

THE OAKLAND POST

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Students back in class

After shaky start to fall semester, students return eager for a fresh beginning.

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PHOTO BY AYMAN ISHIMWE

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PHOTO OF THE WEEK



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EDITORIAL BOARD

Jeff Thomas
Editor-in-Chief
jdthomas2@oakland.edu

Lauren Reid
Content Editor
lrreid@oakland.edu

Bridget Janis
Managing Editor
bridgetjanis@oakland.edu

EDITORS

Sophie Hume Photo Editor
sophiahume@oakland.edu

Matthew Scheidel Sports Editor
mscheidel@oakland.edu

Gabrielle Abdelmessih Campus Editor
gabdelmessih@oakland.edu

Sarah Gudenau Features Editor
sgudenau@oakland.edu

COPY&VISUAL

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Tanner Trafelet Senior Reporter

Rachel Yim Senior Reporter

D'Juanna Lester Senior Reporter

Christian Tate Sports Reporter

Brittany Kearfott Sports Reporter

ADVERTISING

Tori Coker Marketing Director
Toricoker@oakland.edu

Madeline Parker Ads Director
mparker@oakland.edu

248.370.4269
Megan Dull Ads Assistant

ADVISING

Garry Gilbert Editorial Adviser
ggilber@oakland.edu

248.370.2105
Don Ritenburgh Business Adviser
ritenbur@oakland.edu

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POLL OF THE WEEK

WHICH CAMPUS BUILDING HAS THE BEST CLASSROOMS?

- A) HUMAN HEALTH BUILDING
- B) PAWLEY HALL
- C) ELLIOTT HALL
- D) ENGINEERING CENTER

LAST ISSUE'S POLL

WHICH SAFAC ORG HANDED OUT THE BEST MERCH DURING WELCOME WEEK?



CORRECTIONS CORNER: In a previous issue, we referred to the Oakland United Student Workers Coalition (OUSWC) as the Oakland University Student Workers Coalition, which is incorrect.

The Oakland Post corrects all known errors of fact. If you know of an error, please email editor@oaklandpostonline.com.

Students share their thoughts on start of fall semester

LAUREN REID

Content Editor

GABRIELLE ABDELMESSIH

Campus Editor

After a tumultuous start to the 2021-2022 Academic Year, Golden Grizzlies are ready to get back in the classroom — whether its virtual or in-person — to take the next step in their education. We walked around the Oakland Center and asked students about their experiences starting the fall semester. Here are their responses.

What are you looking forward to this new school year?

Julian Ajja, Computer Sciences

"I'm hoping I can finish my classes and get ready to graduate soon."

Jared Hewines, Secondary Education with a specialization in History

"I'm looking forward to in person classes and getting to know some of the faculty and students."

Eva Hulit, English

"I'm mostly looking forward to meeting new people and making connections we weren't able to make during quarantine. [I'm ready] to

get out of the house, learn more and further my education."

Elijah Barchu, Information Technology

"Doing good. Hopefully, I can get a good start and stay on track."

Kaitlyn Lance, Exercise Science

"I'm looking forward to campus events and in-person classes."

What are your thoughts on entering a new school year affected by COVID-19 and the infection prevention measures the university is taking?

Ajja

"I think it's weird. For me, it's kind of a mixture between online and regular in-person classes, and it's kind of messing me up a bit honestly. I don't know, it's kind of a weird structure for me."

Emma Birnbaum, Creative Writing

"I like that there's a vaccine mandate — that was a huge relief to see, the mask mandate as well. I'm not optimistic as to how long this is going to go on for. I think within the next couple months we'll be back to fully virtual. I'm not excited about that."

Hewines

"I think that Oakland is doing a

good job with the safety measures. I'm not too concerned about in-person classes and I'm really looking forward to being on campus and having live classes. I think that will be more enjoyable for me than online."

Hulit

"I'm very content with the vaccine and mask mandates, I just wouldn't feel safe if it wasn't that way. I appreciate that they're going through the steps to make sure everybody is [vaccinated], and how they're offering vaccines, masks, hand sanitizer. There's no reason for there to be an issue — hopefully stupid people don't be stupid."

Barchu

"They have to do what they have to do so that we can back to some type of normalcy. I don't see anything wrong with it, as long as we are coming to campus safely, we can help. We can do what we can do as students to help so that the virus, or whatever it is that's going on, can end."

Lance

"I feel like the University has done a really good job with requiring masks while we're inside and allowing us to take them off outside. Masks can be annoying at times, I understand. Learning with a mask

can be distracting if it's hot in the room or whatever. But, it's for our health most definitely. [I also feel that having an incentive for vaccination] is really good for getting the student population to comply."

Did the work stoppage affect the start of your semester? If so, how?

Birnbaum

"It didn't affect me too much, I had two classes cancelled and one was held. I don't have a standard as to how it's supposed to go, so I didn't have much to compare it to."

Hewines

"It didn't affect me too badly. I know for most of my classes the first day was, we were planning on going over the syllabus so the work stoppage didn't affect me too badly."

Hulit

"I only had two classes get cancelled, unfortunately they were two of my biggest classes. The teachers were very understanding and compassionate about it, and I tried to be compassionate and understanding about it, because this is their lives and their career."

THE OAKLAND POST

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The graphic features a large, stylized 'OP' logo in maroon and black. To the right of the logo, there are five circular icons representing social media platforms: Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, and two others (one with a target symbol and one with a blue bird). The text 'YOU CAN FIND US ON' is centered above the social media icons. To the right of the icons, the text 'VISIT US ONLINE' is displayed in large, bold letters. At the bottom right, the website URL 'WWW.OAKLANDPOSTONLINE.COM' is provided.

