

inside OAKLAND

A newsletter for Oakland University colleagues



Oakland University leads North American effort for instituting an innovative early education math program

American effort for instituting an innovative early education math program

Oakland University's School of Education and Human Services, in a recent landmark agreement with the New Zealand Ministry of Education and its affiliates, has become the North American Coordinating Center for Beginning School Mathematics (BSM) Resources.

The partnership makes Oakland the main source for the promotion, use and sale of BSM materials and the BSM teacher development program throughout the United States and Canada for children in the first three years of school.

"The agreement represents thousands of hours of work on the part of many individuals from New Zealand schools and Oakland who have worked together to refine and develop teaching and learning strategies in order to

Figuring on success

implement the BSM program in both countries," says Mary Otto, dean, School of Education and Human Services, who signed the agreement during formal ceremonies in New Zealand.

"For Oakland, it is a recognition of our international status. This will be one of the most successful models for teaching math to children in the United States. For teachers and students, BSM is an exciting teaching model that, with support from the university, can turn out students who are better prepared in math at an early stage so that they can develop stronger abilities as they get older."

Under the BSM philosophy, math classrooms are more like science labs where children work in small teams, learn by hands-on experiments and become motivated independent thinkers and problem-solvers. There is a decreased emphasis on work sheets, lectures and the traditional memory drills and rote practice of learning math.

Otto says top educational organizations judged BSM as one of a few programs that address the critical need for a massive reformation of math education in order to meet the scientific and technological demands that will be placed on learners and workers in the 21st century and beyond.

"BSM is one of Oakland's areas of expertise," says Gary D. Russi, Oakland interim president. "We are pleased to add this interna-

tional program to our other international alliances. BSM underscores an important component of the university's strategic plan to achieve eminence in distinct areas of teaching, learning, research and service."

The BSM approach is based on principles about how young children learn best, says Donald Miller, professor, Education, and director of Oakland's Institute for Action Research and Professional Development. BSM became one of the institute's first projects when it was formed in 1989.

That same year, Miller visited New Zealand and became acquainted with the BSM program and he negotiated an agreement for BSM trials to be undertaken in Michigan, through Oakland.

"BSM focuses on teaching math concepts to youngsters aged 5 through 8," Miller says.



Donald Miller, professor, Education, uses the BSM program to help children learn math through hands-on experiments.



"Numeration, measurement, geometry, algebra, statistics, problem-solving, logic and reasoning is taught in a manner that better reflects how children grow and learn, through active, inquisitive and investigative ways."

— Donald Miller, professor, Education

"Numeration, measurement, geometry, algebra, statistics, problem-solving, logic and reasoning is taught in a manner that better reflects how children grow and learn, through active, inquisitive and investigative ways."

Miller believes the heart of the BSM project is the team of teachers that enables students to become absorbed in challenging learning situations with a wide variety of materials and which involves teaching-learning strategies appropriate for young children. He likens the move to BSM to the transformation the automotive industry undertook in the 1980s to remain competitive — going from an assembly-line style of working to a platform team approach. It's a change that involves a three-year commitment from schools who want to introduce the BSM project in their classrooms.

"The best time to learn mathematics is when it is first taught; the

best way to teach mathematics is to teach it well the first time," reports the National Research Council (NRC) in its 1989 comprehensive statement in *Everybody Counts: A Report to the Nation on the Future of Mathematics Education*.

"BSM gives emphasis to the importance of mathematics education as stated by the NRC and the (1990) recommendations for action as reported by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)," Miller says.

In that report, the NCTM asserts that: "The need for curricular reform in K-4 mathematics is clear. The foundation of mathematics needed for personal affairs and for careers must be laid by the end of grade 4."

Oakland University is not just advocating BSM, says Miller, "Through BSM we are advocating that all children acquire a strong, early foundation in mathematics which will serve them during their school years and beyond."

NEWS

'We're on the move'

In the State of the University address January 25, Interim President Gary D. Russi outlined Oakland's accomplishments and provided an update on where the university is headed in 1996 and beyond.

"We are moving actively in the right direction," he said. "Oakland University is a great place to be at this time."

Among highlights, Russi announced the university and the state governor's office are involved in negotiations for a \$16-million building that may be constructed with matching funds, slated for the School of Business Administration.

See next month's *Taking the Initiative* for more details about Russi's comprehensive review of the past year and preview of the year ahead.

A clean sweep

As part of the university's continuing efforts to provide more dedicated support services for students, CF&O's Campus Cleaning operations are teaming to provide better coverage for classroom cleaning. Custodial crews are dedicating more time in their mornings before day classes, and in the evening shifts before night classes, to ensure all classrooms are presentable.

Flame Wars

In the third President's Colloquium Series lecture, Associate Professor Brian Connery shows that the Internet is a postmodern extension of coffeehouse culture in 17th- and 18th-century London and speculates about the future of the Internet as a space for public discussion.



Internet discussions are like 17th- and 18th-century London, where coffeehouses proliferated as public places, where citizens could gather to discuss the news and speak their minds, regardless of class or profession. In these and other ways, coffeehouses resemble the way the Internet currently functions, according to Brian Connery, associate professor, English, who shares his research and ideas during the President's Colloquium Series February 6.

Flame Wars in the Virtual Coffeehouse: Lessons from the Eighteenth Century details many similarities about the nature of the Internet, the history of coffeehouse culture, and similarities between the two. Connery concludes with observations about Internet rhetoric, along with some comments

about the future of Internet discussion groups based on the demise of coffeehouse culture.

