts to offer distinctive, high quality programs and to feed the spirit of innovation and outreach across the college's 15 departments, please consider a contribution to our Distinguished Programs Fund, described in the article on page 8 of this publication.

Enjoy this issue of *The College* and look for us online in the spring.

Sincerely,
Ronald Sudol
Acting Dean

CAS MAKES WORTHY BENEFICIARY

When considering your charitable giving at the end of the year, or any time throughout, please keep the College of Arts and Sciences and its departments in mind as a worthy beneficiary of your contributions. The generosity of our alumni helps keep our programs strong and the value of your degree high. There are many ways to give, and one alternative is a gift from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA).

Americans have trillions of dollars in Individual IRA assets. Due to years of disciplined saving and strong investment returns, some of today's retirees have more money in their IRAs than they will ever be able to use. For the first time, IRA owners may make charitable contributions from their retirement savings by giving directly to charity. The federal Pension Protection Act of 2006 allows individuals aged 70 or older to make contributions of up to \$100,000 per year from either traditional or Roth IRAs. Historically, withdrawals from traditional IRAs were taxed at the federal and state level before proceeds could be given to charity.

IRAs can be a tax trap for wealthy individuals who do not intend to withdraw the entire IRA balance to provide for retirement cash flow. IRAs left to heirs are subject to both income and estate

tax and can result in less than 25 percent of IRA assets actually passing to the next generation. Historically, taxpayers have opted to bequest IRAs to charitable organizations at their death in order to avoid income and estate taxes. The Pension Protection Act of 2006 allows taxpayers to do so during their lifetime.

Under the new law, donations from IRAs are not treated as an itemized deduction, like most charitable contributions. Instead, they are excluded from taxable income altogether. Consequently, the new law applies to both taxpayers who itemize and those who take the standard deduction.

The new law covers donations to churches, public charities and universities such as Oakland University, but excludes foundations, donor advised funds and split interest vehicles such as remainder trusts. The new law is effective immediately and applies to donations made in tax years 2006 and 2007.

The provision may be extended beyond 2007 by future legislation. However, if you are interested in taking advantage of this new opportunity you should act quickly and consult with a qualified financial advisor or contact CAS Director of Development Kelly Conway at (248) 370-2148. ○



Jazz violinist **Regina Carter**, CAS '85, has been named a 2006 MacArthur Fellow by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. She is among 25 recipients nationwide to receive this year's MacArthur Fellowships, a \$500,000 prize. Known as the "genius awards," they are intended to highlight the importance of creative individuals in society. Read more about OU alumna Regina Carter at www2.oakland.edu/cas. ○

Photography courtesy of Bill Phelps / Verve Records

FULLY EQUIPPED



ALUMNA'S LIBERAL ARTS TRAINING HELPS HER BUILD BRIDGES

There was a time when Monica Emerson, CAS '71, aspired to be a United Nations translator.

"I always had a desire to travel abroad and meet other people," said Emerson, executive director of corporate diversity for DaimlerChrysler Corp. "I wanted to be an interpreter for the United Nations so I could build bridges and have a better understanding of global issues."

All of this was in the back of Emerson's mind while she earned her bachelor's degree in French and secondary education from Oakland University.

"Although it may appear I strayed away from what I learned, nothing could be further than the truth," said Emerson, who is vice chair of Oakland's CAS Advisory Board.

Emerson went on to earn a master's degree in guidance and counseling from Wayne State University and a professional development in management degree from the University of Michigan. However, she regularly utilizes the skills she gained at Oakland University.

"I often tell people my liberal arts and counseling degrees were more beneficial than my business degree," she said. "Business skills are learned continuously on the job. My liberal arts training enhanced my cognitive abilities, writing skills and communication skills. These skills have provided a strong foundation throughout my career."

Emerson got her first hint that her career might not go exactly according to plan after she graduated from OU and realized there was an abundance of teachers in the area. She had planned to use teaching as a springboard into her ideal job. With a flooded teacher market, she took a counseling position with a small Detroit college. It was this position that inspired her to earn her degree in guidance and counseling.

