OAKLAND UNIVERSITY™

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IT restructure stresses learning, technology

A new information technology structure, which introduces a Center for Information Technology, emphasizes technology in teaching and learning and enhances technology services to meet the growing demands of Oakland University students, faculty and staff. The new organization was announced Friday, March 14, by Virinder Moudgil, interim vice president of academic affairs and provost, and is effective July 1, 2003, but transitions will begin immediately.

"I am excited about the new organization. It addresses Oakland's immediate learning and technology needs, keeps our focus on the future, while also recognizing that our state funding will be significantly reduced this year and in the coming years," Moudgil said. "Through this reorganization, we focus first on our first priority: academics. Then, on the development of a more extensive information technology organization."

The new Center for Information Technology includes three areas: e-Learning and Instructional Support (eLIS), Classroom Support and Instructional Technical Services (CSITS), and University Technology Services (UTS). All report to Moudgil and have distinct responsibilities.

eLIS focuses on academics
eLIS will be responsible for e-learning instructional support; one-on-one training of faculty on instructional technologies, including WebCT; developing and implementing instructional support materials; and developing and conducting student orientation for WebCT. It also includes Web design assistance, working collaboratively with University Communications and Marketing.

"Faculty involvement is critical to this area's ongoing development. This office will work closely with the Teaching and Learning Committee and the Academic Council," Moudgil said.

Through the reallocation of funds, two new positions were created: associate/assistant vice president to lead the eLIS team and instructional designer to provide consultation to faculty about the learning process and incorporate instructional technologies in the classroom.

CSITS provides classroom, technical support
The second area – CSITS – will provide classroom support and technical services support, including multimedia design and consulting; presentation support, image archiving and management; cable TV support and management; video production and archiving; A/V equipment distribution maintenance and invoicing; management of distance-learning classrooms; and training faculty, staff and students to use technology equipment.

George Preisinger, currently the associate director of OU's instructional technology center, will be named assistant vice president of CSITS.

UTS to offer seamless, secure, reliable infrastructure
Oakland's existing Office of Information Technology will transform into UTS, which will provide the necessary infrastructure and leadership in knowledge-based networks and information systems. UTS is responsible for information technology strategy and implementation, including the technical implementation of network communications, technical support, database applications, operations and desktop applications.

The position of director of Information Technology will be re-titled assistant vice president for University Technology Services and filled by the incumbent, Theresa Rowe. Some staff members in the current Office of Information Technology will be reassigned to reach appropriate levels of staffing for critical areas.

"The success of the reorganization will rely upon the collaborative work between the three leaders. To maintain a strong focus from the start, we will meet monthly to identify opportunities and critical university needs," Moudgil said.

Streamlining for effective implementation
The IT restructure also includes moving positions, responsibilities and the respective staff members to other university departments. For example, Administrative Training Services, previously part of the Information Technology Institute, will move to University Human Resources. Statistical software support will move from a centrally supported service to the desktop with one

position moving from the existing Information Technology Institute to the College of Arts and Sciences.

With the steadily decreasing use of computer labs due to the increase of laptops and home PCs, Oakland will modify use of current lab space, including reassigning the open labs in Dodge Hall to the School of Engineering and Computer Science, and the Oakland Center lab to the Division of Student Affairs. Lab space in Kresge Library will be reassigned to CSITS, with one converting to a testing lab and the other remaining an open lab. UTS will manage the Banner lab in Varner Hall.

A future of distinction, a focus on cost
"The new structure focuses on reallocating existing resources so Oakland can enhance teaching and learning while improving technological services to the community," Moudgil said.

Additionally, the new organization saves the university more than $140,000 in base funding. Further cost savings are anticipated as the leaders in each area review operating needs in light of newly defined functions.

"With a new leadership focus on technology for teaching and learning and university technology services providing a solid infrastructure, Oakland University is well positioned to advance its mission during our economically challenging times and be well positioned to move forward to become a university of distinction by 2010," Moudgil said.

SUMMARY
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