Unmoderated discussion groups on the Internet, even those organized around a potentially unifying interest, can dissolve into "flame wars" as different Internet users contend for domination of discussion groups, Connery contends.

"In many groups, during or after such incidents, a sort of meta-discussion begins and new rules or guidelines for the group are proposed," Connery says. "And even in groups without explicit discussion, a new rhetorical style is emerging. Users often attempt to disarm potential 'flamers' by preceding their strongest opinions with acronyms," he says. "In doing so, they indicate that users may

disagree and they affirm the values of pluralism and dissensus, values which the current structure of the Internet inherently support."

Connery believes that two peculiarities of cyberspace discussion are responsible for "flaming" and the solutions to it are slowly evolving.

"Our culture has little experience with an unregulated public sphere where all who claim the right to speak can be heard," he says. Town meetings, letters to newspapers and TV talk shows and talk radio notwithstanding, "no one has yet adopted a rhetoric that is suitable for discussion in which no rules can be enforced."

In his research, Connery has been concerned with questions

Continued on page 4



Committee to draft application for accepting charter school proposals

Oakland University is taking a "thoughtful approach" to the "serious endeavor" of chartering public school academies, says Mary Otto, dean, School of Education and Human Services, and chair of the Public School Academy Application Review Committee.

Otto and committee members met in December to discuss the group's goals. Interim President Gary Russi joined

the committee's first meeting to "officially charge" the group with its task to create a process of receiving and reviewing applications for charter schools.

"We have put together a high-level group of cross-university disciplines to study the possibility of charter schools," Otto says. "We will also use the internal governance system in order to involve faculty and staff."

Joining Otto on the committee are David Downing, dean, College of Arts and Sciences; Kate Lark, director, Risk Management and Contracting, who is also on special assignment as part-time assistant in Academic Affairs to handle community college relations; Ray Harris, associate vice president, Finance and Administration; Robert Eberwein, professor, English; Susan Aldrich, assistant vice president, Capital Planning and Design; Nina Googasian, assistant to the president, Office of the President; Rochelle Black, director, Government Relations; and Susan Gerrits, General Counsel and secretary to the Board of Trustees.

"The mission and goals of any charter school partnership must be consistent with OU," Otto says. "We are not interested in chartering schools as a business. It must involve students and faculty."

Otto says Oakland is interested in what it might be able to add to enhance public school education. "We are looking to address educational needs that are not being met and looking to identify what those needs may be," she says. "We are interested in offering more educational

choices for parents and students."

Involvement in charter schools could also give OU an opportunity to address the quality of students it receives at the college level.

More than 23 states have charter schools, according to Otto, with more than 40 such schools already established in Michigan.

As outlined by the state legislature, the basic state requirements include state-supported funding, as long as the charter school is affiliated with a college or university. Start-up costs, including buildings and equipment, will be covered by those who propose a charter school plan. "OU will not subsidize any charter schools," Otto says.

An institution's board of trustees or regents are responsible to oversee charter schools.

To date, Oakland has received one unsolicited business proposal for a charter school plan. Until the university has an approved application process and procedures in place to review and accept proposals — expected to take about six months — Oakland will turn down charter school partnership requests.

After application requirements have been studied and reviewed by the committee, the group's recommendations will be sent to the university's Senate Planning Review Committee and Senate Budget Committee for review, as well as the full University Senate. Afterward, it will be channeled through the Dean's Council and the President's Cabinet, before final presentation to the board.

employee of the MONTH

..... february



Employee: Lisa A. Smith
Position: Office Assistant I
Department: Placement and Career Services
Length of Service: 6 years
Plaudits:

"Lisa has extended herself to improve her own technical ability and the technical development of the department. She goes beyond what is expected to ensure proper service to students, staff and employers."

"Lisa has been a key factor in the successful implementation of the Resume Expert Plus registration process. She clearly understands the mission of the department as demonstrated by her commitment to accomplishing departmental goals."

"Lisa works extra hours to ensure quality and timely completion of a project. She has complete knowledge of and assists in training for all facets of our department. She is a great asset to all of us at Placement and Career Services."

Employee of the Month nomination forms are available in all departments, ERD and CIPO. For more information, call Gail Ryckman at 370-3480.

It's a mindful

This year, Oakland University will host the MEETING OF THE MINDS IV at which undergraduate research will be highlighted with presentations of undergraduate research projects and creative activity. The meeting is jointly sponsored by OU, University of Michigan-Flint and University of Michigan-Dearborn and is the fourth in the series. It will be the first time that the conference is held at OU.

On Friday, May 17, 1996, OU will sponsor an Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Day. The day will include seminars, posters, and discussion highlighting undergraduate research and faculty-student collaboration.

Registration forms and presentation proposal forms are now available from the Office of the Dean, College of Arts and Sciences.

breaking NEWS

Lowry Center may add charter school

Oakland University is moving ahead with plans to explore the possibility of adding a public school academy or charter school to the Matthew Lowry Early Childhood Center.

A special committee, comprised of School of Education and Human Services (SEHS) faculty, area representatives and community leaders, has been formed to study the feasibility of adding a charter school.

"The main charge of the committee is to see what's possible," says Mary Otto, dean, SEHS. "We're in the exploration stage."

The Lowry center, operated by the SEHS, provides child care needs for Oakland students and university colleagues, and the majority of the center's instructional aides are SEHS students.

The center, located on the southeast corner of campus, has a history of providing "exemplary child care and education at the kindergarten and preschool levels," Otto says.