Emerson would later work in WSU's admissions office and for Focus HOPE, a civil and human rights organization.

She began her career with Chrysler in the mid 1970s after a classmate from WSU encouraged her to apply for an opening with Chrysler Institute, the training arm of Chrysler Corporation. The Chrysler Institute provided a variety of training programs, including community-based training programs for eligible economically disadvantaged individuals. Emerson also worked with Chrysler Learning Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Chrysler Corporation, as an in-school youth training program manager, providing counseling and placement services for at-risk students in urban areas.

"It was work about which I was very passionate," Emerson said. After 10 years of progressive responsibilities in Chrysler Institute, Emerson moved into Chrysler's human resources department. There, she held several positions of increasing responsibility until 2003, when she was named executive director, Corporate Diversity Office.

"The mission of the diversity office is fulfilling," she said, "and a daily challenge. How do we, as a global company, ensure that we have an environment that's respectful of people's differences? How do we make all employees feel valued so they can do their very best? We constantly seek ways to advance our employment value proposition."

It's definitely safe to say that Emerson is realizing her original career goals.

"I'm not using my French, but I'm helping to bring together people of different backgrounds and facilitating a respective environment for everyone." ○

SOLID FOUNDATION: AREA EXECUTIVE FOLLOWS EXAMPLE SET BY OAKLAND FACULTY

When Nino DiCosmo, CAS '90, decided he wanted to be an attorney, a political science degree seemed like a perfect launching point for law school.

Majoring in political science, with a minor in accounting, did turn out to be a good decision for DiCosmo, but not in the way he expected. Since 2004, DiCosmo has been chairman of the board, president and chief executive officer of Autoweb Inc., an international company specializing in supply chain management products and services.

Though he never became a lawyer, his liberal arts education at Oakland University consistently helps him be an effective leader. "One of the best learning experiences I got at Oakland was a great deal of coaching and mentoring from the faculty," DiCosmo said. "A lot of that guidance gave me a good understanding of how to coach, mentor and teach others."

His liberal arts background also helps him tackle the day-to-day challenges that come with his job, DiCosmo said.

"Having a quantitative background certainly is helpful, but when you have a narrow focus, you may perceive problems as nails and pick up a hammer. A liberal arts degree allows you to evaluate every issue with a broader scope and be more creative in how you address challenges."

DiCosmo may not have entered the business world if he had graduated in June instead of December. Because he couldn't begin law school until the fall, he took a job with Electronic Data Systems (EDS). "I was enjoying it and being successful," DiCosmo said. "I decided to stay."

DiCosmo gained extensive international management experience with EDS as a global account executive. Before joining Autoweb, he was director of business development, information systems and services for General Motors.

While DiCosmo was gaining experience in the business world, he earned a Master of Science in information systems management from Carnegie Mellon University in 2005. Currently, he's pursuing an MBA from the University of Michigan.

DiCosmo sits on the Board of Visitors for the School of Business Administration at Oakland, and he recently was selected to receive Oakland's Alumni Spirit award. He also has been named one of Michigan's Top 40 Business Executives under 40 to Watch by *Crain's Detroit Business*.

DiCosmo said he finds his current role with Autoweb extremely satisfying. "Every day brings some kind of challenge, another opportunity to be successful." ○



BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES NEW PH.D. OPTION

The college's long-standing Ph.D. in biomedical sciences now offers a specialization in biological communication. This new option joins existing specializations in health and environmental chemistry and medical physics within the interdisciplinary Ph.D. program.

The department launched the program in fall 2006 in response to the demand for more scientists to research cellular communication within biological systems.

Biological communication describes the interactions that occur between — or within — organisms at the cellular and molecular level. "We're talking about chemical signals that are at the core of everything we study in biology," said Professor Arik Dvir, department chair. Dvir's research focuses on the signals that induce gene activation in mammalian cells.

In addition to training scientists for jobs in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries and academic settings, the new doctoral program improves the research environment at Oakland by staffing research mentors' laboratories with long-term associates who can perform research and advance mentors' projects.

