



# Oakland University News Information Update

Tuesday, March 27, 1990

Produced by the News Service, 104 NFH. Call 370-3180.

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## University, ABS Address Multicultural Concerns

*The Association of Black Students has presented a series of multicultural concerns to the university. The following recaps events of yesterday and today.*

The list of concerns came out of a meeting at 5:15 p.m. March 26 between the Association of Black Students and the University Student Congress, the elected student governing body, to discuss multicultural concerns.

Oakland University officials and representatives of the University Student Congress and the Association of Black Students were to begin meeting at 3:30 p.m. March 27 to discuss the multicultural concerns raised by the students.

Representatives of the ABS appeared March 26 before the regular meeting of the University Student Congress, the elected student governing body, to voice concerns over a variety of issues.

Keith R. Kleckner, senior vice president for academic affairs and provost, said the demeanor of both the ABS and University Student Congress leaders was exemplary, and that he was pleased that students were coming forward to promote multicultural programs and initiatives at the university.

Kleckner said the March 27 meeting is the first step toward solving a variety of concerns raised by the students at the University Student Congress presentation.

Areas of concern voiced by the students at the March 26 meeting included:

- Meadow Brook Theatre
  - Multicultural representation on key student committees
  - Ethnic harassment policy
  - WOUX, the campus student radio station
  - Residence halls contracts
  - Marriott food service
  - Staffing or appointment of a multicultural coordinator
  - Funding for multicultural programs▼
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regulations for the residence halls and to improve consumer understanding. The University will extend the residence hall cancellation date to June 1.

- **Marriott staffing and programs** — Students will work with Marriott (food service contractor) to plan at least one multicultural dinner per term. In addition, the Office of Equal Opportunity will audit the Marriott contract for compliance with equal opportunity provisions and to review hiring practices for students and professional managers at Oakland University. The university will work with Marriott to notify students of openings in the Marriott organization.

- **Meadow Brook Theatre** — By the 1991-92 season, the Meadow Brook Theatre will add at least one play per year of a multicultural nature, with a positive theme. In addition, the theatre will develop outreach and promotion activities to increase minority community participation. The Meadow Brook Theatre will ensure that the artistic director consults with culturally diverse groups when selecting productions.

- **WOUX** — By fall 1990, the university, in cooperation with the Department of Rhetoric, Communication and Journalism, will assist WOUX (student radio station) in developing an effective model for operation, similar to that of the *Oakland Post*, to include training, hiring procedures and program guidelines. Student leaders will advise the WOUX board regarding appropriate program guidelines.

- **Community outreach** — By winter 1991, more attention will be directed at Hispanic and minority concerns through a community-based minority advisory committee including dominant representation from the black and Hispanic minority communities in Pontiac and Detroit. In addition, these efforts will be supplemented through the activities of such offices as University and School Relations and the Adult Career Counseling Center. Student recommendations for inclusion on the advisory committee are welcome.

- **Multicultural representation on Congress** — Before fall 1990, the president of the University Student Congress will recommend that the Congress amend its bylaws to establish a seat on the Congress to be selected by the multicultural student advisory board.

- **Funding for multicultural programs** — By fall 1990, a multicultural program fund of \$8,000 will be developed, administered by CPO and a multicultural student advisory board.

- **Martin Luther King observance** — By winter 1991, the provost will issue a directive to deans and department chairs regarding the significance of Martin Luther King's birthday observance and asking that no examinations

or major assignment deadlines fall on that day.

By winter 1991, the university will develop a set of guidelines for recognition of the Dr. Martin Luther King birthday observance and will involve the Teaching and Learning Committee in the generation of ideas so that faculty involvement will be more extensive.

- **Individual student concerns** — In addition, a number of individual student concerns were raised about misconduct, financial aid and harassment. The students agree that such cases should be handled through existing channels for resolution of complaints. Student affairs staff will work with student leaders to acquaint them more thoroughly with the appropriate channels for addressing such grievances, including the identification of appropriate external agencies.

- **Graduate study** — The graduate office will continue to send letters to minority juniors and seniors regarding graduate school. Additionally, starting fall 1990, the university will promote the availability of graduate assistantships and scholarships in informative ways including workshops each semester, orientation and the multicultural resource guide. Faculty, especially minority faculty, will be encouraged to participate in these programs and to develop mentoring relationships with students. Minority student organizations will be invited by the graduate school to participate in such programs.

The university will identify resources to fund at least five disadvantaged graduate students for fall 1991 and five more for fall 1992.

- **Cultural diversity course** — In fall 1990, the university will ask the General Education Committee to consider approving HST 292 as a general education course; as well as to identify a course in Latin American history that could serve as a general education course. The academic skills center will provide writing tutors to support these classes.

Starting in fall 1990, the Student Affairs Division will work with the Teaching and Learning Committee of the University Senate to develop a model orientation program which includes significant emphasis on racism and multicultural issues.

- **Recruitment and retention** — Starting in fall 1990, the admissions office will meet with minority faculty, staff and students to review and update the university's recruitment plan. Additional outreach efforts will be made to minority community organizations for recruitment purposes. The admissions office and residence halls will develop a new program for senior high school students to visit the campus and the residence halls. Student organizations will work with admissions to get involved in recruitment and precollege mentoring programs as appropriate.

- **Association of Black Students funding**

— While this issue remains unresolved, the vice president for student affairs will monitor the allocation process closely during the period when the SAB guidelines are under revision and will ensure that no disparate actions are taken. The university also will explore additional avenues, which may augment resources available to culturally diverse organizations.

**Closing statement** — The university recognizes the importance of assuring equitable educational outcomes for black, Hispanic and other minority students. It is committed to continuing to seek the additional financial resources which are required to achieve that goal. The administration is cognizant of the social, economic and political factors which impinge upon it and its students and wishes to achieve a just community. To that end, the commitments in this agreement should be viewed as very important elements of a more comprehensive agenda. In that context, discussions will continue through normal administrative channels during the spring and summer of 1990.

Oakland University has a unique opportunity to demonstrate that ours is a civil community, where individual differences and multicultural attributes are respected. The collaborative leadership exhibited by the Congress, ABS and Raices is a source of pride. The strong belief that excellence and diversity along with collaboration are appropriate tenets to guide all planning for the movement of the institution into the 21st century is reflected in the recently issued university strategic guidelines. It is our passionate hope we will not be deterred from that path.

**Keith R. Kleckner**

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**Wilma Ray Bledsoe**

*Vice President for Student Affairs*

**David E. Herman**

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