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OU's MI Works! program enjoys fourth year of record enrollment

By **Katie Land**, news editor

As the state's economy continues to stumble, more and more workers find themselves laid off and in need of assistance retrain and rejoin the workforce.

Coming to their aid is Oakland University's branch of the MI Works! program. Over the past few years, this venture has been steadily gaining ground and increasing its enrollment numbers at a near exponential rate.

When Oakland became involved in 2006, only six students were a part of the program. This number jumped to 22 students in 2008 and hit 232 in 2010. State funding has also increased, from \$99,000 in 2008 to \$1.25 million in 2009, and organizers expect it to reach \$1.27 million in 2010.

"One major reason for the growth is that more students and workers are finding us. More and more students are being referred to us all the time," Scott Crabill, director of Integrative Studies and Undergraduate Initiatives explained.

New initiatives include increasing the number of programs eligible for No Worker Left Behind funds to 86 approved programs, creating a master contract with the nine Oakland County MI Works! agencies, providing space for MI Works! workshops, and increasing capacities for career counseling through the Adult Career Counseling Center and the SEHS Counseling Center.

Oakland's program is focused on responding to the ever-growing needs of the community, according to Crabill. "We just can't respond quickly enough," he said.

MI Works! clients receive a \$5,000 scholarship towards programs and courses for retraining. Those who are eligible for the scholarship have been laid off from their jobs and have a household income of less than \$42,000.

To get started, workers should register with **MI Works!** to determine if they are eligible for assistance.

To learn more about Oakland's MI Works! programs, visit the Web site at oakland.edu/michiganworks.

SUMMARY

Oakland University's branch of the MI Works! program has been steadily gaining ground and increasing its enrollment numbers at an incredible rate.

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