

GRADUATE EDUCATION

# OU's Graduate Education launches new advisory council

 July 31, 2018

---

## SHARE THIS STORY

A new, eight-member advisory council has been created to promote and advocate for graduate education and Lifelong Learning at Oakland University.

“With the changes in the job market, the need to have a graduate degree is becoming more acute,” said Claudia Petrescu, Ph.D., dean of Graduate Education at Oakland University. “It is becoming very important for institutions to put graduate education in the spotlight; to highlight its value to the community, as well as to the institution; and to let people know that there are several opportunities for them after they finish their bachelor’s degree.”



Claudia Petrescu, Ph.D., dean of Graduate Education at Oakland University.

According to Petrescu, the Graduate Study Advisory Council’s mission will be to provide external perspective, as well as advocacy and support for graduate experience, graduate

education strategic direction, and overall objectives.

“We are excited,” Petrescu said. “This is the first time in the history of Graduate Education on this campus that we have had an advisory council. Their role will be to promote graduate education and to advocate for it. In addition to connecting the dean with the community, the council will also connect graduate students with the community and come up with ideas how we can better serve them.”

Graduate Study Advisory Council members will serve a three-year term and will be eligible for re-appointment for one additional term. Board meetings are held quarterly and committee meetings will be held in coordination with full board meetings.

“This council will support Dean Petrescu’s ability to foster feelings of a lifelong community among our current graduate student population,” said Dr. Susan Bowyer, who will serve as council chair. “We will advocate for Graduate Education and promote the impact our graduate students will have in the world. This is a very forward thinking idea, as the ability for Oakland University to be a top school in our nation will depend on our future alumni who will be both ambassadors and supporters of our college.”

The eight members of the Graduate Study Advisory Council include:

- **Napoleon Harrington** is the founder and therapist of the Ambassador Counseling & Resource Group (ACRG), an organization dedicated to providing people and professionals with proficient counseling and training services.

Upon earning his bachelor’s degree, Harrington was awarded the Human Relations Award, a significant honor given to one graduating senior at Oakland University. In 2012 he was awarded the Adjunct Faculty of the Year Award for his academic and professional contributions to his colleagues and the undergraduate student body. In January of 2016, he was inducted into the fifth class of the "Elite 40 under 40 of Oakland County " by County Executive J. Brooks



Harrington

Patterson. He has recently been inducted as alumni and class president of the 28<sup>th</sup> Class of Leadership Oakland – a nationally recognized premiere leadership program.

Harrington is an engaging presenter with national experience and has been a keynote speaker for multiple occasions – ranging from university convocation and commencement exercises to professional conference appearances. He has had multiple television appearances and been featured as a radio guest a variety of times to discuss counseling and psychology related topics. He has also written multiple articles for National and local publications on topics related to mental health and wellness.

• **Amy Butler** serves as the director of sustainability for Michigan State University. She is responsible for initiating, implementing, and advancing MSU's strategic approach towards global sustainability.

Prior to joining the MSU team, Butler was the executive director at Oakland University's international business incubator, OU INC. Her career has also included nearly 32 years with the State of Michigan, where she directed the State Energy Office and Environmental Science and Services Division. In 2015, she was recognized for her career long efforts in energy policy and implementation when inducted into the Michigan Energy Hall of Fame.

Butler holds a bachelor's degree in biology and a Masters of Business Administration in International Business and Management of Information Systems from Oakland University. She is an accomplished international speaker on Michigan energy policy, sustainability, and economic transformation policies.



Butler



Benson

• **Beth Benson** worked at National Bank of Detroit from 1981 through 1984, and at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan from 1984 until she retired in 2018. She has held a variety of positions over the years, including internal auditor (operational and IT), operations management, project management, finance, staffing and compliance, as well as several years serving as chief of staff to the vice president of service operations.

In addition, Benson served on the OU School of Business Administration Alumni Board from 1985 to 1989 and is a current member of the OU Alumni Association Board. An avid fan of OU athletics, she was recognized with the OUAA Spirit Award in 2004 and the Oakland Athletics Community Service Award in 2014, as well as the Distinguished Volunteer AFP Award in 2007.

Benson graduated from OU in 1981 with a B.S. degree in management and concentrations in computer information science and accounting. She graduated in 1997 with an M.B.A. from the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan.

• **Beth Talbert** is a faculty member and serves as the chief undergraduate adviser in the Communication program at Oakland University. She is also the creator of and director of the OU Women's Leadership Institute (OUWLI).