Several faculty members within the department currently work on projects involving biological communication, giving the program sound basis and a fully trained core of researchers.

This year professor Ning Zhang joined the faculty. Zhang is a world-class cancer scientist who specializes in cell-cell communication. "It's critical to attract the best scientists to help develop a successful Ph.D. program," Dvir said. "Zhang is definitely going to be a strong part of that."

Coursework required for the advanced degree includes seven core courses and electives, as well as independent research resulting in a dissertation. The average time to complete the doctorate is five years, said program coordinator Douglas Wendell, associate

professor of biological sciences, who studies genetic factors related to cancer.

Program candidate Jennifer Gromek was pursuing a master of science in biology at Oakland when the biological sciences department launched the new Ph.D. program. The program appealed to her immediately. "I was drawn to continue my studies given that over the past two years at Oakland I have gained an enormous amount of information and experience," said Gromek, who aspires to join the FBI as a biologist/forensic examiner. "As a graduate student, I found that I thoroughly enjoyed research and the whole laboratory experience. What I was learning through my graduate coursework directly complemented hands-on experiences in the lab."

For more information, visit www2.oakland.edu/biology/grad_PhD.cfm. ○

OAKLAND PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION TRAVELING IN CANADA

When "Imaging a Shattering Earth: Contemporary Photography and the Environmental Debate" appeared at Meadow Brook Art Gallery (now Oakland University Art Gallery) in fall 2005, curator Claude Baillargeon never tired of watching people's responses.

The photography collection captures images of environmental devastation across the globe from Owen Lake's bed of toxic red dust in California to the abandoned Pripjat School near Chernobyl, Ukraine, the site of the world's largest nuclear reaction explosion.

"The reaction of people I thought was very, very interesting," said Baillargeon, who also is assistant professor of art and art history at Oakland. "These are such beautiful images, but when people read the short wall texts accompanying them they realized the subject matter represented was quite horrific. That was pretty much universal."

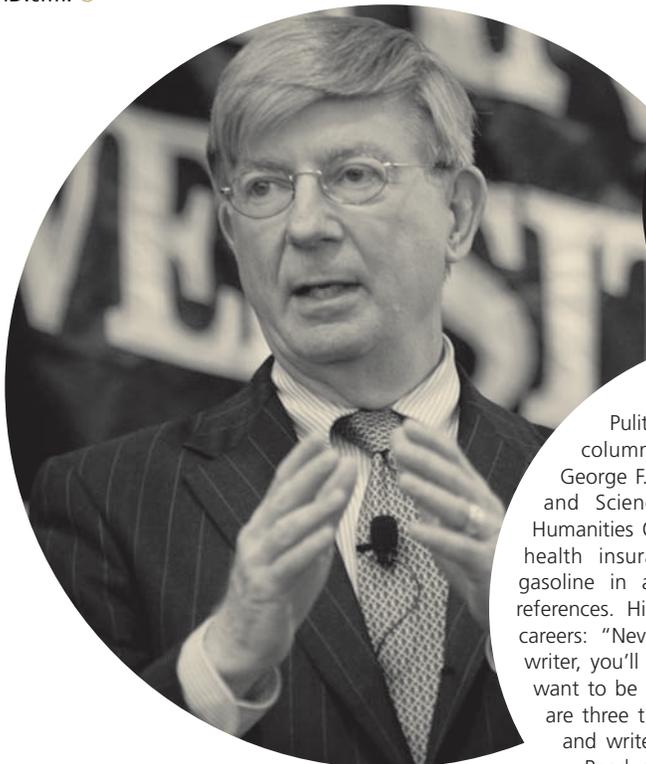
Baillargeon created the exhibit to tie in to the College of Arts and Sciences' 2005-06 theme, Environmental Explorations. It comprises 56 images, or "testimonies," from such photographers as Emmet Gowin, David T. Hanson, David McMillan and Mark Ruwedel.

The photo collection has become the first exhibition created for display at Oakland University to go on tour beyond the campus.

