

## OU continues April Fool's tradition

What is it that makes a good April Fool's prank, and why do people enjoy pulling them?

According to Michele Parkhill Purdie, Ph.D., an associate professor of psychology at Oakland University, the prank itself – as well as the realization that others can ‘get’ us with a prank – can be a humbling experience that allows for a bit of self-reflection.

“Across both pranksters and pranked, there’s a huge element of group cohesion,” she said. “These pranks, particularly because they are being played out on such a big level, will create a greater identification with the OU community. Students will feel a bit more connected – it’s something they can all laugh about. And years down the road, I would bet a lot of students will reflect on these pranks very positively. A university – stereotypically a staunch, serious place of study – is demonstrating that we can have fun around here. It’s good for everyone involved.”

And it’s not just OU students, faculty and staff that enjoy a good April Fools’ prank. Proud alumni like Joe Dombrowski are also getting in on the fun.



*This year's April Fool's joke involved a "mystery creature" spotted in the woods via drone – which turns out, was The Grizz just going for a walk.*

Dombrowski, a fourth-grade teacher at Oakland Elementary School in Royal Oak, recently pranked his students by giving them a spelling test using 10 made up words, including “Biorskee,” “Chchch,” “Gürrr,” “Rol-aska-tox,” “Shabolaskp,” “Slipert,” “Speekuzsimn,” “Speenuch,” “Tangeteen,” and “Wazamata.”

Dombrowski filmed himself spelling out the words while the students graded their own tests.

After making it through all 10 words, Dombrowski announced that the “test” was an early April Fool's joke, which elicited screams of laughter from the students.

“The kids don't care about what you know until they know that you care,” said Dombrowski, who earned a master's degree in Educational Leadership at OU. “To me the April Fool's joke was a way to show my “dad humor” to them and show them how much I care. They're a group and I'm happy to have made them and so many others smile by all of this.”

The video has been posted online and shared on social media, including Dombrowski's own **Facebook** page, where it's been viewed over a million times.

“While it might seem cruel in the moment, April Fool's has proven to be a fun and lighthearted event that people talk about for years to come,” said Colleen Campbell, OU's Digital Public Relations Manager.

Whether it was the announcement that Bear Lake would go all-sports in 2013 or the promotion of a program to help students de-stress by bringing grizzly bear cubs to campus in 2016, Oakland University has a proud tradition of **pulling pranks on April Fool's Day**.

“April Fool's at Oakland University has evolved into a multi-pronged communication effort that has become a tradition in its own right,” Campbell said. “April Fool's is an opportunity to creatively engage with the entire OU community with potential far-reaching and long lasting benefits.”