

**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**OAKLAND UNIVERSITY**

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH**  
**TASK FORCE REPORT**

**OCTOBER 1, 1993**

**OPEN HEARING**

**OCTOBER 26, 1993**

**11:00-1:30PM**

**OAKLAND CENTER - FIRESIDE LOUNGE**

## **MEMBERS**

Dr. Gary Barber, School of Engineering and Computer Science  
Dr. F. James Clatworthy, School of Education and Human Services  
Dr. David Downing, College of Arts and Sciences  
Mr. Douglas Godwin, Public Safety  
Mr. John Greenhill, Probate Court  
Ms. Gina Hawn, Campus Facilities and Operations  
Dr. Pamela Marin, Continuing Education  
Mr. Dennis McGee, City of Auburn Hills  
Dr. James McKay, College of Arts and Sciences  
Mr. Gary Parsons, Athletics  
Dr. Manuel Pierson, University School Relations  
Mr. William Sandy, Sandy Corporation  
Dr. Robert Swanson, Consultant  
Dr. Ronald Tracy, College of Arts and Sciences  
Ms. Margaret Twyman, Meadow Brook Hall  
Dr. Carol Zenas, School of Nursing

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH TASK FORCE

### I. Introduction

Task Force Charge:

**"...TO PLAN FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF OUR STATEWIDE MISSION THROUGH CONTINUING EDUCATION, COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS, RESEARCH, AND OFF-CAMPUS INSTRUCTION."**

Proposed Vision Statement

**OAKLAND UNIVERSITY WILL BE RECOGNIZED AS AN INSTITUTION OF EXCELLENCE, RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF ITS CONSTITUENCIES, AND PREEMINENT IN SELECTED AREAS OF TEACHING, LEARNING, RESEARCH, AND SERVICE.**

Community Outreach Task Force's Interpretation of the Vision Statement

#### **"...responsive to the needs of its constituencies..."**

We interpret constituencies specifically to mean the students, parents, alumni, and employers who are interested in Oakland University; our neighboring communities; the Tech Park, local businesses, and other institutions; the Detroit metropolitan region; and those seeking applied research, training, and professional development services from Oakland University faculty and staff.

#### **"...preeminent in selected areas of teaching, learning..."**

We believe that Oakland University should expand and enlarge its efforts in professional development education, creating pockets of excellence by increasing access to University programs through television, coordinated outreach services, sustained institutional support, and in academic credit and non-credit programs organized at off-campus sites. In addition, the University should expand opportunities for students and faculty to participate in co-op programs, internships, and other off-campus learning experiences.

#### **"...research..."**

Our outreach institutional focus should be on applied research and partnerships with those companies, schools, organizations, and other groups that wish to be partners in problem solving.

#### **"...and service."**

As an institution of higher education, our public service mission is to extend opportunities for learning by working with high schools, local community colleges, business groups, and surrounding communities and agencies. Our goal is to provide continuous, lifelong learning activities. By public service, we refer to the application of the intellectual resources of higher education to public concerns. This is characterized by commitment, relevance, and excellence and rests upon the belief that Oakland University has a responsibility to enhance the quality of life for people within its sphere of influence.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, THREATS, OPPORTUNITIES**

#### **STRENGTHS**

- The amount of public service already taking place
- Location - Oakland University is accessible to large populations, industry, and other institutions
- Official commitment to outreach in mission statement, faculty promotion, presidential statements
- Faculty and staff capabilities and talents

#### **WEAKNESSES**

- Little recognition by those outside Oakland University's efforts; outreach is unfocused, not rewarded, and unknown within and outside the institution
- No internal coordination; often not linked to Oakland University goals and objectives
- No rewards for faculty and staff who participate actively in outreach; limited rewards for students
- Inconsistent policies; limited administrative support; short-term perspective throughout Oakland University
- Communication is fragmented and based upon individual contacts

#### **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Possible expansion in all areas, but particularly in professional development programs through continuing education, off-campus courses, television, and other non-traditional centers for learning
- Greater ties with important constituencies in business and industry; among alumni; minority groups; possible student employers

- Recognition that Oakland University is an innovative institution, one that is meeting new challenges and capable of delivering quality education
- Possible partnerships for research and training
- More effective recruitment of students
- Recognition throughout the state that Oakland University plays an important role in Michigan's system of higher education
- An opportunity to perform important public service, defined as the application of the intellectual resources of higher education to public concerns; characterized by commitment, relevance, and excellence; and resting on the belief that Oakland University has a responsibility to enhance the quality of life for people within its sphere of influence.