New faculty contract: what concessions were made

JEFF THOMAS
Editor-in-Chief

After more than three months of bargaining, four deadlines extensions, a work stoppage that delayed the start of the semester, two days of picketing and a march through the heart of OU by picketers — an agreement was reached between the administration's bargaining team and Oakland University's Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (OU AAUP) at 12:20 a.m. last Saturday.

The tentative agreement is a three-year contract, set to expire Aug. 14, 2024. Its arrival marked the beginning of the fall semester and a collective sigh of relief from a campus community hungry to get back in the classroom for the first time since the beginning of COVID-19.

OU AAUP President Karen Miller released the following statement regarding the agreement and the support faculty received from the campus community in the final weeks of bargaining.

"I would like to thank the Bargaining Team for their efforts in what was an extraordinarily difficult negotiation cycle; they did a wonderful job," Miller said. "I would like to thank all those who helped to organize our communications efforts; they crafted an incredibly successful campaign to explain the ever changing bargaining situation to both our members and the community around us. I would like to thank those who helped organize our job action; they rallied the community and reminded us of the joy we have for each other and our profession. I am grateful to have been the president of such an outstanding group of people. I could not be more

proud of the faculty at Oakland University."

The agreement was hard fought by both sides and the numbers that have been released by OU AAUP reflect that. Major issues in the final days of bargaining included — healthcare benefits, faculty tuition waivers, pay for summer courses, processes for hiring/firing and compensation for special lecturers.

According to the agreement summary released to OU AAUP members Sunday afternoon, in the new agreement, pay raises for full-time faculty have been set at 1.25% increase with a \$500 bonus in year one, a 1.85% increase in year two and a 2% increase in year three. All raises are based on merit, which means faculty must complete certain procedures to be eligible for the raise. These numbers fall between the 3.5% originally proposed by faculty and 0% followed by 1% in subsequent years proposed by the administration.

Additionally, employer healthcare contributions for full-time faculty will be 95% in years one and two, and 90% in year three of the agreement. This is in contrast to the initial economic proposal from the administration that saw OU contributing 90% year one, 85% in year two and 80% in year three.

With retirement contributions, contributions schedules will remain the same for all existing full-time faculty. Employer contributions for faculty hired after Sept. 1, 2021 is set at 11% starting after one year of service. Available retirement plans will be selected by the fiduciary advised by an Investment Committee. OU AAUP will now appoint one non-voting member to that committee.

The formula for full-time faculty will remain the same as the prior agreement, with a cap at \$11,000 for a four credit course. This is significant because the university's initial proposal ditched the formula in favor of a flat-per-credit-hour rate which would have been considerably lower for some faculty.

In the new agreement — upon birthing, adopting or fostering a new child, full-time faculty are eligible for up to 12 weeks of paid parental leave. Additionally, the faculty tuition benefit will remain at current levels of 10%. Though, there are some restrictions for receiving the benefit — like the benefit can only be used for "regularly admitted students degree-seeking or certificate programs or guest students," and that it can only be used once for repeat courses.

Throughout the bargaining process, OU AAUP fought for specificity in language and procedures and ultimately succeeded on that front in several areas. Improving processes for hiring and firing faculty was one such area.

Procedures enabling due process have been created for when a faculty member is removed from campus, changes have been made to when layoffs can be initiated, language has been added so that the administration must seek to use attrition when addressing overstaffing, position shift layoff has been eliminated and laid off faculty will retain their OU email and electronic access to personal documents.

Additionally, OU AAUP fought for protections for Special Lecturers (SLs), a sub-group of faculty who teach a significant portion of the courses at OU. Under the new agreement, SLs who teach at least 16 credit hours in a year will receive a \$500 stipend. Additionally, after eight years of service, SLs will now be offered three-year contracts. And the faculty tuition benefit for SLs has been increased from 10



PHOTO COURTESY OF OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

A new agreement was reached between faculty and OU's administration early Saturday morning. Details of the contract show concessions were made by both sides during negotiations.



PHOTO BY SOPHIE HUME

Faculty picketing at the entrance west entrance to Oakland University.

to 12 credits. Employer healthcare contributions for SLs will remain the same, with SLs paying about 35% of their benefit. Salary for SLs will improve at the same rate as full-time faculty.

With negotiations now settled, President Ora Hirsch Pescovitz gave The Post the following statement looking ahead at the fall semester.

"On September 4, 2021, Oakland University reached a contract settlement with the OU Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). We respect the diligence, dedication, and passion of those who negotiated on behalf of the OU administration and AAUP. The new contract reflects good-faith negotiations and represents a fair and equitable agreement. We look forward to the faculty taking all necessary and feasible steps to make sure students receive the course content, learning objectives, and support needed to succeed academically.

As we move ahead, we look forward to working together with AAUP as we plan and respond strategically to the many challenges facing OU and other higher education institutions across the country. In the upcoming days and months, we must find common ground in the values, priorities and mission we share.

The demands, uncertainty and challenges of the last year-and-a-half of the pandemic have tested our resolve. As we make the transition to the fall semester, let's all take the opportunity to do our part in providing the best possible educational experience for our OU students."

'9/11 Twenty Years Later' to commemorate 20th anniversary

RACHEL YIM

Senior Reporter

For the 20th anniversary of Sept. 11, the Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) at Oakland University is hosting a public discussion.

20 years ago, on Sept. 11, the single largest terrorist attack in U.S. history killed nearly 3,000 people and injured thousands at the World Trade Center. To this day, this horrible event has deeply and forever scarred the hearts of anyone old enough to remember the day.

To commemorate and honor the veterans who served in America's longest war, CCE is hosting two panelists who not only have a deep connection to 9/11 but also the fight against terrorism and the war in Afghanistan: U.S. Rep. Elissa Slotkin and former U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers.

