



Friday, March 8, 2002

Student research program report given

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

The response to the **University Student Research Scholar Program** from students and faculty has been overwhelmingly positive so far, reported Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Virinder Moudgil at the Oakland University **Board of Trustees** meeting March 6, which was a working session.

The new program, established last fall, invites OU students who are interested in carrying out independent research projects to apply for a \$1,000 award to support their research project for a minimum of one semester under the supervision of an OU faculty mentor. Participants also are given the opportunity to apply for up to an additional \$500 in travel support to present their research results at a professional conference.

The first application deadline is Monday, March 11, and the winners will be announced March 25. The deadline to apply for the next set of awards is April 1, and the winners will be announced April 15. Awards also will be given in the fall. The application deadline for those is Oct. 1. Between 20 and 40 \$1,000 awards will be presented each year.

The program's goal is to have widespread involvement from students in all the colleges and schools, Moudgil said.

For more information on the program and how to apply, visit the **University Student Research Scholar Program** Web pages.

Distinguished Professors Program

Moudgil also presented the Distinguished Professors Program to the Board of Trustees, asking it to enable the appointment of Distinguished Professors who are still employed at OU. If approved, the Distinguished Professorships will be conferred at the Faculty Awards Luncheon on Founder's Day on April 17. The board plans to vote on this at its April 3 meeting.

The university created the faculty rank of Distinguished Professor in 1988 to honor faculty members who have shown superior scholarship, teaching, and public and professional service. Since the program was established, only retired faculty members have received this distinction, and of those, only seven individuals have been named Distinguished Professors.

In December 2001, the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost invited nominations for Distinguished Professorships, and nine senior faculty members were recruited to serve on the selection committee.

Oakland Center Expansion

The board discussed a request made by Vice President for Student Affairs Mary Beth Snyder to proceed with completing the design to expand the **Oakland Center**. The proposed expansion includes a dining area/multipurpose space, a coffee shop/lounge, restroom expansion, catering space improvements, student organization and activity offices and event space, a 24-hour computer lab and lounge, and renovated and expanded kitchen and dining areas.

OU Student Body President Derek Dickow told the board OU students were solicited for their input and said they are "strongly supportive of gaining more space in the Oakland Center."

Snyder also mentioned that the Vandenberg dining facility is being looked at for renovation and that it would be handled through the Housing Board operation.

Food Service Management Firm Contract

Snyder presented a proposal to enter into a 5-year food service management firm contract with ARAMARK, which was the unanimous choice of the selection committee.

The board asked that the contract be examined for the ability of the university to hold the vendor accountable for performance. Part of the proposed contract with ARAMARK includes a \$900,000 contribution toward facility improvements in the Oakland Center kitchen.

Snyder also mentioned that the new School of Education and Human Services building likely will have light food service through mobile carts.

OU's women student-athletes recognized

The Board of Trustees meeting opened with a special announcement by OU President Gary Russi in recognition of the university's women student athletes. On March 5, the **women's basketball team** earned its first NCAA Tournament bid in only its third year of eligibility. The entire women's basketball team and coaching staff were present at the meeting, and their achievements were recognized.

Russi also noted that in 2001 the **women's soccer team** was the first OU Division I team to qualify for an NCAA Tournament. The **women's swimming and diving team** also recently won the National Independent Conference championship.

Other items presented before the board:

- Director of University Diversity and Compliance Sharon Abraham presented the Affirmative Action Report, which shows an increase in female and minority hires for faculty and staff positions from 1997 to 2001. Copies of the report are available through the Office of Diversity and Compliance.
- Vice President for Finance and Administration Lynne Schaefer reported that the university has saved more than \$1.5 million in utility costs to date since Viron Corporation designed and constructed a number of energy conservation measures for OU that began in March 1997. This savings exceeds what Viron originally guaranteed, Schaefer said.
- The board decided to table the new service agreement with Comcast Cablevision, asking the administration to take another look at the flexibility in the contract with regard to its length of term and programming content. The board will vote on the issue during a special meeting to be scheduled at a later date. If approved, Comcast will provide cable service to all OU's residence halls, including the George T. Matthews Apartments and new student apartments.
- Schaefer and Director of Purchasing and Risk Management Kate Lark presented a report detailing the activities of the Michigan Universities Self-Insurance Corporation for fiscal year 2001. Schaefer noted that increased insurance premiums are expected in the property market following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, but OU is reasonably well positioned to cushion any losses.
- Moudgil reported that the Office of Urban Partnerships is encouraged by the progress made by the seven Public School Academies it oversees. The academies provide educational alternatives to about 3,800 students.
- Schaefer requested authorization to modify the current spending distribution policy for the Campus Facilities Reserve Fund. The modification would take pressure off the operating budget for spending on deferred maintenance items. The board plans to vote on the issue at its April 3 meeting.
- Schaefer requested authorization to execute a supplement to a purchase order covering trash pickups. The board plans to vote on this issue at its April 3 meeting.

The next Board of Trustees meeting, which will be a voting session, is Wednesday, April 3, at 2 p.m. in the Elliott Hall Auditorium. For more information on the board and to see the March 6 meeting agenda, visit the **Board of Trustees** Web site.

SUMMARY

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