

Continuum

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES ◆ OAKLAND UNIVERSITY



Dear alumni and friends,

This year, Oakland University's College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) witnessed stunning growth in enrollment, new program development and achievements. It's my pleasure to share a few noteworthy items with you:

- ◆ New student growth reached 8.6 percent in fall 2009, with students enrolling in more than 50 majors across the CAS. Additional new majors on the horizon include a Bachelor of Science in Actuarial Science and a Master of Arts in Communication.
- ◆ Beginning fall 2011, the CAS will offer 15 of its majors as an optional three-year program. For students, the plan offers substantial cost benefits in the form of relief from living expenses during a fourth year of college and a one-year jump start on a career and salary.
- ◆ Prof. Brad Roth, director of the Center for Biomedical Research, received federal stimulus funding to build a graduate program in the emerging field of quantitative biology. The funding supports Prof. Libin Rong's research and program development efforts in this critical new field.
- ◆ The Department of Music, Theatre & Dance staged a once-in-a-lifetime performance of Olivier Messiaen's "Quartet for the End of Time" featuring faculty members George Stoffan, Yin Zheng and Liz Rowin. Written while the composer was imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp and first performed on instruments smuggled in by prison guards, it is one of the most important pieces of music of the 20th century.
- ◆ Our new major in writing and rhetoric was cited prominently in a review of writing majors published in *College Composition and Communication*, the premier journal for teachers and scholars of writing.

Despite the economic climate and uncertainty of public funding, the CAS remains vibrant and growing. I invite you to visit campus soon, and I thank you for supporting the College of Arts and Sciences.

Sincerely,

Ronald A. Sudol
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

Gifts to College Boost Vital Programs

In today's environment of decreasing state funding, donors are key to Oakland University's future. Several generous gifts recently made to the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) will go a long way toward boosting vital programs and enhancing student education.

Toby Stein, CAS '74, and her husband, Neal Alpinier, have made a bequest in support of scholarship funding for OU English majors. Stein, who earned a bachelor's degree in English and a master's degree in counseling at OU, is a retired executive vice president and chief human resources officer for the Ontario, Calif.-based CO-OP Network and Service Centers Corporation. She knows firsthand how difficult it can be to cover the cost of higher education. As an OU undergrad who paid her own way, she nearly had to quit when finances grew tight.

Focusing her bequest on English majors allows Stein to share her enthusiasm for the humanities. Before choosing English as a sophomore, Stein tested out a number of majors, from music to political science to history. Her interest in numerous subjects paid off in the long run.

"Over the course of my working life, I realized that having a broad spectrum of knowledge is important," she said, noting that the most valuable skill she gained at OU was the ability to write clearly. "It's helped in every job I've ever had."

Throughout her career, Stein mentored young employees and helped them improve their writing skills. She also shared those teaching skills with OU when she returned to teach courses in business and human resources.

Giving back to OU offers Stein and her husband a way to leave a legacy that will impact future generations.

Another generous gift was made by former OU English professor Marilyn Williamson, who passed away recently. She served as chair of the department and taught during its early years.

Shortly before her death, she established the James H. McKay Endowed Fellowship in Applied Mathematics in honor of her husband, James McKay, who was a charter OU faculty member and served the university from 1959–1995. The former professor and chair of mathematics and statistics at OU was instrumental in developing the Ph.D. program in applied mathematics.

Jack Nachman, chair of OU's mathematics and statistics department, says the fellowship will strengthen the Ph.D. program and raise OU's profile in the academic community.

"Having a named fellowship with a high-quality individual brings visibility to the program and appeals to potential grad students," he observes. "It enhances our position in both the research and graduate education communities." ◆

Toby Stein and Neal Alpinier support the humanities at OU through their contributions to scholarship funding.



Students Explore the Ancient World on Archaeological Dig

There's no substitute for the real thing. Just ask the nine OU students who traveled to Israel last July for two weeks to assist in an archaeological excavation.

The excursion marked the first international field work opportunity in Israel for anthropology students at OU. It offered hands-on excavation experience at the ancient site of Khirbet Qeiyafa, reputed to be the location of the biblical clash between David and Goliath.

The trip, led by Michael Pytlik from OU's Judaic studies program, and Richard Stamps, associate professor of anthropology, was the culmination of a course that instructed students how to research and analyze the way archaeology, culture and biblical history work together. It was funded in part by donations from OU benefactors.

"I had the rare opportunity to be immersed in a different culture."

— Danielle Ager, OU anthropology major



OU students helped to uncover remnants of an ancient settlement in Israel's Elah Valley.

For the OU students who participated, the dig was the opportunity of a lifetime to come face to face with ancient history.

"Seeing what I had been studying about for months was incredible," says Danielle Ager, a Royal Oak junior who is majoring in anthropology. "I had the rare opportunity to be immersed in a different culture and get experience working on one of the prominent archaeological excavations in Israel. Without the generous contributions of donors, I wouldn't have been able to have that unique experience, so I am very grateful."

Bernard Kent, managing director and senior advisor for Telemus Capital Partners in Southfield, Mich., was one

of the donors who made the trip possible. He says he was moved to help fund the excursion based on his travels to Israel.

"It's an amazing place that you can only truly appreciate when you go there" he explains. "I felt that archaeology and Judaic studies students would benefit most from traveling to Israel to see it firsthand."

Thanks to his generous donation and those of several others, nine OU students gained that irreplaceable personal experience. This summer, an additional group of 13 students will participate in the program. ♦



Research in Review



Prof. Tiegs researches the ecological role of species in river ecosystems.

Think "invasive species" and what comes to mind: earthworms?