After appearing at OU's art gallery in late 2005, the exhibit was displayed at the Toronto Photography Festival at the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art in April and May 2006.

It was Baillargeon who contacted the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art after he got Oakland University's approval for the exhibit. The museum representatives liked Baillargeon's ideas and agreed to be the exhibit's partner.

More than 6,300 people came to see "Imaging a Shattering Earth" during its 28-day show in Toronto, Baillargeon said.

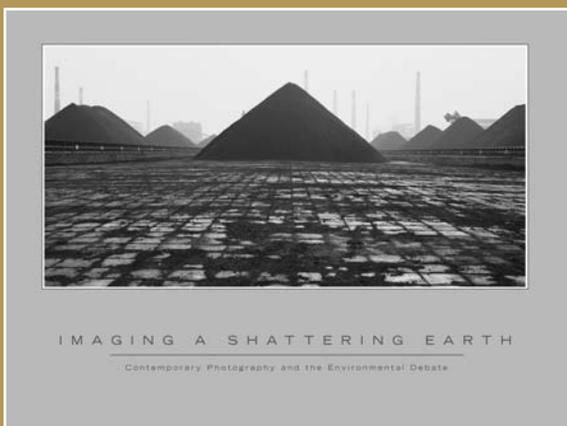


**DISTINGUISHED
LECTURE
IN THE HUMANITIES**
— COLLEGE OF —
ARTS AND SCIENCES



Pulitzer Prize-winning newspaper columnist and best-selling author George F. Will delivered the College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Lecture in the Humanities Oct. 26. He addressed Social Security, health insurance, the economy, Wal-Mart and gasoline in a presentation riddled with baseball references. His advice to students pursuing writing careers: "Never stop taking stuff in, because as a writer, you'll live off the capital you acquire. If you want to be a writer, Mark Twain was right: there are three things you should do — write, write and write. And the fourth thing — read."

Read more about Will's visit to OU at www2.oakland.edu/cas. ○



Since then, he has arranged for it to appear at the Dalhousie Art Gallery in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Jan. 11 to Feb. 26, 2007, and at the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography in Ottawa from early May through mid-October 2008.

He also expects the exhibition to appear at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia in Halifax in 2007, and he is talking to Iowa State University about hosting the display.

"I'm honored I was part of the project and able to initiate contact with the museums," Baillargeon said. "We have a great product and people are responding enthusiastically."

One important aspect of the exhibit is its potential as a teaching tool. All of its hosts, beginning with Oakland University, have made a point of complementing it with lectures. The exhibit also has a 72-page, full color catalogue, and a detailed Web site, www2.oakland.edu/shatteringearth, which was created by Oakland's Honors College students.

"The idea of showing photography depicting the environment is certainly not new," Baillargeon said. "Ours is the one project that focuses on human-induced threats, where the impact of the action is so huge. It's very specific, and it pulls no punches." ○

ALUMNUS HONORED FOR YEARS OF DEVOTION TO UNIVERSITY

William Goldenberg, CAS '70, loves to share memories of his days at Oakland University in the late 1960s.

Goldenberg, who earned his degree in political science, says he treasures his years at OU for both the education he received and the fond recollections he holds. And he doesn't hesitate to let people know exactly how he feels.

It is that spirit of enthusiasm, as well as his devotion to service, that earned him the 2006 Oakland University Alumni Association Spirit Award. "That was very exciting for me," said Goldenberg, who accepted his award at the OUA Award Banquet in November. "I don't look at working for the university as any sort of burden whatsoever. It really is a labor of love. I enjoy working with the people there."

Goldenberg has remained active with OU since graduating. He has been a member of the Alumni Association and OU's President's Club. As a member of the College of Arts and Sciences



and Department of Political Science advisory boards, he shares advice borne of both his student years and his career in financial planning. Goldenberg also serves on the college's dean search committee.

Goldenberg's wife, Enid, is a strong OU supporter, too. And as a kindergarten teacher in Birmingham, she frequently gets to work with OU student teachers.

