Minutes of the Meeting
of the
Oakland University Board of Trustees
Strategic Plan Retreat
August 23, 1994

Present: Chairman David T. Fischer; Trustees David Handleman, Rex E. Schlaybaugh, Jr., Stephan Sharf, and James A. Sharp, Jr.

Absent: Trustees Larry Chunovich, Andrea L. Fischer, and Howard F. Sims

Present: President Sandra Packard; Mr. Robert H. Bunger, Mr. Paul E. Bissonnette, Mr. David S. Disend, Dr. Suzanne O. Frankie, Ms. Susan Gerrits, Dr. David E. Herman, Dr. Gary D. Russi, and Ms. Rhonda G. Saunders

Chairman David T. Fischer called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. at the Troy Marriott Hotel.

President Sandra Packard informed the Board of the following three objectives for the Strategic Plan Retreat: 1. Review the plan and determine any necessary changes before the plan returns to the Board for final approval. 2. Develop a long-term plan that will provide a focused direction for the university's actions and decisions within the next decade.
3. Develop a shared vision between management and the Board for Board policy decision making and management action for implementation.

Trustee David Handleman joined the meeting at this time.

The President briefly explained the charts provided at the meeting noting that modifications will be made to the plan based on the retreat discussions. It is intended that the University Senate Steering Committee will review the plan on August 30, 1994, and assign it to the University Senate Long-Term Planning Committee on August 31. The University Senate's first reading will be on October 20, and the Board of Trustees University Affairs Committee will review the plan on November 3. After any further modifications, the University Senate will provide a second reading on November 16. A final document should be submitted to the Board for adoption on December 1. President Packard added that during this period "focus groups," such as the Oakland University Foundation and the Alumni Organization Executive Committees, will be asked to comment on the plan.

<u>Vision Statement</u>

> **In the coming decade Oakland University will further its recognition for being an institution of excellence by focusing on the needs of its constituencies while working to achieve national eminence in distinct areas of teaching, learning, research and service.**

Trustee James A. Sharp, Jr. stated that the phrase "focusing on the needs of its constituencies" should be replaced with "meeting the needs of its constituencies," to fully define that phrase. With that change, he supported the vision statement.

Dr. Suzanne Frankie, Dean of the Kresge Library and Chair of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, agreed with Trustee Sharp's comment. Chairman David Fischer stated that the statement was fine as long as it is clear who the "constituencies" are.

Trustee Handleman expressed concern about Oakland University having the "wherewithal" to accomplish "national eminence." He stated that Oakland must not forget that it is not the largest school in Michigan and that "learning" is the real function of a university. He questioned whether "national eminence" is reachable.

Dr. Frankie stated that the strategic task forces originally used the word "preeminence" in the statement, but realized that it was not what was intended. In fact, Oakland already has national eminence in distinct areas such as the Eye Research Institute, the Beginning School of Mathematics, and the Reading Recovery program.

Trustee Stephan Sharf asked the vice presidents to provide their views on the vision statement. Dr. David E. Herman, Acting Vice President for Student Affairs, stated that "the objective is to not try to be all things to everyone "but" to focus our resources on distinct areas, build on the excellence that we have, and build a more national reputation, and along with that will come a state-wide reputation and a regional reputation." It sets a high goal for the institution which is appropriate.

Dr. Gary D. Russi, Vice President for Academic Affairs, stated that a vision statement sets a long-term target for the institution that is much higher than its current level of functioning, and when "national eminence" is qualified by "' distinct areas,' it means focus." Oakland must carefully examine its programs to develop approaches to draw national eminence in distinct focused areas.

Trustee Sharf stated that there needs to be more defined areas of emphasis in achieving national eminence. Chairman David Fischer inquired if the focus for national eminence will be so limited that other opportunities will be missed in the interim. Trustee Sharp noted that the university is already nationally recognized in a number of different ways, and it is important to build on that recognition.

Trustee Handleman questioned whether the university has the resources to reach national eminence. Chairman David Fischer commented that perhaps the national eminence would be an asset in the pursuit of additional funding from major donors, foundations, and the state. President Packard added that focus should be on the areas of distinction which present opportunities for the university. When selecting faculty, emphasis should be on their potential to be a national level faculty, and when choosing a curriculum, emphasis should be on whether it is "cutting edge" curriculum.

