



Wednesday, September 10, 2003

Tuition rollback approved, students to benefit

The **Oakland University Board of Trustees** approved a proposal by the university administration that would take 100 percent of the \$1.9 million recently restored to the university's budget and give it back to OU students in the form of a tuition increase rollback, added class sections, research support and financial aid. The measure will reduce Oakland's previously approved tuition and fees increase by 1.4 percent, from 9.9 to 8.5 percent, beginning in the winter 2004 semester.

"We thought it vital to give 100 percent of the additional appropriations money back to our students," OU President Gary Russi said. "Fifty percent of the unanticipated budget dollars will go toward the tuition increase rollback, with the other half going toward adding critical faculty positions to meet the demand for more classes by an ever-increasing enrollment and other student academic initiatives. These include funds devoted to the Distinctive Undergraduate Experience Fund and additional graduate student support.

"Throughout this arduous budget process, we remained committed to supporting the core mission of our university: Providing our students with a high-quality education."

Russi added that \$420,000 in one-time funds will be allocated to financial aid programs at Oakland.

OU initially set its budget in June, assuming its state appropriations would be cut by 6.75 percent. The reduction approved by the state – after the June board meeting – was 2.9 percent. Since that time, board members and university administrators have been engaged in discussions about how best to spend the unanticipated \$1.9 million resulting from the decreased cut.

"We have always felt strongly that our students shouldn't have to shoulder the entire financial burden in these tough economic times and have already cut more than \$5.5 million from our budget," said Board Chair Henry Baskin. "Moreover, we believe that the governor and the Legislature cut Oakland's appropriation by less than we originally anticipated with the assumption that we give back to our students. The administration's proposal was made in that spirit."

The approved initiative includes:

- A tuition rollback of 1.4 percent (\$969,280) for winter 2004.
- Funding to restore faculty positions (\$852,305) to help relieve the pressure academic units face from a growing enrollment.
- Additional money for the Distinctive Undergraduate Experience Fund (\$50,000) for student research and related projects.
- Additional graduate student support (\$100,000).
- An additional \$420,000 in one-time funds to support financial aid programs.

SUMMARY

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