In 2003, Goldenberg and his wife established the William Goldenberg and Enid Bienstock International Student Education Endowment to help students work or study abroad. The Goldenbergs have two children who benefited by their experiences abroad, so they wished to provide those opportunities to students at OU.

Goldenberg is committed to helping ensure a quality education for OU students and maintaining the warm, friendly atmosphere he remembers as a student. "I think there's a real need in the community for the role the university plays," he said. "We need the presence of a major university in Oakland County."

Goldenberg, who is a financial advisor and first vice president with Raymond James and Associates, also serves on the board of Temple Kol Ami in West Bloomfield. "Community service is important," Goldenberg said. "It's something my wife and I both work at." ○

OU PROFESSOR HELPED *LAW AND ORDER* PRODUCER LAUNCH CAREER

Who would have known that a \$1,000 loan from one of his professors would land John L. Roman, CAS '78, on the set of a hit TV drama?

Early in his career, Roman was lined up to shoot a movie, but he needed a professional camera. Roman turned to the late Don Hildum, his communications professor, for help. Hildum was able to find the funds that gave Roman his first marketable product and set him on the path to becoming a respected TV and film producer. Today, Roman is executive producer of NBC's *Law and Order: Criminal Intent*, working directly under the legendary Dick Wolf.

Roman says he has fond memories of classes he took at OU with English Professor Emeritus Brian Murphy and Distinguished Professor of English Robert Eberwein, huge movie buffs who fueled his passion for film.



Roman also credits his experiences with the Barn Theatre — a precursor to the Department of Music, Theatre and Dance — for giving him numerous opportunities to learn about the crafts of acting, set design and production. Through the varied roles played, he developed an understanding of the complexities of staging and actors' motivation.

Roman visited Oakland University in October, presenting a student lecture and leading three

master's classes. He encouraged the students he addressed to do whatever it takes to learn all facets of their craft, including taking on small, seemingly insignificant jobs.

Roman also has created an internship opportunity for an Oakland University student on the set of his television program for winter 2007. ○

OAKLAND, MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY TEAM UP TO CREATE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

**MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Representatives from Oakland University and Michigan State University are working together to build an accredited bachelor's in social work (BSW) program for Oakland.

"It's exciting to see two major public universities working together to benefit students," said Lynetta Mosby, associate professor of sociology and coordinator of Oakland's social work concentration.

Currently, students who complete Oakland's popular social work concentration can apply to the State of Michigan for a Social Service Technician license, but a number of Michigan positions now require a higher level of licensing. "The concentration no longer is going to be helpful to students to get lower-level positions as social worker practitioners," said sociology professor Gary Shepherd. OU decided to respond to students' needs with the new program.

Once Oakland's four-year BSW is in place, graduates will be able to apply for their bachelor's in social work (BSW) license. Oakland plans to launch its BSW program in fall 2007.

Since Oakland and MSU announced their plans to work

together Aug. 21, Oakland has been developing the BSW program's curriculum, policies and procedures. MSU, which has one of the oldest BSW programs in the country, has provided a faculty member to help with every step of the process. Mosby anticipates the program will be presented for approval by Oakland's Board of Trustees no later than spring 2007.

From there, Oakland will focus on earning accreditation for the new BSW program from the Council on Social Work Education.

Oakland's concentration in social work has seen about 159 students since the College of Arts and Sciences launched it within the sociology program in fall 1998. A number of these students have gone on to pursue graduate degrees in the field. Their career choice is a wise one, Mosby said.

"The demand for trained professionals is on the rise. The United States Department of Labor says social work is one of the fastest growing careers in the United States," she said.

Currently, there only are a few bachelor's and master's level social work programs in the heavily populated metropolitan Detroit area, Shepherd said. "It's been our belief if Oakland were to have a bachelor's in social work program here, we would be besieged by student applications," he said. ○



MURAL PROJECT GIVES ART STUDENTS VALUABLE EXPERIENCES

Oakland University art students got practical experience recently when participants in the new Topics in Illustration class were invited to pursue a mural project for OU's Writing Center in Kresge Library.

