

University Update Recap

January 13, 2011

Colleagues,

I'd like to thank the campus community for a wonderful turnout at Tuesday's University Update presentation. I am grateful for your interest in staying informed and helping address our collective challenges and opportunities.

For those of you unable to attend, I'd like to briefly highlight what I feel are key points to consider. We will certainly confront a number of obstacles in the coming months and years. At the same time, we'll have the chance to leverage many advantages and strengths unique to Oakland University.

This is the time to call on all of our resilience, confidence and strength to make changes that will sustain our university through the economic challenges that face us. Our passion must be to make our university even more relevant for the public good.

Thanks to your efforts to date, every school and department in this university can point to a long list of accolades from both internal and external sources. We know, however, that the scope and quality of higher education programs across the country are threatened by what has been the most daunting economic recession we've seen in decades.

Oakland's faculty, staff, students, alumni and community supporters have been able thus far to help the university grow in terms of student enrollment, its array of highly qualified faculty and staff, new facilities, new programs, a respected regional reputation and growing national recognition. Particularly in today's economic climate, these are tremendous accomplishments.

In the face of declining state support and other economic pressures, however, we will have to redouble our efforts to levy community support, expand grant and contract revenue, boost financial aid, reinvigorate our graduate programs, continue growing online course enrollment, forge new community partnerships and implement even more efficient work processes.

As we look to protect program quality from the detrimental impact of looming cuts, we will need to make the economic, technological and political realities of today's world work to our advantage. We will need to focus on the demands of globalization and the evolving academic needs of an increasingly diverse, self-directed and interdisciplinary student body.

Like all colleges and universities, we'll face a growing insistence that we provide students with everything they need to succeed in increasingly demanding job markets.

This will mean expanding student engagement and using data-driven approaches to enhance student success – both of which will improve student retention and graduation rates. We'll also need to find ways to flourish in an intensely competitive market for a declining population of high school graduates. Presently, we have a number of promising strategies at our disposal, but your ideas and participation in strategic planning will be key to ensuring our continued vitality.

Over the coming months, we'll be using the Creating the Future II strategic planning process to welcome valuable insight and advice from 500 of the region's most successful business and community leaders. Their contributions will help us recalibrate our 2020 Vision, broaden our network of supporters and expand our relevance and value in the community.

In summary, the breadth of our achievements inspires great confidence that, together, we can not only overcome the potholes in the road to our future, but pave a new road to even greater success. I encourage and welcome you to actively participate in our current planning process. As I shared Tuesday morning, your involvement is essential to our success.

For greater detail about the state of the university and the challenges and opportunities before us, please download Tuesday's PowerPoint presentation from the homepage of [The POINT](#). For more information on our strategic planning process and to contribute your ideas and suggestions, please visit www.oakland.edu/strategicplanning.

In closing, I would once again like to thank you for your outstanding work and unequalled support of Oakland University. I look forward to pooling our efforts to make the future even more promising for every faculty and staff member, the community at large, and most of all, our students. We must act with a sense of urgency. It is our obligation and our responsibility.

Sincerely,

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