REGISTER

campus

new faces

John Coughlin, computer technologist, OTUS

Terry Colonna, assistant, University Relations

Matthew Edwards, receptionist/security guard, Meadow Brook Hall

Ralph P. Hof, skilled trades, Residence Halls

Cheri Ann Maduri, dispatcher, Public Safety and Police

in memoriam

Roderic E. Righter, professor, Education

retirements

John Wendland, custodian, CF&O, 15 years of service

of distinction

Hoda S. Abdel-Aty-Zohdy, Microelectronics System Design Laboratory, published a paper in the Proceedings of the IEEE International Conference on Electronics, Circuits and Systems ICECS '95. The paper is co-authored with then graduate student

Ahmad A. Hiasat and presented at the conference in Amman, Jordan. Abdel-Aty-Zohdy and Hiasat published a paper in the refereed proceedings of the IEEE International Symposium on Circuits and Systems, ISCAS 1995, A High-Speed Division Algorithm for Residue Number System. Abdel-Aty-Zohdy published two papers at the IEEE ICASSP '95

International Conference on Acoustics, Speech, and Signal Processing, Detroit: VLSI Design and Implementation of a Residue-Based Arithmetic Chip and Sixteen-Input Max/Min Selector for Analog Signal Processing. Abdel-Aty-Zohdy and Hiasat also published a paper in the refereed proceedings of the Second International Conference on Engineering Math and Physics, ICEMP-94, Design and Silicon-Chip Implementation of an Efficient Residue-Based Arithmetic-Logic Unit.

Carl E. Barnes Jr., Art and Art History, published two entries, Soissons and Villard de Honnecourt, in *MEDIEVAL FRANCE, AN ENCYCLOPAEDIA*, New York: Garland Press, 1995.

Robert J. Goldstein, Political Science, was featured in an article about his research on the flag desecration controversy in the December issue of *The New York*

Times. The newspaper highlighted Goldstein's book, *Saving Old Glory: The History of the American Flag Desecration Controversy*.

Fatima Mili, **Hoda Abdel-Aty-Zohdy**, **Keyu Li** and **Ching L. Ko**, School of Engineering and Computer Science each received a \$6,500 fellowship from the University Research Committee.

Donald E. Morse, English, and **Csilla Bertha**, former Scholar in Residence, English, were the guests of the director of the Hungarian National Theatre at the gala performance of *Advent* in the Hargita honoring Andras Suto on the occasion of his receiving the Hungarian equivalent of the American Freedom Medal and marking the 10th anniversary of the play being banned in Hungary and Rumania. Morse also edited a book, *The Delegated Intellect: Emersonian Essays on Literature, Science, and Art in Honor of Don Gifford*, published by Peter Lang. He also published an article, *A Blatancy of Untruth: George Orwell's Uses of the Fantastic in 'Animal Farm'*, in *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies*.

Geoff Wawro, History, has been invited by the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, to lead their faculty seminar on Moltke, Bismarck, and the German Wars of Unification in March.

jobs

- Administrative Assistant Major Events, MBH, Misc., contract
- Publicist, Music Theatre and Dance, AP-5
- Communications Administrator, Electronic Systems Operations, Misc., contract
- Academic and Program Coordinator, Upward Bound, AP-6
- Co-operative Education Coordinator, Placement, AP-8
- Executive Secretary, Office of Equal Opportunity, excluded
- Director, Office of Equal Opportunity, AP-13
- Medical Director, Misc., contract, Meadow Brook Health Enhancement Institute
- Admission Information Analyst, Office of Admissions, AP-6

Members of the search committee for the new director of the Office of Equal Opportunity welcome nominations and suggestions from the OU community, particularly of women and under-represented minority candidates.

Requirements include a master's degree or an equivalent combination of education and experience, and a minimum of three years experience in a directly related field. Applications should include a resume, cover letter and the names and contact numbers of three references to Indra David, chair, Search Committee for the Director of Equal Opportunity, OU Employment Office, 140 North Foundation Hall, 370-3480.

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bits and PIECES

Quite an honor

The Athletic Department will celebrate 31 years of intercollegiate athletics at the annual Hall of Honor banquet at 7 p.m. February 17 in Meadow Brook Hall.

Hall members will induct former basketball star Debbie Delie Stephan and swimming and diving standout Nikki Kelsey. Also to be honored: Dewayne Jones, former women's basketball coach, as well as community members Ken Mittlebrun and Rebecca Girard for their contributions to Oakland's athletic programs. The George Wibby Award will be presented to Joyce Sowter, former Athletic Department secretary. Call 3190 for information.

WOU host luncheons

The Women of Oakland University will host two brown bag luncheons in February that are open to the university community. Kathi Patrick of HAVEN, a shelter for battered women, will be guest speaker February 7 in Gold Room A of Oakland Center. Bev Blanchard of Leader Dogs for the Blind will discuss how families prepare puppies for careers as leader dogs February 21, Rooms 128-30, Oakland Center. Call 2190 for more details.

Check with office

In the case of death of an Oakland University faculty, staff or administrator or an immediate family member or serious illness of an OU employee, departments are expected to notify Shirley R. Cobb, senior secretary, Office of the President.

Call 3500 or e-mail: cobb@jupiter.acs.oakland.edu

Name of deceased, date of death and other pertinent information is preferred.