Slotkin was recruited to and joined the CIA not long after the 9/11 attacks, and Rogers was in Congress at the time of the event and went on to be chair of the House of Intelligence Committee. David Dulio, director of CCE and professor

of political science, pointed out this discussion will be interesting and worth joining to hear from these two experts who come from both sides of the political aisle.

20 years have passed, and this event still remains one of the most pivotal points in American history that has irrevocably changed many lives. An important point here is that most teenagers now entering college — or serving in the armed forces — were not yet born on that unforgettable day.

Although it may feel like yesterday that the attacks on 9/11 happened for most people, for this generation of students, it is history. Therefore, teaching them about what happened on Sept. 11 and why this is important in our history is critical for them to understand how big of an impact it had on the country. Later on, it will depend on this generation of students to pass on the history and lessons of 9/11 to those even further removed from this event.

"That day changed our country and the world in a number of ways," Dulio said. "I think students will learn more about not only what happened on 9/11 but why and what that means for us moving forward."

With the recent withdrawal of U.S. troops in Afghanistan, Dulio said this discussion will be a great opportunity to not only talk about the 9/11 event but also the broader aspect of the war on terrorism.

"This conversation is certainly an opportunity to talk about broader issues about the war on terror, the withdrawal from Afghanistan, and others that will come up for discussion," he said.

CCE hopes to continue to educate and engage the younger generation of students in various topics that may not have a clear understanding of the nation's history.

The discussion is held at 6 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 9 in the Founders Ballroom A in the Oakland Center. It is open to anyone interested, and they can register by completing the form. In-person seating is limited, and all attendees must abide by all OU's COVID-19 policies. People who are interested in attending the event virtually will be receiving an email with instructions when they submit the form.

For more details about the event, email professor Dulio at ddulio@oakland.edu.



PHOTO COURTESY OF OAKLAND UNIVERSITY
Oakland University pays tribute to the 20th anniversary of 9/11.

COVID-19 vaccination deadline extended by one week

LAUREN REID

Content Editor

In a Campus Communication email sent Saturday, Sept. 4 — Oakland University announced an extension to the COVID-19 vaccination deadline by one week. All faculty, students and staff who have not yet received their first vaccination dose now have until Friday, Sept. 10 to do so. The deadline was previously Friday, Sept. 3.

For the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, the second dose is required by Friday, Oct. 8.

Vaccination status must be uploaded to the Graham Health Center Patient Portal, where the \$100 incentive is still offered through Sept. 30 to those who upload their data. The university will not share this information publicly — only collect the data as a whole to track the campus' collective vaccination rate.

According to the email, OU is "striv[ing] to reach a campus-wide vaccination rate as close to 100% as possible."

The vaccination mandate applies to all faculty, students and staff who plan to attend on-campus classes, utilize on-campus services, or attend activities in-person on main campus or any offsite locations, according to OU's vaccine mandate FAQ's.

OU first announced they were mandating the COVID-19 vaccine to students, faculty and staff on Monday, August 3 after a plethora of other Michigan universities had done the same — including the

University of Michigan, Michigan State University, Wayne State University, Grand Valley State University, among others.

"I am so very proud of how the Oakland University community has weathered the past 18 months of the COVID pandemic," said OU President Ora Hirsch Pescovitz in a press release detailing the expanded vaccine mandate. "It is a tribute to your individual and our community's collective perseverance, determination and resilience. But, unfortunately, the national and international health crisis is not over."

As the Delta strain continues to spread alarmingly, Michigan's positivity rate has increased from 4.74% to 8.74%, as mentioned in the press release.

Unvaccinated individuals are 29 times more likely to be hospitalized from COVID-19 compared to those who are fully vaccinated, according to a study done by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC continues to stress that vaccination prevents not only infection, but getting severely ill, and reduces the chance of hospitalization and death.

The best way to slow the spread is to get vaccinated.

All members of the OU community can receive a COVID-19 vaccine through the Graham Health Center. Appointments and walk-ins are available — appointments can be scheduled through the patient portal. For additional vaccine locations, visit vaccines.gov.

Along with the vaccine mandate, OU has a mask mandate in place along with the Daily Health Screening Form.

Students, faculty and staff who do not comply with the vaccination mandate will receive disciplinary action, according to the vaccine mandate FAQ's. Not complying with mask requirements may result in disciplinary action from the Dean of Students office.

"To protect yourself, your family and your community, you must get vaccinated and wear your mask," Pescovitz said. "It is important that you listen and speak to one another respectfully. If you understand how vaccines are saving lives, please explain that to a friend, a colleague or a fellow student. The empathy you show others during this challenging period will serve you well in the future, even if it is not reciprocated today."



PHOTO BY NOORA NEIROUKH
Oakland University extends the deadline for students to get vaccinated.

Anti-Vax Mandate Protest: ‘My body, my choice’

GABRIELLE ABDELMESSIH
Campus Editor

On Sept. 2, people gathered in front of Elliott Tower to protest the university’s vaccine mandate. Students, parents of students, and even individuals with no affiliation to the university participated.

The protest was organized by OU’s chapter of Turning Point USA (TPUSA), a conservative nonprofit that claims “to identify, educate, train, and organize students to promote the principles of freedom, free markets, and limited government.” One of the organization’s co-founders, Bill Montgomery, died of complications related to COVID-19 in July of 2020.

Some of the signs at the protest read “MY BODY, MY CHOICE,” “1 year of data ≠ safe,” “educate, don’t mandate” and “GRIZZLIES FOR MEDICAL FREEDOM.” Some protesters were also carrying a sign with a link to a right-wing website riddled with misinformation as well as the phrase “Stop N.W.O.,” which is often associated with government-related conspiracy theories.