Trustee Sharf questioned whether language regarding "racial balance" should be added to the vision statement, and Trustee Sharp supported the notion that "diversity" should be included in the statement. Dr. Frankie and Dr. Russi both stated that "diversity" is a part of Strategy 3.

Trustee Handleman commented that the funds designated for the Eye Institute do not contribute to teaching, learning, services, and other research. Dr. Russi responded that the Eye Institute creates an environment to bring strong people who have a lot of collaborative efforts into the Biology and Chemistry Departments, and into the sciences in general. It helps the university attract faculty to teach in these programs and attract students for the degree programs. National eminence enriches the overall environment.

Mr. Paul E. Bissonnette, Vice President for Finance and Administration, noting that "national eminence" is paramount in the vision statement, expressed concern that teaching and learning might become a subset of becoming preeminent in some nationally recognized areas. Such a goal changes the focus of how resources are spent. Viewed from a resource strategy perspective, it would be much more costly to deliver services at a national level than it would at a level that puts undergraduate education first.

Dr. Russi stated that the selection of a few programs for eminence and placing every other program in a subservient mode is a real risk. The university has a broad mission to meet, and those areas selected must not compromise the primary mission. The key to success is in selection.. National eminence in certain areas of teaching, research, learning, and service will enhance the undergraduate education.

Trustee Rex E. Schlaybaugh, Jr. joined the meeting at this time.

Trustees Sharf and Sharp again expressed concern that diversity was not a part of the vision statement. Dr. Frankie replied that Strategy 3 deals with diversity in the language "To promote the recruitment, retention and success of its students, Oakland University will provide an environment rich in human diversity . . ."

<u>Strategic Guidelines</u>

President Packard stated that the following strategic guidelines were used as the principles in making decisions on the strategies recommended:

> **1. Oakland University should increase its enrollments with funding and resources to ensure that the quality of the academic programs is maintained;**
>
> **2. Oakland University should increase, somewhat, its emphasis on graduate education;**

3. Oakland University should experiment with alternative modes of delivering courses while keeping the fundamental principle of instructional excellence;

4. Oakland University should become more selective in where it chooses to concentrate its efforts;

5. Oakland University should be more responsive to the external demands of the community, while remaining true to its internal principles;

6. Oakland University must address its lack of recognition through new approaches.

Trustee Schlaybaugh asked where the plan would include the standards for strengthening the student body by focusing on academic recognition and recruitment of quality students to achieve a national recognition and reputation. He wondered if an objective should be to upgrade the caliber of instruction received by increasing the caliber of the teaching staff and seeking to enroll a brighter student in order to attain national eminence.

The President stated that Trustee Schlaybaugh raises a very good question as to just how selective the institution wants to be and what market the institution wants to pursue.

Trustee Sharp commented that there may be a problem in attracting minority students if the selection process is tightened. There are minority students who can meet the highest of standards, but the university would be appealing to a much smaller base of qualified minority students, many of whom are being competitively sought.

Dr. Frankie noted that Tactic 1.9 deals specifically with that area by recommending that the university "Expand opportunities for high achieving students." However, in terms of the definition of Oakland's constituencies in the Preamble, it was not intended that the university would focus primarily on high-achieving students, but on a broad and more diverse group. President Packard added that Oakland can compete to recruit very bright and able students who are local and regional students, but there is still the obligation to serve area students who come from backgrounds that have not prepared them as well academically for college.

Trustee Schlaybaugh suggested indicating in the vision statement that the university's desire for national recognition and reputation is subject to the commitment to be only moderately selective. He expressed concern that the vision statement would be doomed to failure if the institution found that it was not prepared to take the steps necessary to really compete and achieve on a national basis. He supported Trustee Handleman's thought that the strategic plan objectives should be tempered with reality about what the university is prepared to do.

Dr. Russi stressed that there must be a strategic mesh of focusing, choosing, and determining what will bring national eminence. The charge is teaching, research, learning, and service.

