

State of Higher Education

November 12, 2004

Dear colleagues:

As many of you know, on Monday of this week I spoke to the Detroit Economic Club at Cobo Hall about the importance of Michigan's public universities to our state's economy. My address focused on how we are moving from a manufacturing based economy to an era in which brainpower is the most coveted asset a person can have.

This presents an incredible challenge for all universities, including Oakland. We stand on the brink of a new era in which universities will have a paramount role in serving as the most powerful force for our state's economic revival. We support Governor Granholm's commitment to double the number of college graduates in Michigan over the next 10 years, and to ensure that each and every one of those graduates possess the knowledge and skills they'll need to succeed in whatever career path they take.

This formidable challenge is made even more difficult by the multiple state budget cuts that we've incurred over the past four years. State support for higher education has been diminishing steadily, and we expect this trend to continue, at least in the short-term. Preliminary budget projections for fiscal year 2004 and fiscal year 2005 are grim; we're operating under the assumption that further cuts will need to be made. I'll be telling you more about this soon, as the budget picture becomes clearer.

In the meantime, let's continue to use our creativity to maintain the quality of learning environment here at Oakland that we have all worked so hard to protect. We need to continue to focus our energies on developing and nurturing key partnerships in the community, and to our commitment to the groundbreaking research for which our faculty and students are known. Let's work together to come up with innovative ways to increase university efficiency. We must also focus our energies on fund raising, as we move toward the public phase of our capital campaign, which will begin in April.

I invite you to take a look at the full text of the [speech](#) and as always, I welcome your comments and questions. Working together, we can help lead the revival of Michigan's economy.