While addressing the crowd, president of OU’s TPUSA chapter Taylor Weinert said, “We want the choice and we want our right to medical freedom. Is this too much to ask?” Weinert also underscored the protest was intended to be anti-vaccine mandate, not anti-vaccine.

After her opening remarks, I asked to interview her. Here’s part of our conversation:

GA: Are you vaccinated against COVID-19?

TW: I am, yes.

GA: So what about the mandate don’t you like?

TW: I just feel that as a United States citizen you should not be mandated to receive the vaccine especially for me, with it being so new, I don’t like how the school and everywhere else around the nation is [saying], “You need to get it.” I think that that’s a freedom choice you should be able to decide for yourself.

GA: Could you see any scenario where the university has the right to mandate something in order to keep the university safe?

TW: That’s a tough question. I think in this circumstance, it’s more of a... I think it’s more of a measure for money at this point, especially with the COVID-19 vaccine. COVID-19, it’s not deadly...there are circumstances where people do die unfortunately but for this circumstance, I don’t believe it should be mandated at all.

GA: Does it concern you at all that unvaccinated people who contract COVID-19 and experience severe illness put hospital workers and healthcare providers at higher risk for having breakthrough infections or passing COVID-19 on to others?

TW: Yes, of course I care about the healthcare workers. I worked in healthcare myself. I got to see frontline exactly what was

happening so I do have a lot of empathy and sympathy for those people, but... especially with this new Delta variant I guess I could say, the people who received the vaccine are more likely to get sick, so... it’s tough. There’s going to be continuous variants.

GA: Where do you get your information regarding COVID-19 and vaccines?

TW: The CDC, all the government resources. Many other protesters against the mandate decision were also interviewed. Those who chose not to get vaccinated cited religious reasons, medical freedom, and their interpretation of clinical data as contributing factors in their decision. The link to their interviews can be found here:

Editor’s Note:

It is important to point out that while we are all experiencing a global pandemic, we are also experiencing what some are calling an infodemic surrounding information, or disinformation, about COVID-19 — making it harder to trust science and public health responses. People have every right to protest the actions of a public university and to receive medical and religious vaccination exemptions, however, The Post will never legitimize false information. I asked, and the protesters answered — it doesn’t mean their comments regarding the science of COVID-19 are verifiably true.

As someone studying Biomedical Sciences and Journalism with the goal of becoming a physician with a commitment to being truthful and evidence-based in my decision making, I would direct anyone seeking information regarding COVID-19, the COVID-19 vaccines, COVID-19 treatments, or how a disease actually spreads and is prevented to the NIH, FDA, CDC, WHO, your local public health department or any other well-regarded organization that uses peer-reviewed, double-blind studies to gain information for the benefit of mankind.



PHOTO BY ANNA DRUMM
Students and parents protesting the vaccine mandate at Oakland University.

College of Arts and Sciences welcomes new Dean Carey

TORI COKER
Marketing Director

Dr. Elaine Carey is an accomplished historian, acclaimed scholar and passionate academic leader. This year, she adds dean of Oakland University’s College of Arts and Sciences to the vast list of roles she’s held, bringing with her a diverse range of experience and a strong admiration for the campus community she’s joining.

Having originally pursued her Ph.D. in history from the University of New Mexico with the intention of becoming a journalist, Carey’s detour into academia was as unanticipated as it was enlightening. It took hesitantly declining a dream job offer that’s area of focus didn’t correlate enough with her studies for her to make the transition, quickly realizing just how valuable her personal expertise was within the classroom.

Following her first position post graduate school at The University of Detroit Mercy, she continued expanding her teaching resume through positions at various schools across the nation, whilst simultaneously advancing her remarkable contributions to academic research. Having published dozens of works, she highlights her book *Women Drug Traffickers: Mules, Bosses, and Organized Crime* as one of her proudest achievements. Instrumental in altering the conversation surrounding women in the drug trade, this source is considered the first to assign focus to the ways in which these women have often been bosses in a number of ways — a focus previously so underexplored, several fellow scholars initially assumed Carey’s presentation to be one of fiction.

Carey’s most recent position was founding dean of Purdue University Northwest’s College of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences. Arriving in 2017 at the university’s inception, she played an instrumental role in the school’s development, collaborating with faculty, administration, librarians and students across all of the university’s colleges on endeavors such as general education offerings.

Her first brush with OU traces back to a visit to campus for a concert back in the nineties. Remaining cognizant of the university’s growth over the years through friends on the staff, her initial intrigue to join the school was grounded in appreciation for its community.

“I was really impressed by the growth, the collaborations within the community, the research, the work that was going on and the programs that are in the college and the university as a whole,” she said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ELAINE CAREY
Dr. Elaine Carey joins Oakland University as the new Dean of College of Arts and Sciences.

She’s currently enjoying getting acquainted with campus and the work and people who make it what it is. Her ambitions for contributing positively to the CAS include reinstating the Meeting of Minds conference, establishing a theme for the college and prioritizing students’ preparedness for their professional futures. Furthermore, she cites various consistencies across her experience and the college’s central values — particularly that of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.

“I mean, that is something that the faculty in the college have really spearheaded for much of the history of OU,” she said. “It’s the nature within their disciplines, and you can see it — not only in what they teach and their research, but also who they are. That is very similar to the work that I do, so that to me is really exciting.”

Many CAS students had their first encounter with Carey during New Student Welcome last week. She embraced the opportunity to connect with students further by attending the Student Organization Fair, a testament to her commitment to remain engaged with students throughout her decisions made as dean.

“A lot of what I’m really interested in [is] working with students and asking them [...] what, maybe, the college could do better,” she said, highlighting her desire to form a student advisory board — something she proudly instated at her previous college. “I’m hoping to have some of those conversations going forward with students.”