The guidelines are presented as suggestions of ways to accomplish that. One way is to grow and another is to selectively focus the graduate education. Increased visibility will come by maintaining and improving quality while gaining eminence in selected areas.

Dr. Herman stated that the "value added" idea of taking the student population and adding as much value as possible is enhanced by having strong focused nationally or regionally recognized programs. A good example is the highly recognized Physical Therapy program.

Strategy 1

Oakland University views undergraduate education as central to its mission and will ensure an environment of learning excellence in order to educate a diverse body of students to be productive, contributing members of society.

There was discussion that greater emphasis should be placed on the principle that students are the first priority in the institution. Chairman David Fischer stated that it should be more strongly highlighted in the plan. Dr. Frankie stated that the concept that students are first priority is consistent with Oakland's tradition and its philosophy to provide students with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes which are essential for successful living and active and concerned citizenship, which is reflected in Strategy 1.

Trustee Schlaybaugh questioned the meaning of Tactic 1.6: "Conduct undergraduate program reviews to insure that all programs match Oakland University's mission and the needs and goals of Oakland University students." Dr. Russi explained that the reviews are scheduled five-year reviews of all undergraduate programs by peer groups consisting of program committee representatives, external program representatives, and at times people outside the university. The reviews cover the entire program including teaching methods, research efforts, delivery to students, and student services. The five areas of a program review are: 1. how central the program is to mission; 2. the quality of the students, faculty, and delivery of services and what they are receiving; 3. the demand by the students for the program and the demand of the market place for the students; 4. a review of cost; and 5. a "niche" assessment of the program given environmental trends over time.

Trustee Schlaybaugh suggested that programs should be measured against the strategic plan as a fundamental part of a review process, interfacing the strategic plan against program accomplishments. The President added that budget allocations and annual institutional goals should also be based on accomplishing the strategies. Progress measurement in terms of the goals would be a part of the implementation plan.

Trustee Schlaybaugh stated that the focus in determining progress should be on benchmarking. President Packard agreed that a tracking process should be developed to evaluate the degree of success in accomplishing the strategies, obstacles to be overcome, and requirements for further accomplishment. Trustee Handleman asked whether appropriate resources were available to accomplish the measurement.

Mr. Bissonnette stressed the need to stay focused on a broader base of student population for the necessary financial resources to achieve success. The President added that the plan calls for the university and the Board to focus priorities in light of financial and human resource limitations.

Trustee Schlaybaugh asked if a measurement portion of the plan would be provided to the Board prior to its review and approval of the strategic plan, and President Packard stated that assessment information would be provided but not by the December 1, 1994, Board of Trustees meeting. Progress measurement will be complex in some areas.

Strategy 2

> **To sustain Oakland University's reputation of overall excellence in selected areas of Graduate Education, resources will be focused on creating and strengthening areas of graduate study in a manner that is responsive to regional and national needs.**

Trustee Sharp recommended that there should be more concentration on extension courses and outreach based on the competition in the market area. Dr. Russi noted that there was an attempt to emphasize outreach in Strategy 6, but it does not permeate the entire document. Dr. Frankie added that one recommended opportunity is to identify particularly who and what Oakland University is in relationship to the universities around it, leading to offering programs unique in the immediate area. Chairman David Fischer stated that there should be a "higher level of urgency" to this endeavor because of the aggressive competition..

The President stated that the question should be addressed of whether Oakland should establish branch campuses and otherwise how outreach will be performed. Chairman David Fischer commented that if Oakland does not take some non-traditional opportunities and make it a strategy to use those non-traditional opportunities to promote the university, it is going to be harder to gain national eminence as competitors come into the market area. Perhaps a specific strategy would promote that sense of urgency.

There seemed to be a consensus that Strategy 6 should be rewritten and its tactics reprioritized to show a heightened sense of urgency.

The Board recessed briefly at this time.

Trustee Schlaybaugh stated that to provide a well-rounded, balanced, diverse experience for the students, we should consider more focus on campus athletics and social interaction. The plan should indicate the extracurricular activities that are important for students to participate in beyond the academic world. He specifically noted that intercollegiate athletics, including a football program, would be a way to broaden Oakland's reputation.

