

Thursday, May 28, 2015

Building on OU's tenets to shape the future

Dear Alumni and Friends of Oakland University,

Just months before the University's first medical students crossed the **Commencement** stage, a promise made out of a regional partnership was fulfilled: The Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine (OUWB) was **granted full accreditation** by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education.

Besides the medical school's accreditation, a look back at what has happened in the past season shows us we have already come a long way. We are striving toward a new vision for our University – one that makes clear Oakland University is a student-centered, highly regarded scholarly institution within our own community, and globally. Oakland is growing in scope, size and reputation.

When I began as president of OU, I took steps to ensure that our staff and faculty thought critically about what we aim to accomplish. I did not have to push very hard to get our University family involved. As we continue our work to construct a proposed mission and strategic plan, I have been delighted by the amount of enthusiastic input provided by staff members, strategic planning committee members and faculty.

A point of pride in crafting our **strategic plan** has been the fact that every step of the way, examples of community engagement, academic excellence and growth have been easily found. In December, we watched our **100,000th graduate walk across the stage**. We gained international acclaim in January as our own **Oakland University Brass Band took second place** in their division of the prestigious Butlins Mineworkers National Open Brass Band Festival in Skegness, England. Further, we continue to have not only generous alumni, but a staff that is truly invested in our vision.

Earlier this year, I had the pleasure of announcing that a total of 786 faculty, **staff and retirees donated \$388,814 during the All-University Fund Drive (AUFD) campaign**. This demonstrates so clearly the passion and belief our employees have in OU, and their dedication to our students.

One of the Strategic Planning Committee's tenets throughout the process of honing in on what the University intends to accomplish includes focusing on staying student-centered and maintaining the levels of service that the modern college student expects in



Members of OUWB's charter class were selected from more than 3,200 applicants nationwide when the school opened in 2011 as Michigan's first new M.D.-granting allopathic medical school in nearly 50 years.

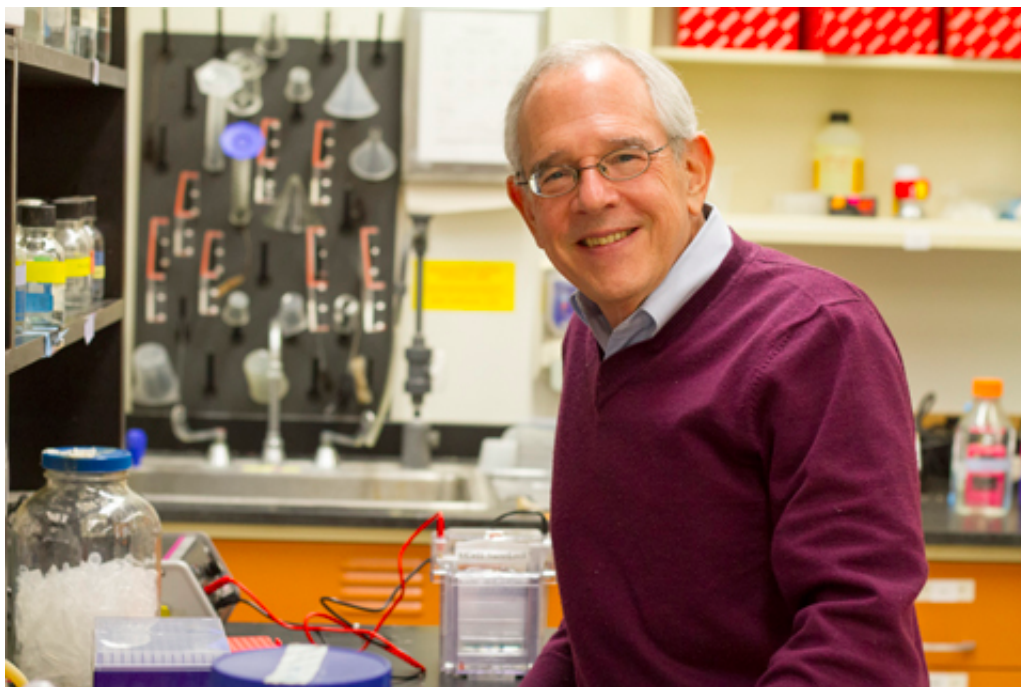
a metropolitan university. I could not have been more proud to attend the Jan. 30 unveiling of Oakland's new, **108,000-square-foot athletic dome**, which is a microcosm of our commitment to engaging the community and attracting students to our campus.

We have seen capital enhancements such as the athletic dome, the Upper Fields, and much more attract a greater number of committed students over the years. The number of full-time students since 1996 has grown 15 percent to around 75 percent of the student body now taking a full class load each semester. The dome, which is built to be used around the clock, accommodates a central component of campus life. An array of vibrant campus-life options – the dome, in addition to more than 250 student clubs and many campus enhancements – is leading students to choosing to live on campus. This is an important point. We know that living on campus requires a vibrant campus life and it also positively impacts students in it can lead to higher grade point averages, higher retention rates and an increase in our 4-6th year graduation rates.

As we think about the goals of Oakland University, we understand that while we are looking to attract students, we are also looking to enrich our community surroundings. A **partnership with schools in Pontiac, Mich.**, which sits just six miles east of campus, is a step in the right direction.

Through a three-year, \$1.95 million grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Oakland University has **partnered with health professionals and Pontiac** to create a program that provides increased access to healthy foods and promotion of physical activity in the community, as well as strengthen culturally relevant health programs for Pontiac's Hispanic residents.

As a doctoral research institution, OU has consistently been spotlighted for its performance in academia. During the winter semester, **distinguished physics Professor Michael Chopp, Ph.D., received the prestigious 2015 Thomas Willis Lecture Award from the American Heart Association.** Dr. Chopp is an internationally recognized expert in the development and treatment of stroke, traumatic brain injury and cerebrovascular neurodegenerative diseases. His research has uncovered therapeutic approaches for injured brain tissue that can significantly reduce neurological damage from stroke.



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The University also prides itself in keeping in tune with growing industry trends, and in February, Oakland was ranked by the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) as **11th in the country for the percentage of tenured or tenure-track women faculty members in engineering**. Oakland was also ranked 32nd out of 171 schools for the number of undergraduate computer science degrees awarded within an engineering program.

While I have only highlighted a few outstanding programs and events at OU, there are many great achievements constantly being made by the University's staff and faculty. Their dedication to student success and thoughtfulness in cultivating a new Strategic Plan drives Oakland's pursuit of academic and institutional excellence. I am inspired by all that Oakland has to

offer, and share the enthusiasm that our exceptional leaders in academia and administration have as we forge new opportunities for our students, and communicate to all in our state, nation and beyond the value of a degree from Oakland University.

Sincerely,

George W. Hynd
President



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