'Fridays at the Farms' return to campus, off campus

BRIDGET JANIS

Managing Editor

With the school year starting back up, the Student Organic Farm is beginning to hold their weekly "Fridays at the Farm" farmstand again. This provides an opportunity for all community members to purchase fresh produce and support Oakland University students.

"I believe that going outdoors is just super important in general, being able to see the farm, understanding how your food grows, understanding food systems," Madison Lee, Assistant Farm Manager and President of Growing Grizzlies said. "And being able to see a place in your own backyard that's actually doing that and providing food to many people is super important."

The farmstand will be open every Friday throughout September and the first couple weeks of October, depending on the weather, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. on 3070 Butler Rd.

With the lack of volunteers this year, the farm decided to hold their farmstand directly on the farm, instead of on campus.

"It's actually easier to have the farmstand here than it is to take it to campus," Dr. Fay Hansen, Associate Professor of Biology Sciences said. "It's a huge effort to get it to campus but we love the visibility — what we like about having it here is people come out and see the farm."

Community members are able to purchase a wide variety of common and unique vegetables such as cucumbers, tomatoes, squash and kohlrabi. You can also purchase flowers such as dahlias and zinnias.

"We try to sell the classics," Lee said. "But also, try to get people to try new things, because that's super important."

The Student Organic Farm is partnered with Growing Grizzlies, a club on campus that helps with the volunteering aspect of the farm. Students interested in volunteering at the farm should reach out to Growing Grizzlies on GrizzOrgs, or through their Instagram — @GrowingGrizzlie.

This past year, the farmstand has also been partnering with the Grizzly Pantry to make it more accessible to students. There is now a vouture program, "Grizz Greens," in which you can take the voutures to the farmstands or at specific times the farm allows. Then, students that use the Grizzly Pantry can get access to whatever is available.

"The club grew to kind of teach people how to grow whatever they want or need at their house," Jason Jungle, Farm Manager and Treasurer of Growing Grizzlies said.

The Student Organic Farm was founded in 2010 and has grown ever since. OU received a grant to start the farm in 2010 — before that it was a small student garden. The grant was specifically to help change the way OU teaches STEM: through the way of food.

"Our goal when we founded the farm was

to provide fresh produce for our students," Hansen said.

The farm is student run, and accepts volunteers year-round. There are multiple classes that surround helping out and learning about the farm. A lot of the active learning takes place directly on the farm.

For the upcoming year, the farm hopes to improve their engagement with the community and bring back some old events. They want to start the Thanksgiving bake back up, hold potlucks and create some hang out sessions.

"I'd like to get more people interested, people that want to make the farm prosper," Jungle said.



PHOTO BY SOPHIA HUME
Students return to their work at the student farms.

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Day one: Faculty, students and retirees picket

Morale was high on the picket line the first morning. Gathered near major entrances to the campus — faculty, students and OU retirees hoisted signs reading “AAUP For A Better OU” high into the late-summer sun. As beautiful as campus is this time of year, their presence was indicative of an ugly fight that had taken place all summer behind the scenes.

Picketing began at 8 a.m. Thursday Sept. 2 in response to the contract dispute between OU’s administration and the OU Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (OU AAUP). The two parties failed to reach an agreement after roughly 13 hours of bargaining took place on Wednesday Sept. 1. OU AAUP authorized a work stoppage at 1 a.m. that morning after their contract had expired at midnight. Students found out first thing this morning from a Campus Communication email and through emails sent via Moodle from their professors that classes have been postponed for the time being.

Returning to campus for what was supposed to be the first day of classes, students headed to the lines seeking information about what had happened throughout the summer contract negotiations. One such student was incoming freshman Andreas Herwig. He was surprised with what he heard and shared these thoughts.

“I’m a freshman student at OU and I did not see my first day going out like this,” Herwig said. “From what I’ve heard from the professors, if they’re not making enough money to live on, then that is a problem for the administration. The administration should figure out how they’re going to pay the professors because I don’t want a professor that’s focusing on how they’re going to pay rent, and not focus on how they’re going to teach the class.”

One person informing students who approached the picket line was OU AAUP Vice President and Special Lecturer of Writing and Rhetoric Allison Bohn. According to her, these negotiations were about more than just a paycheck.

“[What students should understand] is that we’re bargaining for equity. We’re looking for respect from the university,” Bohn said. “And the way they show that after all the work that we’ve done during the pandemic is by giving us an equitable contract.”

OU AAUP and university administrators resumed negotiations at 10 a.m. Thursday. Picketing proceeded throughout the day Thursday and Friday before a deal was reached at approximately 12:20 am Saturday.



Stories by Jeff Thomas, Design by Bridget Janis, Pictures by Sophie Hume

Day two: The march through the heart of OU

Starting at 8 a.m. Friday — faculty and supporters including students, alumni and retirees picketed outside major entrances to the university. The story from the picket line was cross-campus solidarity, as student workers were present on the line and non-faculty campus employees showed their support via a parade of maintenance vans honking their horns.

“The mood is very upbeat, we have a tremendous amount of support from the students who have been out here who have brought us food and water and good wishes, which is meaningful and wonderful for all of us,” Oakland University Associate Professor of Political Science and Contract Officer for the Oakland University’s chapter of the American Association of University Professors (OU AAUP) Diane Hartmus said. “... It’s a very positive response, we feel that our message has clearly gotten out, and clearly resonated.”

Member of OU’s Student Congress (OUSC) and representative for the Oakland United Student Workers Coalition (OUSWC) Jeremy Johnson elaborated on why the presence of student workers was important on the picket line Friday.

“We recognize that we live in an intersectional world, the struggle that the [OU AAUP] is experiencing is the same one that student workers experience,” Johnson said. “... It’s all interconnected, it all speaks for itself. The only way to push back against it and claim some amount of collective power over the

administration is to stand together and unite as the people that are employed by the university.”