Chairman David Fischer and Trustee Schlaybaugh stated that students should be recognized as "customers" and as the university's first priority in the strategic plan. Dr. Russi noted that the task force report, which was the source document used to draft the plan, was the only place where the student was clearly portrayed in that manner. Dr. Herman stated that, athletics and student priorities were discussed at various task force meetings; however, as editing progressed the emphasis was lost and the report took on a more academic focus. President Packard noted that this emphasis change was made by individuals who have been in an institution that has not emphasized athletics. Oakland has been very successful in Division II athletics, but there has not been an emphasis on this activity as evidenced by the resources allocated.

Trustee Schlaybaugh stated that visibility in the community could be increased and a well-rounded educational opportunity provided through developing plans and objectives for Oakland's role in intercollegiate athletics. Dr. Herman commented that there is room under Strategy 3 to develop more initiatives. Chairman David Fischer concluded that a strong statement addressing the importance of the students and the concerns with athletic programs and facilities should be included.

After a discussion on the funding for possible athletic programs, there was sentiment that Oakland should evaluate moving basketball from a Division II to Division I level, and should evaluate adding additional athletic programs, possibly including football.

Trustee Sharp recommended including professional schools under Strategy 2 which the university may select as areas of distinction. Dr. Russi stated that Strategy 2 could be revised to read "To sustain Oakland University's reputation of overall excellence in selected areas of professional and graduate education . . ." President Packard interpreted the thrust to be that Oakland could grow in professional, as well as graduate, education.

There was a break for lunch from 11:52 a.m. to 1:20 p.m.

<u>Strategy 3</u>

> **To promote the recruitment, retention and success of its students, Oakland University will provide an environment rich in human diversity, with dedicated support services, extensive non-classroom activities, and outstanding instructional, residential and recreational facilities.**

Dr. Frankie noted the trustees' earlier point that students are the top priority and there is a need for more emphasis on students in the strategic plan. She noted that Strategy 3 continues that theme by stressing the importance of recruitment, retention, student success, and diversity.

Trustee Schlaybaugh requested that the Board be provided a "black-lined" document that notes the changes that evolved through the retreat process. The document should be provided sufficiently before requesting approval by the full Board.

Trustee Sharp referred to Tactic 3.2.2 which states "Increase representation of students from inner cities, from areas in the state outside the tri-county area, and from surrounding states and outside the United States." He stated that there should be focus on recruiting Black and Hispanic students from Pontiac and Detroit. Trustee Sharf added that resources should be earmarked to attract those students, with less focus placed on recruiting from outside the United States. Dr. Frankie noted that Tactic 6.7, "Implement a Center for Global Studies to coordinate the international activities of the university," is a specific focus on international activities and exchange programs. She added that Tactic 3.2.2 should be clarified separating "inner cities" from "and outside the United States." Trustee Sharf stated that in his opinion Oakland is not currently a school that needs international involvement in order to be known. Dr. Russi noted that there was a need to prepare our students to function in a global economy.

The President stated that based on the trustees' comments, there is a need to articulate the global focus more specifically, and to strengthen the issue of diversity in student population.

Trustee Sharp noted that Tactic 3.2.6 states that the university should "Increase financial resources to attract and retain minority faculty and staff." He questioned the need for increasing financial resources for this purpose. President Packard responded that salaries are not the problem. She added that the university is presently working on achieving a successful recruitment and retention rate for faculty and staff, with increased resources as only one facet of the process.

Strategy 4

Oakland University believes that continuous planning and evaluation are needed to effectively chart the future of the university, and therefore Oakland University will increase its self-assessment activity.

Dr. Russi stated that the primary thrust of Strategy 4 is the emphasis on quality assessment of each academic program. An assessment plan, recently approved and endorsed by Oakland's accrediting body, will take effect this fall.

Strategy 5

Research is one of Oakland University's greatest strengths and will be aggressively encouraged, funded and supported.

Dr. Russi emphasized the importance of research in keeping faculty members intellectually active and vital, a critical factor in the teaching process. Dr. Russi stated that students should be involved in a research enterprise or scholarly work as part of their educational process. Oakland's involvement of undergraduate students in research provides a unique opportunity for students to develop tools in various disciplines that are different than those of students from other universities. Dr. Russi stated that research is normally funded from outside sources.

