



Tuesday, September 18, 2001

## Forum held to discuss recent tragedies

By **Kimberly Popolek**, OU Web Editor

Oakland University students, faculty and staff members gathered Tuesday, Sept. 18, to share their opinions and concerns and to ask questions regarding the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the United States.

More than 75 people attended the public forum, "Attack on America - One Week After," which was held in the Oakland Center's Fireside Lounge.

"I wanted it to be a student discussion and the students certainly controlled the discussions," said Paul Franklin, coordinator of campus programs and organizer of the event. "I also appreciated the insight that faculty and staff provided."

Forum participants spoke about a variety of issues related to the terrorist attacks, including the possibility of the United States becoming engaged in war.

"One of the things that surprised me were the number of people who voiced their opinion that were opposed to going to war. In the media, we hear that the majority of Americans are ready to go to war, but the people at the forum didn't seem to think that way," Franklin said.

Another issue discussed was the incidents of harassment and hate acts that have been reported across the nation against people of Middle Eastern decent.

"I'm really afraid that innocent people will be the target for our fear and our rage," said Angela Jones, an OU senior majoring in communications. "As a society, we need to be careful that our fear doesn't turn into hate."

Judette Haddad, who is an Arab-American and the coordinator for the Howard Hughes Lab, came to the forum to talk about how the terrorist attacks have affected her and to thank the OU community for the support she has received this past week.

"As an Arab-American, I was really touched that my colleagues in the Research Office came the next day and checked on me to make sure I was OK," Haddad said.

Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Virinder Moudgil called on students to serve as leaders and role models.

"We should not be paranoid, and we should not loose sight of what we are trying to preserve. Why does America draw the best of the world, because of the opportunities that we have," Moudgil said. "This group that is here. This is the future of America. Students present to me the best of what America has."

"I ask you (students) to shoulder the responsibilities to become the leaders and the torch bearers. You are the leaders in educating society. Please take a step and add to the harmony that is Oakland and become ambassadors of peace."

The forum, sponsored by the Center for Student Activities, included a newspaper display of articles written on the terrorist attacks, which will remain in the Fireside Lounge throughout the week.

"I am amazed by the number of people that have stopped to read the newspapers. Some are reading them like they are seeing it for the first time," Franklin said.

The OU community also is invited to share their thoughts and concerns about the tragic events on a banner that is posted at the entrance of the Fireside Lounge.

"We plan to keep that up for a few days, and don't have any plans as to what we are going to do with it right now," Franklin said. "It is the type of thing that people will go by and read what others have written and will share their own thoughts."

### SUMMARY

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