For picketers, the day culminated in a long march through the heart of OU’s campus. Picketers from all entrances gathered between North and South Foundation Halls, then marched past the Oakland Center, through Elliott Tower and past Kresge Library.

The march came to an end when picketers coalesced around President of Oakland University’s chapter of the American Association of University Professors (OU AAUP) Karen Miller to hear her speak. Miller delivered a heartfelt address to picketers, expressing her gratitude for their support and encouraging them to enjoy their Labor Day weekend.

“This weekend is so workers can rest. So go get some rest, spend some time with your friends and your family this weekend,” Miller said. “Hopefully we won’t have to be out here Tuesday, but if we do, you’ll know where to find us.”

After a 16-hour day at the negotiating table Thursday, bargaining between OU’s administration and the OU AAUP continued all day Friday. Reports from both sides indicated some progress was made, but there was still more work to do, with key issues separating the sides. For students, the start of the fall semester was delayed until an agreement could be reached. The delay to the start of classes caused some confusion among students.

The situation was not helped by unusual messages released from the administration throughout the week via the Campus Communication email broadcast system.

Faculty and student workers criticized the communications as being designed to drive a wedge between OU AAUP faculty, students and non-faculty campus employees, saying that the communications are misleading and an abuse of the broadcast system.

“It is a disgusting abuse of the platform that OU has,” Johnson said. “... They have abused their power, especially because a lot of freshmen that have just come in are very confused about what’s going on ... They should not be using the megaphone that they have that is inherent to their positions to confuse people, to pit them against each other.”

“It seems like the emails, the messages that they’re sending us, it seems like they’re not explaining what they’re doing exactly,” said Junior Musical Theatre Major Madison Wiley. “It seems, not that they’re lying, just that they’re exaggerating their side of the story.”

A veteran of seven bargaining teams, Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering and member of the OU AAUP executive community Michael Latcha explained that using the broadcast system in such a way is not unprecedented once a work stoppage has occurred.

“These types of communications are actually fairly normal when it gets down to a job action,” Latcha said.

Communications released by the administration last week praised faculty for



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHIAONING SU
Picketers begin their march through OU’s campus..

their commitment to the university, while also blaming the OU AAUP for being the reason why a contract agreement has not been reached.

Given the circumstances, praise from the administration has not been well received by faculty. With many seeing it as disingenuous and not reflective of the administration’s behavior at the bargaining table.

“We are, to use the current word for it, being gaslighted,” Latcha said.

Issues including healthcare and special lecturers were the final gap bridged in negotiations. Bargaining concluded Saturday at 12:20 a.m. when a tentative agreement was reached between the two sides.

The weather was beautiful for both days of picketing and morale was high on the picket lines. Faculty appreciated the support from the campus community and enjoyed seeing each other after spending a year apart due to COVID-19.

“I’m just delighted at how much love we have had towards our efforts and how many people have come out to support us,” Miller said.

Of that support, alumni made their presence felt. One alumnus spoke on why it was important for them to be on the line picketing.

“I would not be where I’m at today without all the experiences I had with my professors at Oakland,” class of 2018 alumni Syed Murtaza said. “And solely [on behalf of] the staff and professors because [the] administration didn’t really bring anything to us. It was the professors that invested and put time into us, cared for us. And I think they should be paid for what they’ve been giving to the university. I don’t understand why [OU’s] administration gets these huge packages of benefits and wages while they’re not contributing anything labor wise. It’s the professors and the staff that contribute the most. The school’s [built] off the backs of professors, so it’s important for me to support the people who helped build me up.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF GARRY GILBERT
OU AAUP President Karen Miller gives interview to Local 4 following the march through OU.

People of color: students, faculty share their thoughts on work stoppage

SARAH GUDENAU

Features Editor

A work stoppage has occurred. The start of school has been delayed due to the contract dispute between the administration and Oakland University's American Association of University Professors (OU's AAUP). Students and faculty on campus shared their thoughts as they wait.

Francine Guice, Special Lecturer in the Department of Management and Marketing in the School of Business

Having the insecurity of not knowing whether you'll receive a paycheck is scary. I think all faculty are concerned about students and the quality of the educational output that we deliver. OU is a good school but I think the administration is misguided in its approach to faculty pay, faculty benefits and summer teaching pay.

If the pandemic has taught us anything, workers (yes, faculty are workers!) are entitled to fair wages, respect and dignity. The Union is asking OU to share any financial burdens equally so that it doesn't affect our students' education or costs of education. That's fair.

It's my opinion that Black faculty desire the same benefits as do all faculty who are taking this employment action. We want:

- 1) 3% pay increase for all bargaining unit faculty
- 2) No increase to the faculty cost of insurance to faculty
- 3) Retirement benefits extended to the Special Lecturer bargaining unit
- 4) An increase in faculty summer teaching pay

Raya Hollis, Graduate Student, Public Health

I'm paying my tuition dollars to get an education and because they won't compensate professors with what they deserve, I can't get my education. I am a person who likes to be prepared, and I go on Moodle and I can't see my syllabus. I don't blame my professors at all for this. I blame the administration or the mediator for not being able to come up with a deal before classes. If you really cared about the students, you would have come up with a deal before classes started.

This is day one, and students were told by administration to continue to go to class and if you're waiting for more than fifteen minutes, then you can leave. Why would they say that when they know that the professors are not able to complete their

duties because they don't have a contract? So essentially, the administration is trying to pit the students against the professors and I think that's wrong.

Tianna Chatman, Sophomore, Psychology

I'm sad about the situation. Professors are trying their best and there's nothing else they can do. It feels frustrating because we [students] don't know what's going on. I sympathize with them and unfortunately, we have to wait, too.