Chairman David Fischer recommended the development of a strategy to generate external research funds in order to direct other internal funds for student programs. Dr. Russi noted that Tactic 5.2.3, which states "Provide additional resources to the Office of Grants and Sponsored Research to aid faculty in the grant application process," is an attempt to accomplish that goal.

In response to a question posed by Trustee Schlaybaugh on prioritization of the strategies, the President stated that the Board of Trustee, upon the advice of the university community, set the direction for the university. She reiterated that the trustees determined that certain core values need to be made more visible in the document. The Board will also need to determine what are the most important agendas in the coming years. Chairman David Fischer stated that the administration needs to make a recommendation based on the consensus of the constituencies for the Board's review.

Trustees Handleman and Sharf stated that the strategic plan should be "miniaturized" to better define and prioritize the focus on specific programs.

Trustee Schlaybaugh noted that we also need to get to an action plan for next year. Chairman David Fischer agreed, but stated that this strategic activity must come first.

President Packard concluded that a one to two-page statement should be drafted that pulls out the core values and the major directions based upon the document and the Board's sentiments.

<u>Strategy 6</u>

> **Oakland University views community outreach as an integral component of its activities, and will offer programs that are responsive to the community and consistent with the university's mission and vision.**

Dr. Russi stated that the Board's earlier comments on the urgency in the outreach process are on point. The university is currently offering outreach projects such as a new reading program in Flint; a new M.A. in counseling in Macomb; an M.B.A. in Human Resource Development in Macomb; over the wire distance learning; and an Engineering Technology program in Macomb. He stated again that a sense of urgency has been created at upper institutional levels, but that sense has not yet permeated the institution.

Strategy 7

Oakland University will develop and fund areas of institutional excellence and distinction that contribute to national eminence.

Dr. Frankie stated that the task force did a very thorough review of various recognized programs within the university that were excellent and distinctive. The task force targeted specific university areas and programs that they felt had the most potential. A three-year development plan for each area was advocated. She noted that Tactics 7.7, "Develop a process for the review and evaluation of areas designated for national eminence," and 7.8, "On a 3 to 5 year cycle, review, identify, develop and fund areas designated for national eminence," provide for a review and evaluation cycle to verify that the directions taken for the selected areas are valid or that there are new areas that have emerged that should be emphasized.

Trustee Handleman questioned the drive to achieve great national prominence, concerned that it would take away from educating local students. Chairman David Fischer noted that the university administration feels that some national recognition contributes to our ability to educate students.

Chairman David Fischer and Trustee Schlaybaugh expressed concern about the recommended areas of distinction and questioned whether they are the most appropriate choices and what the sources of funding are. The President suggested that the Board should endorse the concept of the institution having areas of special strength and excellence, but that further study could occur on the selection of those areas.

Trustee Schlaybaugh questioned the benefits to the university of adopting the recommendations of Strategy 7. Would they attract top academic students and more research funding? He hesitated to support Strategy 7 as a priority for the university without knowing what the true benefits would be. Dr. Frankie noted that the strategy is another example where the measurement process for implementation and evaluation would be used.

Strategy 8

Oakland University will create an empowered community of diverse, unified, committed and motivated employees who focus their collective skills, talents and knowledge toward realization of the university's mission and vision.

Mr. Bissonnette noted that the university began the NACUBO benchmarking process this year and spun that off to a program of cross-training process redesign, where systems are viewed without the constraint of departmental boundaries. In the process, the university will involve the various collective bargaining units, because they play an integral role.

There was a discussion on the intent of Tactic 8.2 which states, "Provide employees with training in problem-solving skills and reward employees who use these skills to promote commitment to the goals of the institution and to improve service to university constituencies." Trustee Sharf questioned how employees would be rewarded, and Mr. Bissonnette responded that they should be rewarded within the context of the merit salary adjustments. The President stated that the strategy speaks to the need to provide the kind of empowerment, support, and staff development required so employees can accomplish Oakland's goals. Then the university needs to reward those efforts.