Wanted: Student Liaisons to the Board

University colleagues are encouraged to nominate students to fill two positions as liaisons to the Board of Trustees for 1996-97. Each liaison will be required to serve for one academic year beginning July 1, attend all board meetings, and provide a cross-section of student views and opinions and make periodic reports regarding Board activities to various student groups.

Applications for nominations are due February 23 and are available at 157 North Foundation Hall, extension 4200, and at the CIPO office, 49 Oakland Center, extension 2020, and the Student Life Office, 144 OC, 3352.

Nominations will be screened by a search committee comprised of two students, a faculty and a staff member, with the President's Office making the final appointments, expected by April 11.



Ground breaking begins this fall for Oakland University's new state-of-the-art Recreation and Athletic Center, following the Board of Trustees' approval of final architectural plans.

"The center will be one of the top recreational facilities in the Midwest," says David Herman, assistant vice president, Student Affairs, and dean of students.

The 250,000-square-foot facility will have something for everyone — Oakland's championship Pioneer intercollegiate sports program, as well as fitness and recreational facilities.

The centerpiece will be a 3,000-seat indoor arena for intercollegiate athletics, convocations, graduations and other special events.

Expected to be open in fall 1998, the three-story, \$28-million center will offer a high-fidelity sound system throughout, a new card access system, sun decks, classroom/meeting rooms, open gym and fitness programs, family nights, children's programs and swimming lessons, along with many other expanded athletic and recreational programs.

'Game plan' scores big for new Recreation and Athletic Center



Going Global

Master's degree in Engineering Management offered in Austria

Oakland University's Master of Engineering Management (MEM) is being offered to 11 working engineers in Austria as part of an executive education program, sponsored by Oakland and the University of Technology in Vienna.

The universities had signed a collaboration agreement at the beginning of 1995, but classes did not start until October, says Naim Kheir, chair, Department of Electrical and Systems Engineering, and program coordinator.

Kheir taught the first course, Systems Engineering Fundamentals, during the week of October 23 at the Scientific Academy of Lower Austria, Krems. He says Oakland faculty will teach seven courses for about 25 credits. European faculty will teach the rest of the program. Each course is an intensive week-long session of 8- to 9-hour days.

"I find it very exciting and a new dimension that will make Oakland more visual internationally and give us another edge," Kheir says.

The MEM is a collaboration between the School of Engineering and Computer Science and the School of Business Administration. It offers practicing engineers with bachelor degrees a way to keep

abreast of their field and prepare for advanced management responsibilities.

Oakland started the program in 1993 and currently has about 160 students enrolled. Other Oakland professors teaching in the program are business faculty members Sadi Bazaz, Robert Kleiman, Ravi Parameswaran, Howard Schwartz and T.J. Wharton. Engineering special instructor and General Motors engineer Robert Borderly will also teach a course.

The 11 Austrian participants will be on campus in May to complete the final two courses and make visits to key local industry in southeastern Michigan.

Office splits name, numbers

The Office of Handicapped and International Student Services, under the direction of Lisa McGill, has changed its name to better reflect the services the office offers.

Effective immediately, there will be two separate names and phone numbers: the Office of Disability Support Services, 3266; and the Office of International Students and Scholars, 3358.

Both offices are still located at

144 Oakland Center and the TDD (telecommunications device for the deaf) number is 3268.

The name changes were made to increase student, faculty and public satisfaction, provide more efficient implementation of both sets of services and an overall improvement in the perception of the office with the university community as well as in the disability and international education communities, McGill says.

Winter student enrollment up almost 7 percent

Student enrollment at Oakland University continues its upward trend. Final overall student headcount for the winter semester (January through April) is up 6.8 percent over the same period last year, according to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA).

The number of undergraduate students increased 4.5 percent over last year, while graduate enrollment jumped 15.6 percent. Similarly, total college credits are up 5.6 percent this winter.

The increased headcount comes from a "healthy mix of sources," according to the OIRA. New students account for 15 percent of the increase, with the greatest increases found in graduate students in the School of Education and Human Services (32 percent) and the School of Business Administration (up 23 percent), and undergraduate students in the School of Engineering and Computer Sciences (up 60 percent).

Oakland's fall 1995 enrollment set a school record in September with 13,600 students, a 3.3-percent increase over the previous year. Over the past five years, enrollment has swelled by about 10 percent at the university.

get to KNOW

A feature for and about university colleagues



ART BULL
Chemistry



BARBARA POWELL
Campus Facilities & Operations



JOHN CAMERON
Art and Art History



KAREN KUKUK
Finance & Administration

What food do you like least?

Traditional Scottish food.

Squash.

Ice cream soda.

Liver.

What is your favorite place to hang out?

Berkley Front Tavern.

Chi-Chi's.

Paint Creek Tavern.

At home in the family room.

What is your favorite piece of jewelry?

I don't wear jewelry.

Necklace, which was a Christmas gift.

\$13 watch.

My mother's ring.

What was the last concert you attended?

Elton John at the Palace.

Janet Jackson at the Palace.

It was in Paris last summer — a German five-piece group played 18th-century music.

Fabian.

What would be your dream vacation?

Biking in the back woods away from other people.

The Virgin Islands where it's sun and fun.

Rome, Italy. Italy is wonderful.

Italy. I want to go for food and architecture.

calendar of EVENTS

People with disabilities who need special assistance to attend any of the events listed may call the sponsoring unit or the Office of Equal Opportunity at 370-3496.



