

Campus Update

September 26, 2001

Colleagues,

So much has happened on campus and around the world since I last communicated with you through an e-mail message. The days before Tuesday, September 11 now seem like a lifetime ago. I find myself thinking of the victims and the challenges ahead many times each day.

As difficult and as heartrending as the huge losses of life, massive destruction of property and businesses, major setbacks on the stock market and the ripple effect on various industries have been, we have seen a tremendous outpouring of support - physically, financially and emotionally - from people across the globe. The best of the human spirit has been revealed during some of our darkest days.

When my thoughts come back to campus, and to our mission of educating students, my spirits rise. Heartfelt thanks go out to members of our campus community who so quickly rose to the occasion and traveled to New York to offer their assistance. And, to those who donated blood, sent clothing and supplies, or contributed financially to assist the victims of the disaster. I commend those students, faculty and staff who organized vigils, times for reflection, the memorial service, the issues forum and other spontaneous events in an attempt to understand the implications of the past two weeks. And, our counseling staff in the Graham Counseling Center, resident assistants and hall directors have done an outstanding job over the past two weeks in helping students cope with this experience.

Tuesday, our students and faculty engaged in discussions focused on the challenges our world faces, and how we as a university community can come together to live and learn in harmony. We owe a note of thanks to our Interim Provost Virinder Moudgil, Vice President for Student Affairs Mary Beth Snyder and Student Congress President Derek Dickow for creating and organizing this "Day of Understanding." Dr. Moudgil and I had the opportunity to sit in on Associate Professor Tad Grudzien's Biology class Tuesday morning and were impressed with the depth of feelings our students expressed.

Beginning today, the Center for Student Activities will present a series of forums on the tragedy and related topics to provide the university community with opportunities for discussion with experts, opinion leaders and fellow students, faculty and staff. You can obtain details and a schedule by logging on to The News @ OU on our website, either by clicking on one of the headlines on the home page, or by clicking on the News and Information button. I appreciate the work the Communications and Marketing staff has done to keep the campus informed through our website during this difficult period.

A look at the News site brings other "heartening" news. Once again, our campus community did an outstanding job of hosting metro Detroit's American Heart Walk. We had close to 17,000 walkers on Saturday, the largest walk in the United States, with hopes

to raise well over \$1 million. You may be aware that the American Heart Association pledged to send \$250,000 from its efforts this year to victims of the September 11 tragedies.

And even while national events swirled around us, we were welcoming students - first-year and returning - back to class. Once again, we will set a new enrollment record this fall. I know many of you, and the students you encounter, are inconvenienced by our growing pains. Even while we build the new Education and Human Services building next to Varner Hall, and the much-anticipated student apartments across from the upper fields, parking and campus exits have developed into operational concerns. I want to assure you that Vice President for Finance and Administration Lynne Schaefer and her staff are working on these bottlenecks and will have short-term solutions in the near future. Long-term solutions are also in motion through our master planning process.

In my last message, I talked about the budget planning process. Since that time, all base budgets have been allocated to the divisional vice presidents, along with some one-time funds. At the request of Provost Moudgil, I presented a report on university allocations last week to the academic department chairs and to the University Senate. Dr. Moudgil will present a report to the academic council, the chairs and the Senate on his allocations within Academic Affairs. Other vice presidents will also be sharing budget information with their staffs. The financial and strategic planning processes have been vital to our growth since 1995, and will be just as important as we move ahead with our 2010 vision.

I am pleased to report that support for our core mission, academic quality, has steadily increased as a percentage of the overall university budget during the past several years. Academic Affairs received 85 percent of the new base dollars this year, some \$4.2 million. Student Affairs received \$145,000 in new base dollars (3 percent), Finance and Administration \$199,000 (4 percent), Development, Alumni and Community Engagement \$246,000 (5 percent) and the President's division \$146,000 (3 percent). Details on the FY02 allocations can be obtained through your university senator, department chair, dean or divisional vice president.

Finally, in the next week or so, you will be able to view a copy of the new university report entitled "Transformation: A Five-Year Report of Educational Enrichment, 1995-2000." Primarily a fund-raising vehicle, a limited number of copies will be made available in the offices of deans, department chairs and vice presidents. I think you will be proud of what we have accomplished together since 1995.

It has been my honor and pleasure to have worked with you to move Oakland into the forefront of higher education in our region. We now have an aggressive agenda to achieve our desired profile for the year 2010 - a visionary undergraduate experience. With the talent, commitment and passion of the OU community, which has become even more evident during the past 15 difficult days, I look forward to the challenge.

Gary Russi