



Friday, April 16, 2004

OU honors its seniors at send-off

By **Jeff Samoray**, *OU Web Writer*

Though Oakland University faculty are proud of their students on graduation day, they also are sad to see them leave. The feeling is understandable given the distinctive student-faculty relationships that form in classrooms and labs over the course of a four-year degree. In celebration of Oakland's graduating seniors and their achievements, faculty, staff and university administrators invited students to attend the eighth annual Senior Send-Off April 14 in the Oakland Center Fireside Lounge.

"Over the course of your academic career, Oakland University has provided you many opportunities and challenges and expanded your horizons," OU President Gary Russi said in his remarks. "You are a different person today than when you first arrived on our campus. We know this degree will serve you well. And in the future, I hope you'll stay involved with the campus by remaining in touch with Alumni Relations, reading our publications, visiting our Web site and by telling prospective students about your OU experience."

Many of the students in attendance invited their favorite professor to the event.

Political science major Lindsay Stover, who is planning on attending law school, invited Associate Professor of Political Science Martha Zingo to the send-off.

"It's really nice to be able to bring faculty to this event," Stover said. "Professor Zingo has been a real mentor for me. She's the most intelligent woman I've ever met and has helped me define myself as an individual."

Senior history major and political science minor Gena Hintz brought Associate Professor of Political Science Michelle Piskulich.

"One of the nice things about Oakland is that you really get to know your students because of the smaller class sizes," Piskulich said. "For me there is a sense of sadness when the students graduate. I'm flattered that Gena asked me to attend this event. I feel honored that a student with very high standards would ask me to accompany them."

The seniors received an OU lapel pin, harking back to 1963 when OU founder Matilda Wilson honored each charter class graduate with a diamond-studded class ring. The university also encouraged students to maintain their connection with Oakland by offering a complimentary one-year **Oakland University Alumni Association** membership. More than 100 students activated their OUAA memberships during the event.

"Although you feel your education has come to an end, your relationship with Oakland University has only begun," said Alumni Relations Director Adrienne Bass in her remarks. "You now have an entire lifetime to take advantage of your relationship with OU. You're about to join a community of more than 65,000 OU alumni, and we hope you'll establish a two-way relationship by becoming an alumni association member."

Senior English and philosophy major Rhonda Hanna said she plans on maintaining her connection with the university community even after starting law school this June.

"I always enjoyed participating in campus events at Oakland and definitely want to continue my involvement," said Hanna, who is an OU Board of Trustees student liaison. "Oakland definitely made a difference for me. The quality of the education is not something I could have found anywhere else. Other universities may be bigger and have more students, but you don't have the same contact with the professors and the administration. The people who make up Oakland's campus also make it a very friendly environment."

Commencement for winter and spring 2004 semester graduates is Saturday, May 1. Ceremonies take place at Baldwin Pavilion on the Meadow Brook Music Festival Grounds at 9 a.m. for the School of Education and Human

Services and School of Nursing; 1 p.m. for the College of Arts and Sciences, School of Health Sciences, and General Studies; and 5 p.m. for the School of Business Administration and School of Engineering and Computer Science. More information is available on the **Commencement** Web site.

For more information on joining the Oakland University Alumni Association and all the related benefits, visit the **Alumni** Web site or contact them at (248) 370-2158 or ouaa@oakland.edu.

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