More than a walk

"This is the essence of the King legacy for all Americans: freedom, justice, peace. Today's march is about more than remembering the dreamer; it's about living the dream," says Monifa Jumanne, director, Special Programs, who spoke to a group of about 100 students and university colleagues who commemorated the late civil rights leader, Martin Luther King, Jr., in an annual campus walk January 15.

FEBRUARY

- Meadow Brook Hall tours, 1:30 p.m. daily and from 1 p.m.-5 p.m. Sundays (last tour begins at 3:45 p.m.). Admission. Gift Shoppe also open. Call 370-3140.
- 6 - President's Colloquium Series: Brian Connery, Associate Professor of English, 11:30 a.m., Oakland Center Gold Rooms.
- 6 - Health and Wellness Fair, East Crockery, Oakland Center, 11 a.m.
- 7 - African American Dinner Special, Vandenberg Dining Center, Vandenberg Hall, 4 p.m.
- 8 - Patricia Russell-McCloud Lecture, Crockery, Oakland Center, 2:30 p.m.
- 9 - Video: Cleopatra Jones, Abstention, Oakland Center, 8 p.m.
- 10 - Underground Coffeeshouse featuring Vincent York's NY Force, Abstention, Oakland Center, 8 p.m.
- 13 - Poetry of Black Women, Fireside Lounge, Oakland Center, noon
- 13 - SPB's Mainstage: Comedian Geoff Brown, Crockery, Oakland Center, 8 p.m.
- 14 - Jazzy Ethnic Fair, Crockery, Oakland Center, 11 a.m.
- 14 - Talent Show, Crockery, Oakland Center, 7 p.m.
- 16 - '70s Dance, Crockery, Oakland Center, 9 p.m.
- 17 - Concert, Women of the Calabash, Varner Recital Hall, Varner Hall, Department of Music, Theatre and Dance, 8 p.m. Admission. 370-3013.
- 17-March 31 - Art Exhibition, The Manogian Collection, Meadow Brook Art Gallery. 370-3005.
- 20 - Morale Boosting 201, presented by the AP Assembly Professional & Personal Development Committee, Gold Room A, Oakland Center, 1-2:30 p.m.
- 20 - Unsung Heroes, Fireside Lounge, Oakland Center, noon
- 20 - Opening Night, *The Piano Lesson*, Meadow Brook Theatre. Admission. 370-3300.
- 21 - The Puppy Program featuring Bev Blanchard, Leader Dog Operation, Room 128-30, noon, Oakland Center
- 22 - Keeper of the Dream Banquet featuring Father William Cunningham of Focus: HOPE, 7 p.m., Crockery, Oakland Center

MARCH

- Meadow Brook Hall tours, 1:30 p.m. daily and from 1 p.m.-5 p.m. Sundays (last tour begins at 3:45 p.m.). Admission. Gift Shoppe also open. Call 370-3140.
- 13 - Opening Night, *Shadowlands*, Meadow Brook Theatre. Runs through April 7. Admission. 370-3300.

Flame Wars from page 1

of authority and authorship. "Coffeeshouses reflect the great simultaneous change which the print trade was undergoing," he says. "Free from government licensing from 1697-1736, booksellers and newspaper writers were essentially self-authorizing and did not need to seek permission to publish. Similarly, the rise of science and rationalism, in the aftermath of the Reformation, had made people suspicious of other forms of established authority. The result was a period of political-theological-philosophical free-for-all, a period from which Internet users could learn much."

Connery promises his talk will

be "entertaining, informative and worthwhile to all of those who are currently users of the information highway."

His lecture is based on an essay to be published later this year by Routledge in a book titled *Internet Culture*.

Connery, who joined Oakland in 1989, says much of his research and teaching is directed at ways of understanding the present based on the past.

He won the university's Teaching Excellence Award in 1992-93 and was a summer 1995 recipient of an Oakland Research Fellowship. Connery is also the founding editor of *Writing on the Edge*, a journal devoted to composition studies.

safety SAYS

Welcome to "Safety Says...", a new series of articles on topical health and safety issues from the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S). In this series, EH&S colleagues will answer frequently asked health/safety questions, address common misconceptions and present "actual" hazards in OU's work environments and the methods available to manage these hazards.

I am having health problems. Can someone come to my office and "test" the air to see if it's causing my illness?

Yes and no. What you are asking is whether we can address the issue of "Sick Building Syndrome" (SBS) in your area with a "test." However, we can only begin "testing" the air once we have some idea of what to test for. There is no instrument which can "sample" air and tell you that it is "healthy." Air monitoring instruments require the user to "tell" them which contaminant to look for (generally one contaminant, or family of contaminants, at a time); and only then can the instruments tell you whether

mercury to sulfur dioxide etc.) which are capable of becoming airborne; the cost of analyzing for each of these compounds would be prohibitively time-consuming and expensive. Secondly, a strong history (i.e., a 60-90 day "log") of indoor air quality (IAQ) complaints/symptoms (i.e., description, time of onset, duration, etc.) will give the Office of EH&S a much more precise mechanism of "narrowing down" the field of possible contaminants before "testing" begins.

What are the symptoms commonly associated with Sick Building Syndrome?

Headache, nausea, dizziness, fatigue, malaise, cough, runny nose and sore throat are often attributed to SBS; and all, some or none of these may in fact be related to the air in your work environment. As you can see, these symptoms can also be attributed to colds, flu, job dissatisfaction, allergies, poor lighting, poor body positioning (ergonomics), etc. It then becomes the job of an industrial hygienist to determine (via interviews, inspection of the environment, walk-through of the building's HVAC system and careful review of the complainant's history) whether indoor air contaminants are in fact implicated.