Njambu Jamneh, Sophomore, Psychology

Two teachers emailed me and said if the school doesn't figure it out, they won't hold classes until they [the school] do. I sympathize with the professors and if it were me, personally, I'd picket.

Chanelle Beach, Sophomore, Musical Theater

We're out here to support our professors because the university is treating them like they're nothing, even though they're the whole foundation of this university. We're upset because if our professors aren't taken care of, how are they going to take care of us?

How terrible is it that last year, we barely even had class in-person, we barely even got to see our professors or our peers. Then this year, literally the first day of class, we don't

even get to go because the professors are on strike — that's not on the professors, that's on the university.

Eve Draper, Senior, Social Work

I feel like they have every right to be upset and honestly as a student, as much as I'm paying tuition, costs are going up every year. If it's not going to the faculty, I'm curious as to what it's going to. We're not getting any new dorms, so where is all this money going?



PHOTO BY LAUREN REID
Jaliyah Langford, Litta Dillard and Raya Hollis holding signs at OU on September 1. Many students joined faculty on the picket lines.

Looking back: February 1962 communism was OU's hot-button issue

TANNER TRAFELET

Senior Reporter

It is Feb. 3, 1962 in Rochester, Michigan. United States (U.S.) president John F. Kennedy has issued an executive order announcing a trade embargo on Cuba — a result of deteriorating relations stemming from the Cuban Revolution of 1953 to 1958 — driving Cuba ever closer to the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact.

A week prior, the Michigan State University Oakland's (MSUO) — Oakland University's name at the time — Young Republican State Charter organization passed a resolution condemning communism which read: "No Communist, foreign or domestic, nor any delegate or visitor from a Communist country be permitted to teach or speak on any tax supported campus in this state of Michigan."

Earlier this week, Dr. James Haden — an associate professor of philosophy at MSUO — lectured on Marxism as a part of the university's "World Report" series. In this lecture, Dr. Haden discussed why Marxism continues to be prevalent as a theory of governance, despite its failure in implementation within command economies. The facilitated pursuit of a sort of economic democracy and how that pursuit relates the individual's role within the broader system of dialectical

materialism were Dr. Haden's main talking points.

In past years, U.S. relations with the Soviet Union have improved, at least in relation to U.S. relations with the world's other Marxist-Leninist state, the People's Republic of China. However, the U.S. and Soviet Union are still locked in a "Cold War." Centered on state sponsored proxy wars, an international arms race and the stockpiling of nuclear weapons by both the U.S.-led North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Soviet Union-led Warsaw Pact, this simmering tension is based on ideological divides on the political distribution of resources.

However, within a month on MSUO's campus, the Young Republicans called for a ban on speech for all communists, and subsequently were lectured by a university faculty member offering an interpretation on the very set of communist ideas that the Young Republicans moved to disavow.

In a time where the U.S.' security dilemma is centered on the opposition of a set of ideas (collectively labeled as communism), a peculiar conflict arises. Which is deemed to be more important in a time of conflict: free speech or national security?

A rudimentary analysis of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution reveals that even if someone disagrees

with an idea being propagated by an individual, the speech is likely protected as free speech. This also applies to discussion of ideas such as communism, and a ban permeating to even the most basic discussion of something such as communism would restrict the ability of an individual to exercise their right to free speech.

As an MSUO student in early 1962, one would have three choices to choose from in such an on-campus political situation. One may support the ban of people who believe in communism from teaching or speaking on the university campus. Conversely, one may support not banning people who believe in communism from being able to speak or teach at a college. Another form of participation in this civic process would be to do nothing.

Should the U.S. and its college

campuses be a marketplace of ideas, adherent to the concept of free speech? Or should free speech be curtailed in order to protect against perceived anti-constitutional and thus undemocratic forces, similar to the German idea of "streitbare Demokratie?" Two questions students pondered then and still do now 59 years later.



PHOTO BY JEFF THOMAS
The cover of the February 2, 1962 cover of The Oakland Observer, the former name of OU's student newspaper.

OU introduces new Master of Social Work Program

SARAH GUDENAU
Features Editor

The Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work and Criminal Justice at Oakland University is introducing a new Master of Social Work (MSW) program that will begin July 2022.

The degree program will provide students with “the requisite theoretical knowledge, evidence-based interventions and ethical framework for advanced social work practice with diverse client systems,” per the website.

“For many years, our community partners have asked us about starting a MSW Program,” OU Director of Social Work Dr. Maria Beam said. “As part of the MSW planning process, we asked area agencies that hire large numbers of social workers to speak to the impact that an OU MSW program might have on their ability to accept MSW level interns and to recruit qualified staff and serve their client populations.

We received many letters expressing unanimous support for the development of an MSW at OU, citing the high-quality reputation of our Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program,

the locality of the MSW program in Oakland County, as well as the ability of the program and its graduates to serve their organization’s mission.”

An MSW is required in the state of Michigan to receive a license. With this degree, students who wish to earn their license will be prepared after completing the necessary coursework and field experience. The degree also opens doors to jobs in a variety of settings such as healthcare, schools and in community mental health initiatives.

“Our interest to start an MSW degree is what we know from data and that there is a demand, not only by students, but in the labor market,” Dr. Beam said. “We know a majority of BSW graduates within five years are likely to seek an MSW degree.”

To prepare graduates for advanced social work professional practice, OU’s MSW curriculum will merge both the “clinical” and “macro” areas of practice in a “more contemporary and transformative approach to social work,” according to Dr. Beam.

Students who seek more intensive training will have the option to take an additional four or six credits to earn a specialization of their choice. There will be three specializations in social work

practice areas: integrated health, community and organizational leadership and school social work.