### **THREATS**

- Public support for Oakland University is reduced as it is perceived as not caring, arrogant, distant
- Opportunities are lost to other institutions and organizations that meet community needs more effectively
- Oakland University has become isolated from important publics and is less responsive to changes taking place around it

## **II. Recommendations**

1. Outreach must become an integral component of the university's activities

Rationale: As a state supported institution of higher education, Oakland University has a responsibility to work with other constituencies to provide education and expertise that can improve the quality of life for all.

2. Provide mechanisms to develop and coordinate outreach programs throughout the university and to communicate them to the external community.

Rationale: Those outside Oakland University do not know who is responsible for outreach or where to make contact. Within Oakland University, most people have no idea what others are doing. As a result, Oakland University gets little institutional credit for the work that is being done, and many opportunities are lost. It would be unfortunate, however, if outreach became over-centralized. Individuals, departments, and units should determine what they can do most effectively.

3. Develop and support policies and procedures that promote community outreach by faculty and staff, as well as establish the principle that community outreach is expected of each unit.

Rationale: Within Oakland University many believe we only give lip-service to service. There is no recognition or reward for those who work in this arena and inconsistent, limited support and direction concerning the importance, extent, and direction of outreach.

4. Develop new programs and enhance existing programs that are responsive to community needs and consistent with Oakland University's mission and vision.

Rationale: It takes time to build mutual trust and understanding between organizations, and it is essential that the necessary personnel and financial resources be allocated to the development and maintenance of partnerships deemed important to Oakland University. Since Oakland University cannot meet all the social needs, priority should be given to those activities that best fit the mission of Oakland University.

### ACTION PLANS

In order to realize the recommendations the university must fundamentally change the way it recognizes, evaluates and rewards community outreach. The following initiatives are examples of changes that need to be made to achieve this end.

1. Each academic and non-academic unit should establish a community outreach plan. This plan should:
  - a. be guided by activities that integrate teaching, research, service, faculty/staff development, and student growth within the unit.
  - b. be approved by the dean or vice president to which the unit reports.
  - c. include an implementation timetable and annual evaluation process.

2. Designate an office with responsibility for coordinating, promoting and monitoring community outreach. This office should:
  - a. coordinate all collaborative partnerships throughout the university.
  - b. pro-actively seek new collaborative partnerships.
  - c. work with academic deans and all vice presidents in establishing institutional priorities in community outreach, beginning with nearby neighbors, and then extending to metropolitan, regional, state and international levels.
  - d. assist faculty in arranging faculty internships at public and private institutions.
  - e. provide financial support (for a specified period of time) for those community outreach projects that the university believes are clearly in its best interest.
  - f. communicate the university's community outreach programs and initiatives to the university and external community.
  - g. monitor all unit plans through internal and external evaluation procedures, to ensure effectiveness and high performance standards.
3. Each unit should develop policies and processes that encourage and foster community outreach. Units should:
  - a. modify their promotion and tenure guidelines so that community outreach is a valued component in promotion, tenure and other personnel decisions.
  - b. support outreach through release time, compensation, or other incentives (eg awards) to those engaged in significant outreach projects.
  - c. sponsor regular forums, that highlight research or other activities, that appropriate individuals from area public and private institutions are invited to attend.
  - d. encourage faculty on sabbatical leave to take faculty internships at public and private institutions.
4. Develop new and strengthen current programs and partnerships to substantially enhance off-campus learning. The university should:
  - a. upgrade and expand distance learning capacity at Oakland University.

- b. expand opportunities for students to learn outside the classroom, including internships, field projects and co-ops, and integrating these opportunities into the classroom.
  - c. enlarge the scope of off-campus learning.
  - d. review fee and tuition policies that make Oakland University less competitive at off-campus sites.
  - e. provide services for students at off-campus sites.
  - f. establish complete programs, not merely course offerings, at off-campus locations and integrating all extension programs with university strategic objectives.
5. Develop new and strengthen current professional development programs. The university should:
- a. develop new programs and expand current programs that are responsive to community needs and consistent with university strategic objectives. This includes both professional development programs as well as specialized programs for alumni and senior citizens.
  - b. appoint an academic council to advise on the development of credit and non-credit professional development programs.
  - c. review fee and tuition policies for professional development programs.
  - d. develop incentives so that the revenue generated supports both the program and the academic unit(s) providing the program.