There is no instrument which can 'sample' air and tell you that it is 'healthy.'

that contaminant is present in the area, in concentrations above the instruments' "detection" range. In this regard, the air monitoring instruments act as tools of "elimination," more so than "identification." The other complicating factor is that SBS is now commonly recognized as resulting from a combination of environmental contaminants, which makes the analysis just that much more difficult.

Why can't you just ask air monitoring instruments to test for every possible contaminant, and call the area "clean" if all the tests come up negative?

In the first place, there are hundreds of chemicals and chemical combinations (from ammonia to carbon dioxide to

Future *Safety Says* questions will include:

- What do you often find is the cause of SBS symptoms?
- How can we increase the humidity in our offices?
- My office is dusty; isn't that a health hazard?
- What are the other possible causes of SBS?
- Why do we see SBS now more than we used to?
- What do I do if I have indoor air quality concerns?

taking the INITIATIVE

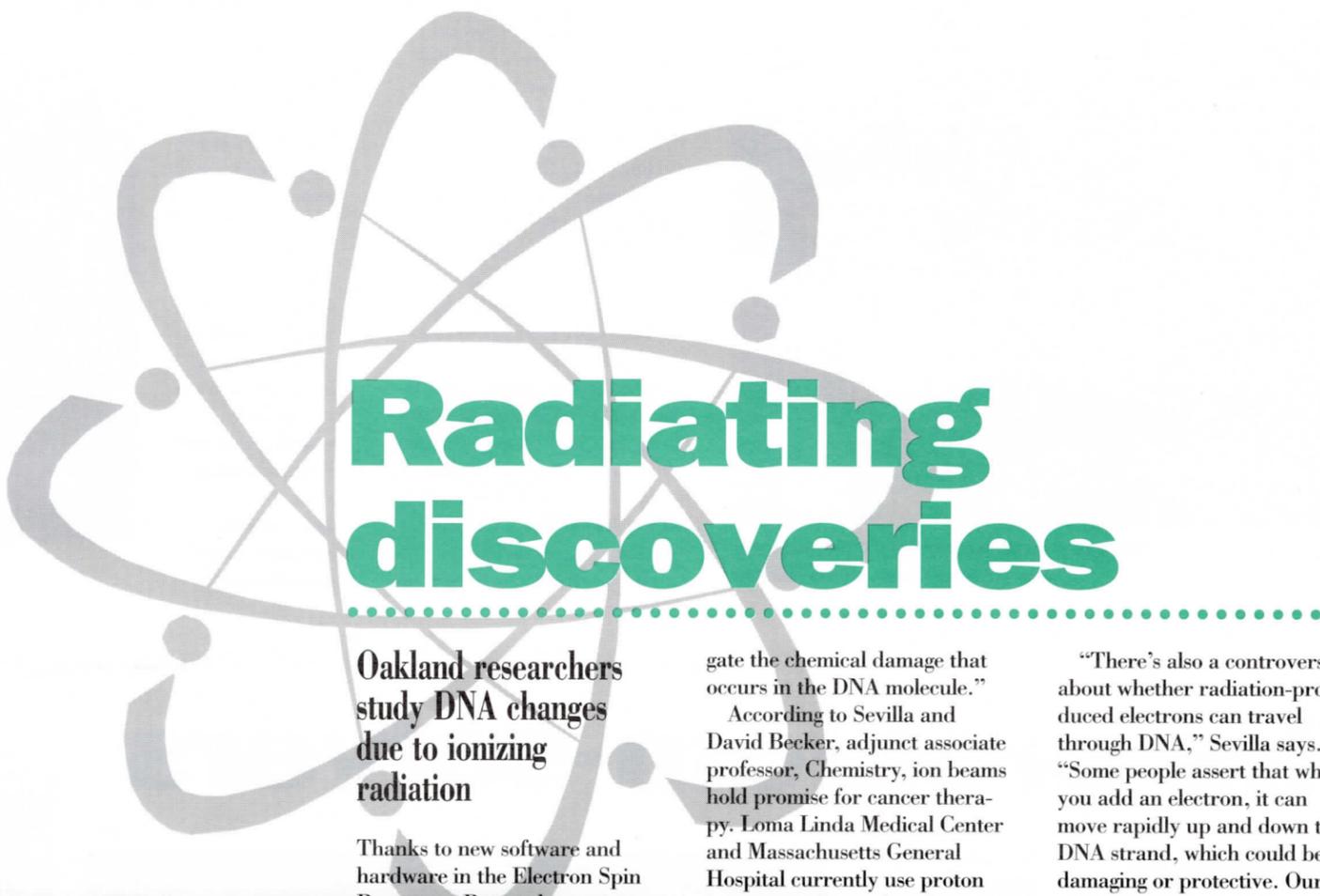
A monthly supplement to *Inside Oakland*

about this ISSUE

Taking the Initiative, a monthly supplement to *Inside Oakland*, shows the Oakland University Strategic Plan 1995-2005 in action to Oakland faculty, staff, students and friends. Read *Taking the Initiative* for news about Strategic Plan "initiatives"— projects and programs moving Oakland toward its vision and strategies . . . and the 21st century.

Initiatives in the making

Next month, *Taking the Initiative* will provide a comprehensive review of the past year and preview of the coming year as outlined in the State of the University address January 25.

