

Wednesday, Jan 11, 2017

Honors Institute event celebrates honor societies at OU

A group of students, faculty and staff gathered in the Honors College this week for the university's second annual Honors Institute event. This year's event celebrated Oakland's honor societies, which provide high-achieving students with opportunities for service and leadership development in a variety of fields.

Graeme Harper, dean of the Honors College, kicked off the event by highlighting the origins of honors education, both at OU and around the country.

"Honors programs have a distinctly American context," Harper said, noting that the first honor society was founded in 1776 at the College of William and Mary, in Virginia.

Harper added that Oakland's ties to honors education date back to its founding and that the Honors Institute "reflects that we are part of a broad spectrum of honors programs nationwide."

The event drew student leaders and representatives from the OU chapters of Tau Beta Pi (national engineering honor society), Psi Chi (psychology international honor society), Alpha Lambda Delta (freshman national honor society) Golden Key International Honour Society (all disciplines) and the Honors College Student Association.

Robert Van Til, Pawley Professor of Lean Studies and Chair of the Industrial and Systems Engineering Department, spoke about his experiences as faculty adviser for Oakland's Tau Beta Pi chapter, a role he has served in since 1989.

"We've always strived to build community among the students," Van Til said, noting that the chapter has twice been named the nation's most outstanding chapter.

During a roundtable discussion, chapter leaders and advisers shared the benefits of joining an honor society, including social engagement, career and graduate school preparation, scholarship eligibility and community service.

Jean Ann Miller, director of the Center for Student Activities and Leadership Development, and adviser for the Golden Key International Honour Society, pointed out the lasting impact that honor societies have on members.

"The friendships you create will stay with you the rest of your life," she said. "They are what you'll remember most about your college experience."



Students, faculty and staff discussed the benefits of joining an honor society during the second annual Honors Institute at OU.



Graeme Harper, dean of the Honors College, spoke about the history of honors education, both at OU and nationwide.