The project required the students to develop a project proposal and present it to a prospective client.

Their work, now complete, covers three walls of the Writing Center.

The idea for the mural came from Ronald Sudol, acting dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, who helped with the center's planning and wanted to add a special finishing touch. He sought the help of Associate Professor Andrea Eis, chair of the Art and Art History department. Eis, in turn, approached special lecturer Lynn Galbreath, who developed the Topics in Illustration course.

The class is designed to give students an opportunity to create a professional illustration portfolio. "Illustration has always been a primary means of support for the fine artist," Galbreath said. "When the mural project came up, I thought it was a great opportunity."

Galbreath's 15-student class met with Jeanie Robertson, special instructor in rhetoric, to get the project specifications. From there, each student designed concepts for the mural and produced a presentation. All of the concepts went through a preliminary review within the department of Art and Art History. The department sent six ideas to a committee for final consideration.





Photography courtesy of Dan Wilkinson

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT OFFERS SUMMER RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Michelle Fritz knows how important research experience will be as she pursues a career in science. That's why she and nine others applied for Oakland University's summer physics research program.

Participants in SMaRT, Summer Materials Research Training, spent 10 weeks on a physics project working one-on-one with an OU faculty mentor. SMaRT is one of multiple undergraduate research opportunities offered through Oakland's College of Arts and Sciences.

Not only did the SMaRT participants each receive a \$4,000 stipend, they gained first-hand knowledge of how the research process works.

"It was a really helpful experience," said Fritz, who transferred this fall from Delta College to the University of Michigan. "It gave us a feel for what research is like, and it gave us experience in writing papers and giving presentations."

This was the first summer the physics department at Oakland offered SMaRT, which is being supported by a three-year grant from the National Science Foundation.

"The university has a strong commitment to undergraduate research as a whole," said assistant professor of physics George Martins, who co-directs Oakland's SMaRT program with professor of physics Uma Venkateswaran. "Physics in particular is a very research-oriented discipline. We decided to utilize funding opportunities to get our faculty together and offer research experiences to a large group of students."

"When they came they didn't know anything about research. Now they have some experience doing research in a focused area."

Participants in the SMaRT program are graduating high school seniors and undergraduate students from community colleges and universities. "Research really prepares students for their future," Venkateswaran said. "Doing research makes them a little more creative; it helps them do a little more on their own."

In addition to presenting mid-program written research reports, participants made an oral presentation at the end of the program to share their findings with fellow SMaRT students and physics faculty. OU students Patrick Hoover, Dhanashree Godbole and Yuwen Mei along with University of Michigan freshmen Jon Bar and Fritz presented their research at the 2006 annual meeting of Sigma Xi, held in Detroit on Nov. 4.

Venkateswaran said she considers the program's first year a strong success. "It's nice to see these young people getting really excited," she said. "When they came they didn't know anything about research. Now they have some experience doing research in a focused area."

For more information about SMaRT, visit www2.oakland.edu/physics/smart.

Their final choice, Casey Conlon's "The Gift," is inspired by "The Gleaners," an 1857 painting by Jean Francois Millet that shows women collecting bits of wheat in a field after harvest.

Conlon's mural comprises a series of farming scenes, from planting seeds to gathering harvest. But in these vivid scenes, the laborers' efforts yield papers. They grow from the ground and blow from a tree. And the people producing papers have a guide pointing them toward success, just like the students in the Writing Center.

Conlon, who is majoring in English as well as studio art, is well acquainted with the writing process. "I wanted something that represented working for something," he said. "Writing can be hard work, but in the end there's always something that comes from it."

After his design was selected, Conlon took digital photos of friends in the poses he needed, manipulated the images with software for a more abstract look and projected them onto the Writing Center walls. From there, he penciled the shapes onto the wall and painted them with other members of the Topics in Illustration class. Conlon estimates he put in 60 hours of painting himself.

"It's a really different experience," he said. "I never envisioned myself doing a mural."