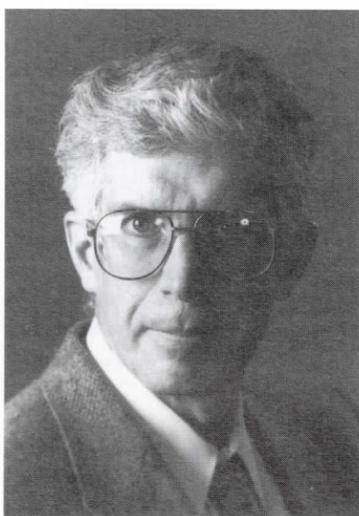


Radiating discoveries

Oakland researchers study DNA changes due to ionizing radiation

Thanks to new software and hardware in the Electron Spin Resonance Research Laboratory at Oakland University, researchers are discovering how ionizing radiation affects cancer patients.

Funded via a \$4,800 grant from the Oakland University Foundation, the modeling program and Gateway 2000 P5-100 computer help researchers perform simulations in seconds that once took days.



Michael D. Sevilla

One of four in the world investigating radical mechanisms in DNA resulting from ionizing irradiation, the group's current focus is the 'oxygen enhancement effect.'

"We have recently made use of the National Superconducting Cyclotron Laboratory at Michigan State. There they produce ion beams — the nuclei of atoms accelerated in a cyclotron to almost the speed of light," Chemistry Professor Michael D. Sevilla says. "The beams exit the cyclotron and impinge on our set-up, which contains DNA samples.

We're basically radiating DNA with these ion beams to investi-

gate the chemical damage that occurs in the DNA molecule."

According to Sevilla and David Becker, adjunct associate professor, Chemistry, ion beams hold promise for cancer therapy. Loma Linda Medical Center and Massachusetts General Hospital currently use proton beams — a form of ion beam — on cancer patients. Patients report no significant pain or ill effects.

"Say you have a tumor inside a patient," Sevilla says. "An ion beam can be adjusted so it will penetrate and stop at that tumor. The last bit of an ion beam's traveling path contains most of its energy deposition, which is where most of the damage is done. You're able to control the damage so it's primarily at the tumor site, not on the intervening tissue."

Becker concurs: "It does the least damage to healthy tissue and the most damage to tumors. It's also presumed that patients will not get as sick with this type of radiation compared to older radiation treatment programs."

In addition to charting chemical processes that occur to DNA after damage, the Electron Spin Resonance Group is investigating chemical processes that protect DNA from damage. The National Institutes of Health funds the group's research.

One of four in the world investigating radical mechanisms in DNA resulting from ionizing irradiation, the group's current focus is the "oxygen enhancement effect."

With the new modeling program and computer, the group can model this effect, characterized by the fact that cells irradiated in the presence of oxygen die more easily than oxygen-deprived cells.

"There's also a controversy about whether radiation-produced electrons can travel through DNA," Sevilla says. "Some people assert that when you add an electron, it can move rapidly up and down the DNA strand, which could be damaging or protective. Our modeling studies don't agree with these assertions."

Group members have penned 35 papers which have appeared in peer-reviewed journals since 1988. The group is now working on a hypothesis paper on the oxygen enhancement effect for presentation at the April 14 Radiation Research Society meeting in Chicago.

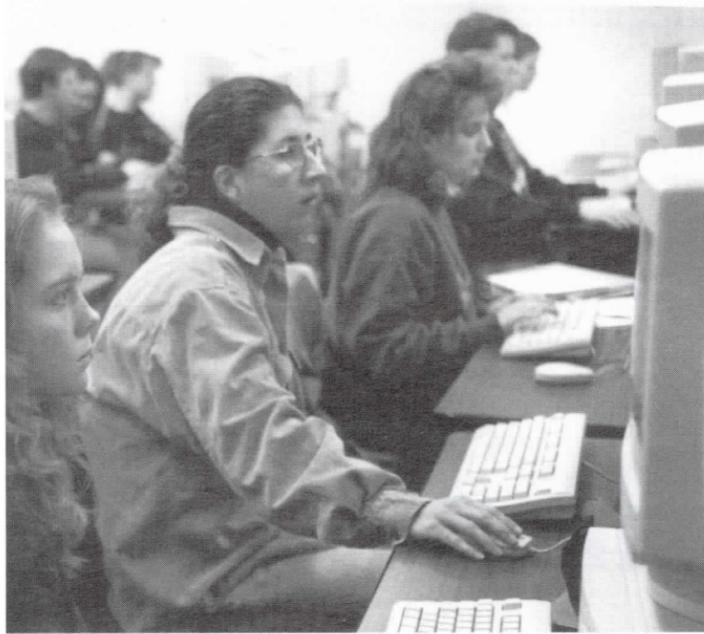
"People ranging from physicists to biochemists to medical doctors attend our meetings," Becker says. "They want to know what happens when the radiation hits. We don't investigate what happens at the instant it hits, but rather the chemical events a few seconds after. These events are a linchpin to understanding the biological effects of irradiation."

Follow-up goals include developing a quantitative model that relates the oxygen enhancement effect to its chemical and biological effects and using the software and hardware for related research projects.

"There's little known about what happens to the chemistry of DNA when radiation occurs," Becker says. "A few people have taken a rather broad-brush approach, but we've been honing in on the real details. It's exciting because nearly everything we see is new."

Lab Partners

Math and Journalism team up to share computer resources



The new facility boasts 18 PC PowerMacs, new software and a laser printer.

Christy Grove applauds Oakland University's efforts to update computer equipment in 207 O'Dowd.

"The old ones were slow," she says. "The new ones are quite helpful."