As a faculty member, Talbert teaches a variety of courses including Leadership, Gender Communication, Women in Leadership, Persuasion, and Organizational Communication. Prior to her experience as a faculty member, Talbert served at OU in the capacity of associate director for Admissions, director of New Student Programs and coordinator of Student Organizations. She recently served as the co-chair of OU's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion conference and is a member of the OU Alumni Association Board of



Talbert is a former trustee on Rochester Community School's Board of Education, twice serving as board president, during which time the Board received the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) Board Visionary Leadership Award. She is also a member of the Women Officials Network, and was appointed to the Executive Committee of the Greater Rochester Community Foundation from 2010-2016.



Tack

• **Laura Tack** is an assurance staff at Plante & Moran, PLLC. She graduated from Oakland University with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and a Master of Business Administration.

While a student at Oakland, Tack volunteered with Global Business Brigades, a program dedicated to creating and sustaining economic empowerment within impoverished communities in various third-world countries.

Tack and her fellow volunteers spent two weeks providing financial literacy workshops and individualized business consultation in two rural Panamanian villages. This experience allowed her to work with Oakland University faculty to coauthor and publish relevant articles in the New England Journal of Entrepreneurship and the Southeast Case Research Journal.

• **Debra A. Pruent** is retired from GfK, SE where she was COO and a member of the Management Board. She was responsible for the strategy, M&A activity, talent and operational execution of the company's global custom research and consumer panel sector. She became a GfK Management Board member in 2008 and was the first American and only second woman to ever be named to the Board. She also served on the company Boards of the Italian, Austrian,

China and India companies which were part of the GfK global portfolio.

Prior to her role on the GfK Management Board, Pruent held executive positions at GfK Custom Research North America and NOP World Automotive, which was acquired by the GfK Group in 2005. During her professional career, she built up a strong track record in research and consultancy, both on the client and the research institute side. After starting her career in 1983 with General Motors, Pruent joined automotive research company Allison-Fisher International in 1991 as a partner, which later became a part of NOP World.



Pruent

Additionally, Pruent also previously served for eight years on the Advertising Research Foundation's Board of Directors and spent three years as chairman of their Finance Committee. She also previously taught Statistics at Oakland University.



Antaran

• **Michael J. Antaran**, is the founder and CEO of Marvel Apps LLC & CARROT Pass LLC. Before founding Marvel Apps, Antaran spent the majority of his professional career as one of the auto industry's leading powertrain and engine systems experts at DaimlerChrysler (1997-2008) and General Motors (2009-2012). Antaran left GM in 2012 to devote his full energies to Marvel Apps that since has been annually recognized as one of Southeast Michigan's top app developers, and was honored as a "Top 50 Company to Watch" by Michigan Celebrates Small Business.

In 2015, CARROT, through its leading health and wellness focused app, was selected as the official tech partner for the Michigan State Fair, and Antaran was one of just 16 U.S. entrepreneurs selected to participate in a special business development program hosted jointly by Goldman Sachs and Bloomberg in New York City.

In addition, Antaran was selected by the New Enterprise Forum to participate in its entrepreneur coaching program, was chosen to be a May 2017 NEF Showcase Presenter at Ann Arbor Spark, and was invited to present at the 2017 Michigan Growth Capital Symposium. For his leadership Michael was invited by his alma mater, Oakland University, to give the Commencement Address to the school's December 2017 graduating class.

• **Susan M. Bowyer, Ph.D.**, is the scientific director of the Neuromagnetism laboratory at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, where she uses her physics and brain imaging skills to assist Neurologists and Neurosurgeons plan brain surgeries for patients with epilepsy or tumors.

Bowyer is an experienced researcher with extensive training and expertise in Magnetoencephalography (MEG), Electroencephalography (EEG), Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) applications and image analysis. Her research has covered numerous brain disorders such as, migraine, epilepsy, autism, language dysfunction, tinnitus, panic and schizophrenia.



Bowyer

In collaboration with multiple organizations and differing disciplines, Bowyer has conducted analytical investigations, designed projects, and published over 100 articles. She was selected as one of the “Women in Physics” by the American Physical Society in 2002, and is a past board member and treasurer for both the American Clinical MEG Society and the International Society for the Advancement of Clinical MEG.

“The mission of this council provides strong emphasis on shaping the direction of the graduate school,” Bowyer said. “We need to be proactive in looking to the future and inspiring fond feelings and memories of OU in the current graduate student population, thus providing for future benefits. These benefits can be in the shape of mentoring future grad students, employing future grad students, giving back to OU by volunteering their expertise or donating to OU.”

To learn more about the Graduate Study Advisory Council, visit [wwwp.oakland.edu/grad/about](http://wwwp.oakland.edu/grad/about).