Since he completed the work, a number of people have told him how much they like his contribution to the Writing Center. "It's nice knowing people appreciate it," he said. ○

Three area piano students had an opportunity to work with internationally acclaimed piano prodigy Lang Lang when he gave a master class at Oakland University in September.

OU was invited to host the program, which was scheduled in conjunction with the pianist's visit to the area to perform with the DSO. Lang Lang is known for his dramatic performance style and his ability to connect emotionally with audiences. "He is a masterful teacher with beguiling charisma. Varner Recital Hall was standing room only," said Ronald Sudol, acting dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Read more about Lang Lang's visit to OU at www2.oakland.edu/cas.



COMING EVENTS

Threads of Gold: Chinese Textiles

On Wednesday, January 31, 2007, co-authors Paul Haig, SEHS '73, and Marla Shelton will discuss and sign their book, *Threads of Gold: Chinese Textiles*. The event begins with a reception at 6 p.m., a talk with the authors at 6:30 p.m., and a signing at 7 p.m. Kresge Library, fourth floor.

Lafayette String Quartet

The Department of Music, Theatre and Dance presents the Lafayette String Quartet for the group's 20th anniversary concert on Thursday, April 12, 2007, at 7 p.m. The concert benefits MTD. The internationally renowned quartet was founded at Oakland University in 1986 by Joanna Hood, former artist-in-residence, and Pamela Highbaugh Aloni, former faculty member. Flavio Varani, former OU professor, will participate as a guest artist. Tickets are \$50 for VIP, \$25 for general admission and \$10 for students. Varner Recital Hall.

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NEWSLETTER STAFF

Dean	Ronald Sudol
Project Manager	Sandra Dykstra
Editor	Michelle Moser
Photographer	Rick Smith
Writer	Flori Meeks CAS '88
Art Director	Debra Lashbrook
Designers	Kathy Angel Eric Zurawski
Editorial Assistant	Sheila Carpenter

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College of Arts and Sciences
Rochester, Michigan 48309-4401

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SPREADS EXCITEMENT ABOUT UNIVERSITY

One of the things that has impressed Kelly Conway since she became the director of development for Oakland University's College of Arts and Sciences is the tremendous number of giving programs in place to accommodate the wishes of Oakland supporters.

"People can make gifts in a number of ways," Conway said. "There are so many options for people who want to support Oakland University and the College of Arts and Sciences."

College supporters can specify exactly where their donation dollars go, Conway said, or they can ask that their money be used as needed.

"One interesting option is our Distinguished Programs Fund, which benefits a variety of CAS programs and gives discretion to the dean of the college to use the money where it is most needed," Conway said.

The fund has provided seed money to launch new programs,

and it has supplied a much-needed financial boost to programs already in place. The initiatives receiving support include the Hispanic Outreach Program, through which Oakland students teach English to Spanish-speaking Pontiac residents; the Women's Studies Film Festival; the Far Field Retreat for Writers; the "History Comes Alive!" community lecture series and a number of activities tied to the college's annual theme.

"The Distinguished Programs Fund gives us the flexibility to support whatever program has the greatest needs at the time a donation is made," Conway said.

Prior to coming to Oakland University last January, Conway was director of major gifts for Walsh College in Troy. Her primary role with OU is to spend time reacquainting alumni with the College of Arts and Sciences, updating them on new academic programs and other initiatives and finding funding opportunities that match their



interests while benefiting OU students and the community.

Working closely with Conway is Sandra Dykstra, who recently was promoted from administrative secretary to stewardship and events coordinator for the CAS. In this capacity, Dykstra coordinates community outreach programs, donor appreciation events and fund-raising activities. She also supports Conway's efforts by recognizing donors for their contributions and making sure gifts are used exactly as specified.

"This work is extremely rewarding," Conway said. "There's

always a link between the funding and the students. It all goes back to providing a quality education."

For more information about supporting the Distinguished Programs Fund, visit www2.oakland.edu/cas/gift.cfm.

For information about other giving opportunities, call Conway at (248) 370-2146, or e-mail conway@oakland.edu. ○