Groves, who is taking a feature writing class in 207 O'Dowd, is an English major with a journalism minor. She is typical of students who use the new state-of-the-art laboratory.

"I've used older computers at OU and these are a considerable step up," says classmate Phil Stayhue, a history major with a journalism minor.

Thanks to the new computers, students studying calculus and statistics are sharing the same laboratory with journalism students learning newswriting and newspaper editing.

The math/journalism computer laboratory partnership is a collaboration made possible through a \$65,000 grant underwritten by a portion of the proceeds collected from student course fees. The facility boasts 18 PC PowerMacs, new software and a laser printer.

The laboratory sharing is one

example of how Oakland is redirecting resources to enhance the university's mission and vision, says Dave Downing, dean, College of Arts and Sciences.

"We combined the computer laboratory to serve the needs of both departments and their students," Downing says. "We are always looking at ways to use our resources in the most efficient way possible."

The Journalism Department uses the facility for six journalism classes and additional computer laboratory hours for students, says Jane Briggs-Bunting, chair, Department of Rhetoric, Communication and Journalism.

"For journalism, the laboratory has been a wonderful boon," Briggs-Bunting says. "We can now provide advanced computer graphics

classes. You can see improvements in the student newspaper thanks to the laboratory." Briggs-Bunting adds that employers have been pleased with the computer skills of recent journalism graduates.

Jim McKay, chair, Math, says: "The computers add to students understanding of math."

McKay is planning to use the laboratory this summer for a

math camp aimed at high-achieving high school students.

The combined laboratory serves the needs of both departments and their students



The problem-solvers

Faculty mentors aid SBA retention effort

Problems and solutions.

Every business entity has them — the School of Business Administration (SBA) included. Realizing that only 45 percent of its incoming freshmen pre-business majors graduate from Oakland University, the SBA recently instituted a faculty mentorship program.

Bolstered by a \$10,000 grant from the Oakland University Foundation, the faculty mentorship program is designed to boost the school's freshman and transfer retention rate.

Katie Kazarian, coordinator, Academic Advising, says the program is most beneficial in that "the first and second semesters are most critical for retention, yet our faculty don't see these students until their sophomore year." Kazarian adds that 40 out of 50 of the incoming SBA students contacted during winter '96 orientations said they wanted a mentor.

"We developed a mentoring resource guide last summer (*Mentoring: In Pursuit of Success*) that can be easily updated," Kazarian says. "We explain the program to students during orientations and then we run a list of the newly admitted students for fall and winter semesters and assign them to the faculty."

Faculty mentors first meet prospective mentees at a reception held each fall and winter semester. All incoming SBA freshmen and transfer students were invited to the winter '96 reception, held January 31. As of fall 1995, approximately 225

Oakland students were classified as incoming SBA freshmen.

"We talked about Oakland, careers, the School of Business Administration, what to expect and what other students were thinking and doing and how that related to what she was thinking and doing," explains David P. Doane, professor, Quantitative Methods, mentor to freshman Kimberly Culyba.

"He was enthusiastic about it and that made me enthusiastic about it," Culyba says. "Katie Kazarian was also very helpful. Their overall attitude was positive. I see Dr. Doane every so often in passing and if I ever have any questions, I feel comfortable going up to him and asking them."

Five to six mentees were assigned to faculty mentors during the fall semester, and faculty will pick up additional mentees this semester as well. Mentors are encouraged to meet with mentees for informal question-and-answer sessions, show them around the SBA and the Kresge Library and attend lectures, sporting, or cultural events with them.

The business fraternity Alpha Kappa Psi serves as a liaison between faculty mentors and new students, serving as "big brothers and sisters."



Accounting Associate Professor Barbara Theisen, center, talks with freshman Leigh Ann Swims and her father, Jerry Swims, during a mentoring seminar at the Oakland Center January 31.

"It's a win-win situation for everyone," says Miron Stano, professor, Economics and Management, who facilitated the collaboration between the business fraternity and the program. "The new students get contact with faculty and Alpha Kappa Psi. Alpha Kappa Psi members get experience in a mentor-type situation and the process gets more word-of-mouth exposure, which benefits both the school and the university."

"Eighteen faculty have volunteered to work with Alpha Kappa Psi to contact students and help ease them into it. Freshmen are a bit intimidated by faculty and are thus hesitant to take the initiative."

According to John E. Tower, interim dean and associate professor, Management Information Systems, research

shows that connection to faculty is the number one way of retaining students, followed by student involvement in activities.

In addition to the faculty mentorship program, the SBA is developing a new course, MIS 200, to introduce new students to issues related to their majors. In conjunction with the mentoring, this may help improve retention.

Tower says that a number of universities have successfully implemented faculty mentorship programs, but that meaningful cultural change takes time. In the meantime, "It's like that old saying that ministers have," he notes. "If you can save one student, it's worth it."

A mentor is...

men•tor [L, fr. Gk Mentor]

1: cap: a friend of Odysseus entrusted with the education of Telemachus, 2: a trusted counselor or guide, 3: tutor, coach.

A mentor is a role model, knows good listening skills are essential, encourages human growth, offers challenging ideas, is understanding, sincere, real, helps build self-confidence, is non-judgmental, trustworthy, offers encouragement, triggers self-awareness, offers knowledge, insight, perspective, wisdom, confronts negative behaviors and attitudes.

P.S. Not to worry — a mentor does not have to be all of the above.

— From *Mentoring: In Pursuit of Success*, School of Business Administration