Just ask a graduate student in OU's Stream Ecology Lab, under the direction of Scott Tiegs, assistant professor of biological sciences.

Three graduate students now are doing field-based research on different invasive species. "Our students know what they want to study generally; I help them focus the research," says Prof. Tiegs. "They feel invested in their projects and have ownership."

Tim Campbell is investigating how the round goby, an invasive fish introduced through discharged freighter ballasts, affects native fish populations. Jeff Stephens is studying the effect

of invasive wetland plants on larval frogs. Holly Greiner is looking at how exotic earthworms – all Michigan earthworms are non-native – impact forest ecology.

Research can provide valuable information to help improve the Great Lakes ecosystem. "Streams and rivers provide a lot of natural resources," says Prof. Tiegs. "We need to know how invasive species influence them."

The research is supported by modest state and federal funding which, unfortunately, can take up to a year to secure. "It would be wonderful if financial resources were more immediately available to these students who are here for only a short time," Prof. Tiegs adds. "A small amount of money goes a long way." ♦



Photograph: Jessica Carmichael

Art Program Aims for Higher Profile

OU's studio art program has grown exponentially since its 2004 launch, with the number of declared majors rising from 10 to 240. Upgrades made just last year to on-campus studios now provide those students with appropriate, well-lit and adequately ventilated spaces for their creative endeavors.



Prof. Andrea Eis

Andrea Eis, chair of the department of art and art history, says that while OU's goal is to establish an art program of national renown, it's a challenge made more difficult by limited resources.

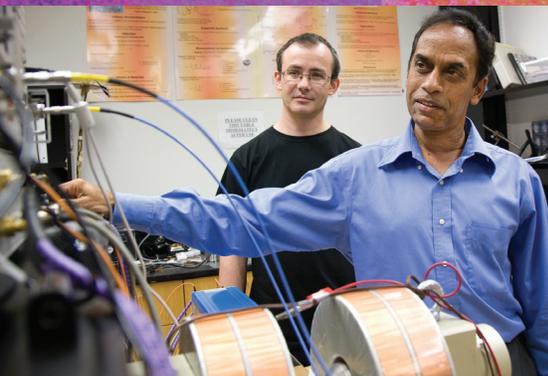
"We have high expectations for the art program at OU," she says. "We have already made a significant mark in a short time, with students going on to graduate work at Cranbrook Academy of Art and Parsons School of Design in New York, for example. We'd really love to add a graphic design major for students, but currently we're limited by classroom space and outdated equipment and software."

Prof. Eis observes that donor contributions are an important source of support and could be used to help the department acquire state-of-the-art equipment and software that would allow its graduates to be more competitive in the marketplace.

Prof. Eis adds she also has hopes for a student art gallery to permit more critical exposure for the works of studio art majors and help to bring them to a wider community.

"When students see the facilities here, we want them to feel validated in their choice of OU," she explains. "It should tell them: we value what you are doing and we are paying attention to the quality level. We want the art program to be something of which the entire OU community can be proud." ♦

Research in Review



Prof. Srinivasan's groundbreaking research and commitment to mentoring students has brought distinction to Oakland University.

As an internationally known researcher in the physics of materials, and an outstanding educator, Gopalan Srinivasan, recently was named a Distinguished Professor of Physics at OU. His research has led to applications in consumer electronics, national defense and homeland security.

It is no surprise, then, that his work is supported by grants from the National Science Foundation, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, Office of Naval Research, Army Research Office and a congressional grant.

And although those types of funding aren't easy to get and take time, it's a situation where experience counts in proposal writing. "It's

not a handicap if you know the system," Prof. Srinivasan says.

The projects in Prof. Srinivasan's lab provide experience for many researchers, ranging from post-doctoral associates to high school students. Prof. Srinivasan's experience also counts in mentoring the students. "I do three things: teach them the theory behind what we are trying to do, train them on the instruments we have to use, and show them how to do the research tasks.

"Then they're on their own," he says with a laugh.

Prof. Srinivasan admits it takes a big investment of time to train a researcher. But, he adds, "That is what professors are supposed to do." ♦



College of Arts and Sciences

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CAS Alumna Profile: Lisa Settles



Lisa Settles, CAS '02, was headed for a career in international business when a chance psychology course at OU changed her trajectory.

Today she is a pediatric psychiatrist and associate professor of clinical psychiatry at Tulane University in New Orleans, La. She specializes in the treatment of children under the age of six with a variety of emotional, relational and developmental problems, and supervises nine clinical sites around the state.

"I was all set for the world of business," she recalls. "I don't know what made me decide to take a course in psychology; it probably just

seemed interesting. My professor, Mary Eberly Lewis, was conducting attachment theory research and was looking for volunteers, so I raised my hand. As it turns out, something just clicked with me."

Settles finished her undergraduate degree at OU in three years and then developed her own research projects before moving on to the University of Indianapolis and Tulane University.

Having the chance to present her findings as an undergrad alongside Prof. Lewis at conferences in Chicago and San Diego was a huge boost for her, she says.

"I had opportunities at OU that I don't think I would have gotten at a larger university," Settles says. "I really enjoyed my time there." ♦

Help Make a Difference

Gifts to Oakland University's College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) provide an essential source of expendable support that impacts many critical areas including scholarships, research, technology enhancements and curriculum development.

Your gift demonstrates confidence in the university's direction, affinity with classmates, as well as a desire to help the next generation of students through a tradition of generosity that links us all.

Every gift, small or large, makes a difference. Please visit oakland.edu/donate and click on "Make a Gift," then select the College of Arts and Sciences as your Gift Information category option. You will be able to view all CAS gift funds.

Thank you!