



Monday, September 8, 2003

CAST program connects students with alumni

There's no better way to learn about a potential career than to talk to someone who has work experience in that area of interest. That's the premise behind **Connecting Alumni and Students Together** (CAST), a new program that provides opportunities for Oakland University students to network with OU alumni and gives alumni a chance to give back to OU by offering career guidance to students.

"Bringing the student and alumni populations together is beneficial for both groups," said Bob Thomas, director of **Career Services**. "Through the CAST program, students can talk to alumni throughout their academic careers. As freshmen, students can perform some preliminary career explorations. Sophomores can make some decisions about which major to pursue. Juniors can make contacts for an internship or co-op while they learn how to become successful job candidates. And seniors can continue networking for jobs and set up some informational interviews."

Nearly 50 alumni from fine arts to business and technology already have agreed to be CAST members and provide students a "portrait" of their chosen careers.

"Alumni in the program can participate in a number of ways," said Jamie Simek, assistant director of **Alumni Relations**. "They can help students explore career directions by conducting informational or mock interviews as well as job shadowing and professional networking opportunities. Through sustained contact, alumni also can become mentors for individual students."

CAST is part of OU's eRecruiting system, which allows students who have registered for the service to search a database of OU alumni by job title, college major, graduation date and other categories. Students initiate contact with alumni using the information provided in the database. Students also can use the eRecruiting system to post resumes for potential recruiters, access information on local and national job postings, and sign up for interviews with on-campus recruiters.

"Alumni have a lot to gain by participating in CAST," Simek said. "They can strengthen relationships with the university, Alumni Relations, and Career Services; have the opportunity to recruit or refer students for employment; learn what other alumni are doing in their careers; and have the satisfaction of giving back to Oakland."

Career Services is hosting a kick-off reception for the CAST program on Tuesday, Sept. 16, from 5 to 7 p.m. in the new Oakland Center Banquet Room. A presentation on the importance of networking also will be given. All OU students and alumni are invited to attend this free reception.

OU alumni seeking more information on the CAST program can visit the **OJAA** Web site or contact Jamie Simek at (248) 370-3700, ext. 1113, or ruark@oakland.edu.

Students can register for the eRecruiting system and gain access to the CAST database by contacting **Career Services** at (248) 370-3250 or careers@oakland.edu. For more information on the program, visit the **CAST** Web page.

SUMMARY

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