Trustee Sharf commented that he fully endorses Tactic 8.4, "Encourage promotion from within the university community."

Chairman David Fischer expressed concern about the emphasis placed on Strategy 8 compared to the other strategies. He stated that there did not appear to be the same intensity of focus on Oakland's 2,000 employees when compared to the faculty and students. Trustee Handleman agreed and noted that with a budget of over $70 million of which 80 percent is committed to personnel, more emphasis should be placed on this strategy.

Strategy 9

> **Oakland University will secure, allocate or redirect human, physical and financial resources in a manner that enhances the university's mission and vision.**

Trustee Schlaybaugh noted that the word "redirect" implies that the current practice is wrong. Dr. Frankie responded that perhaps "secure, allocate, or reallocate" would be more appropriate since it does suggest that money may be taken from existing areas. President Packard added that it was assumed that the whole process would not be accomplished from "all new money." The university will have to make priority decisions and change allocations of resources to accomplish some of the goals. Mr. Bissonnette added that redirection of internal resources, through determining future assets of the institution combined with outside resources, can be important in achieving some of the goals.

Trustee Schlaybaugh suggested substituting "manage its" for "secure, allocate, or redirect." Chairman David Fischer and Trustee Sharp supported the use of the word "manage".

Trustee Sharf then referred to Tactic 9.2: "Reduce, restructure or eliminate administrative, academic and non-academic programs/areas which are not central to the university's mission. Personnel in positions eliminated by restructuring should receive training and reassignment." He inquired about what areas the task force had determined should be eliminated. Dr. Russi stated that they have not been identified to date, but that the task force realized the need to create a strategy to assist in reallocating existing funds. Dr. Frankie stated that the Steering Committee avoided any specific identification of such programs, recognizing that very hard choices would have to be made.

Trustee Sharf inquired what the plans are for accomplishing Tactic 9.1: "Increase significantly dollars generated from non-state support and develop numerical targets for contract and grant activity, private foundation giving, alumni giving, private individual giving, company and corporate giving, and annual giving." Mr. David Disend, Vice President for University Relations, responded that typically, after institutions go through this kind of strategic plan process, existing resources are not sufficient to accomplish everything outlined in the plan, which leads to a fund drive to help achieve as many of the articulated goals as possible. The key to significantly increasing dollars is to elevate the size of the gifts the institution has been receiving. The attraction of larger gifts creates noticeable jumps in fund raising.

President Packard asked if there are items missing from the document, other items that should be addressed. Chairman David Fischer stated that emphasizing the focus on the student as the customer has been discussed previously.

President Packard stated that an implementation plan will have to be developed after a final strategic plan is approved. The implementation plan will state the process, time frame, and priority in reaching the goals of the strategic plan. It will be the administration's responsibility to oversee the development of the implementation process.

The President expressed appreciation to the Board members for their excellent participation in the day's discussions. She stated that Dr. Frankie, the authorship committee, and the cabinet members will immediately commence to address the issues raised by the trustees and then provide a black-lined document for trustee review. After the modifications have been made, which will include a prioritization of the major commitments, initiatives, shifts, emphases, and core values of the institution, the Senate will make a recommendation to the President and the Board about the document. Assuming that the Board is comfortable with that draft, an implementation plan will be developed. Trustee Schlaybaugh stated that the Board needs to be told what the administration thinks it can handle, what the capacity constraints are on the university, and then the Board can make decisions about the priority of specific initiatives and where they fall on a timetable.

Chairman David Fischer expressed appreciation to Dr. Frankie for her efforts in administering the development of the strategic plan.

Trustee Handleman commented that Oakland University needs to have a format to "sell" itself to the community and region. Chairman David Fischer stated that perhaps that issue was somewhat responded to in the retreat discussions.

President Packard asked the Board if the university should continue to operate under the assumption that items being worked on should continue rather than be on "hold" until the strategic plan is complete, such as the recreation center proposal. There was general sentiment that the answer was "yes."

The meeting adjourned at 3 p.m.

Submitted,

Rhonda G. Saunders
Administrative Assistant
Board of Trustees

Approved,

David T. Fischer
Chairman
Board of Trustees