

Monday, Jun 06, 2016

## Board approves 2016-17 budget that continues OU's investment in student success

With the approval of its 2016-17 general fund budget, Oakland University will continue to provide students and the region a robust teaching and learning resource, a center of vibrant scholarship and research, and a broad spectrum of purposeful and productive community engagement.

Oakland's \$263.5 million budget will maintain existing operations and programs, as well as facilitate the hiring of new faculty and academic advisors, enhance student retention and graduation support initiatives, and raise both the University's minimum wage level and student employment resources.

Also this year, Oakland will boost the financial aid it provides its students by 13.1 percent, or \$5.2 million. This will bring total financial aid resources to a level roughly equal to OU's proposed 2016-17 state funding allocation. In essence, nearly all state dollars will be given back to students in the form of both merit-based and need-based financial aid awards.



This and other budget management initiatives will help Oakland further reduce net tuition costs. On average, debt-free financial aid in 2015-16 reduced student tuition bills by \$4,077, or nearly one third.

"The success of bright and ambitious young men and women in southeastern Michigan, not to mention the economic vitality of the state as a whole, hinges on access to top-notch higher education programs," said OU **Board of Trustees** Chair Mark E. Schluss.

"No one in this state can afford to regard a strong college education as a luxury. It is an absolute necessity for the vast majority of Michigan's students and state residents as a whole."

Oakland University strives to advance the quality and value of its educational programs despite a number of persistent challenges. The \$49.9 million it expects to receive in state funding, for example, amounts to just 18 percent of Oakland's budget, and is \$2.5 million less than the state allocation received in 2009.

Budget managers work painstakingly to minimize the impacts of constrained resources. In fact, permanent and one-time budget cuts approaching \$50 million over the last 13 years have helped place OU among the state's most efficient stewards of public higher education dollars.

"Fortunately, we are able to welcome nationally and internationally acclaimed scholars as faculty members who, supported by dedicated staff, have been able to create a tremendous personal, professional and community growth enterprise on our campus," said OU President George W. Hynd.

"Still, the people of Michigan can help build even better futures for students and communities alike, and the most promising way to do that is by expanding access to and support of exemplary learning environments."

Despite receiving the lowest level of state funding on a per student basis and managing the state's most rapid enrollment growth over the past decade, Oakland has implemented a 2016-17 student tuition rate increase below the state's tuition restraint cap. The budget was approved with the caveat that Oakland would not exceed the state cap, should it be lower than 3.95 percent.

Full-time, resident freshman tuition will be \$11,970, which represents an increase of \$15.25 per credit hour. The overall average resident undergraduate tuition rate will increase by 3.95 percent. Meanwhile, the average full-time, resident graduate tuition rate has been set at \$16,338, which represents a 3.93 percent increase.