



Thursday, February 13, 2003

Outlook programs assist freshmen, parents

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

For freshmen entering college for the first time, university life can sometimes be a hectic adventure. To help incoming freshmen succeed academically and socially during their first year of college, last fall Oakland University launched **Freshman Outlook** and Parent Outlook – a free, interactive, Web-based program that offers weekly tips, advice and resource links via an e-mail account.

"The program is meant to be an online resource for students and parents who are more apt to use the Internet to find information about the university," said Outlook Coordinator Paul Carlin. "There are different segments for students on university services such as the Academic Skills Center and Center for Student Activities, as well as other tips on topics like time management, campus safety, managing finances and improving study skills. For the parents, the program provides a way to get a rough idea of what pressures and stresses their child may be facing. It also informs parents of events on campus, and it provides support tips and resource links to campus services that can benefit their son or daughter."

By the conclusion of the fall 2002 semester, 21 percent of the freshmen and 55 percent of the parents who received invitations registered for the service. Four students and two sets of parents who read each message during a semester are randomly selected for a \$250 American Express gift check. Student winners from the fall were Jessica Horvath of Owosso; Jeffrey Jerome of Washington, Mich.; Christa Lenhardt of Warren; and Kathryn VanGorder of Birmingham. The parent winners were Lawrence and Nancy Danko of Macomb and Martin and Paula Rathsburg of Clarkston.

"The program had some useful tips and I was able to learn about events that were happening on campus, like a basketball game I attended," VanGorder said. "I think it's helpful to students. If you're unsure of how to approach an issue, you can read over the advice and see if you're on the right path."

The Parent Outlook program is useful for parents of students who may not have the time to investigate the multitude of services OU offers, Nancy Danko said.

"The program is conveniently organized into sections and not overwhelming," Danko said. "I was particularly glad to see the Web links to calendar listings of events and different on-campus resources. There are so many things freshmen deal with on campus, they may not be aware of different university resources until their second semester or even their second year. But the Outlook program keeps parents informed so we can convey that information to them. I'd definitely recommend the program to other parents because of the way the information was presented. And if you want more information, you're always pointed in a particular direction."

Students and parents who have not yet registered for the Outlook programs can still do so. Freshmen are periodically sent an invitation, via their Oakland e-mail account, to register for Freshmen Outlook. All they need to do to register is go to the link provided in the e-mail and follow the simple instructions. Parents of freshmen who wish to register for Parent Outlook should contact Paul Carlin at prcarlin@oakland.edu, and they will be sent an e-mail with registration instructions. Once registered, students and parents will receive all e-mails from this academic year.

Freshman Outlook and Parent Outlook is being offered as a partnership between many areas on campus, spearheaded by Student Affairs and Enrollment Management. For more information about either program, contact the **Office of New Student Programs** at (248) 370-3260 or nsp@oakland.edu.

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Created by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Thursday, February 13, 2003
Modified by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Thursday, February 13, 2003
Article Start Date: Wednesday, October 15, 2003