There are two options for completing the degree depending on students’ history. One is a two-year period of 64 credit hours of coursework and 900 hours of an internship for those who do not have a BSW. The second option is Advanced Standing for students who do hold a BSW — a ten month period of 34 credit hours and 450 hours of an internship.

Students have flexibility with modifying the program to fit their life. Depending on students’ individual schedules, they may complete the program part-time.

“We anticipate the application opening soon for prospective students to apply to the MSW Program through the graduate school,” Dr. Beam said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF OAKLAND.EDU
Director of Social Work, Maria Beam LMSW, Ph.D. OU has announced a new Master of Social Work program.

Łódź to Litzmannstadt: Derek Hastings on the Rywka Lipszyc diary

TANNER TRAFELET
Senior Reporter

On Sept. 1, the Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills welcomed Derek Hastings — associate professor of history at Oakland University — to present on the diary of Rywka Lipszyc.

Lipszyc, a Polish-Jewish teenage girl, composed a diary during her imprisonment in the Łódź ghetto and eventual transfer to the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp. Her fate is unknown as she disappeared from recorded history upon entrance into Auschwitz, with April 1944 marking the last of her diary entries. Hastings’ speech and presentation served as the keynote events of the evening centered on the Holocaust Center’s featured exhibit, “Rywka’s Diary — A Girl Lost, a Diary Found.”

Born on Sept. 15, 1929, Rywka grew up the youngest of four children in the Polish city of Łódź. Following the 1939 German invasion of Poland, Rywka and her family were forcefully relocated to the Łódź ghetto — a sealed off area in the northwestern part of the city, isolated from the outside world via brick walls, barbed wire fences and devoid of running water and sewer — where her father died from complications from a severe beating during the initial stages of the German occupation in 1941. One year later, Rywka’s mother died from malnutrition and exhaustion.

“Rywka was fourteen when she started her diary. She took it with her when she was moved to Auschwitz... although the persecution of the Jews began with the



PHOTO COURTESY OF EMANUEL RINGELBLUM
A bridge in Łódź ghetto. Rywka Lipszyc recorded her experiences in a diary during her imprisonment at Łódź.

German invasion, the establishment of the ghetto took time,” Hastings said. “From the beginning [of Nazi occupation], ethnic Germans in Łódź (renamed Litzmannstadt as a result of Nazi urban renewal program) came forward to exercise German control over the city, to fly Nazi flags and use the Hitler salute.”

The creation of ghettos for the concentration and isolation of Jewish people was a tragically common practice throughout Nazi-occupied Europe, Hastings explained. Continued maintenance of many ghettos, and the Łódź ghetto specifically, was a result of bureaucratic warfare within the Nazi regime centered

on the productivity of the Jewish slave laborers sealed in the ghetto.

The Nazi government maintained the ghettos as it decided between whether to keep Europe’s Jews alive to be used for slave labor, or if it was easier to kill them all using the developing death camps in Eastern Europe, which constituted the “Final Solution.” The latter finally won out, with Rywka’s ghetto being liquidated in 1944, and its inhabitants were sent to Auschwitz in 1944 for extermination by gas chamber.

“Her [Rywka’s] adolescent perspective gives insights that the older, ‘more mature’ people would not have been able to give,” Hastings said. “I think what she would try to tell us is that we all underestimate ourselves, we all think our limitations mean that we don’t have anything important to say.”

Hastings focused the later stages of his presentation on the themes he believed to be present in Rywka’s diary. Things such as her youthful, tragic infatuation with teenage life, her eternal mourning for dead family members and her contemplation and sometimes yearning for the release of death were all themes that screamed in a dark, isolated agony in the tightly packed one hundred or so pages of her diary. However, the diary’s pages also feature experiences that carry a glowing, but broken light for the reader to view her life from.

“Her diary, as a tangible object, is a form of immortality that allows her to still influence the world around us through her thoughts and experiences,” Hastings said. “Her hope was not misguided.”

My experience walking the AAUP picket lines

TANNER TRAFELET

Senior Reporter

The heavily covered contract negotiations between Oakland University administration and the OU American Association of University Professors (AAUP) resulted in two days of missed classes for students. That is, if your professors were in the AAUP and chose to participate in the labor strike, classrooms were left empty on Sept. 2 and 3.

On Sept. 2 and 3, I was supposed to have class, but instead found the classrooms devoid of professors. As of Sept. 5, an agreement has been reached between administration and the AAUP, so I may now have professors in the courses I am paying OU for.

During these days off, I decided to walk the picket lines at OU and see what the professors were really protesting for. I had many conversations with professors I had never met before, and even caught up with one I wasn't expecting to converse with.

I was duly informed by several professors that they were not allowed to offer official comments — as a result of AAUP directing all

official inquiries of the professors to spokespeople — and so I started talking to students present.

The levels of knowability regarding the contract negotiations varied greatly, from some students being well informed, and some, similar to me, being cautiously distant, but still hoping that both sides bargain effectively enough to reinstate classes.

“My name is Brady Jacot, and I’m a sophomore studying theatre, music and communication. I’m here to support the faculty, specifically in the School of Music, Theatre and Dance (SMTD), because the SMTD is like a family. Everyone takes care of each other, and we must give back to them [our professors] as they have given so much to us,” Jacot said. “I just want to see everyone happy. I don’t know a ton of specifics, but I know there’s economic problems that need to be solved for everyone to go back to normal.”

Many of the students I spoke with had similar perspectives, in that the utterly precise details of the contract negotiations were unknown to them. Students also commented on how, conversely, protests and the ensuing labor strike would not have occurred over a small disagreement

between OU’s administration and the union faculty. Rather, that this point had been reached because of a radical attempted restructuring of the relationship between faculty and their employer.

“I’m Ethan Bradley and I’m studying philosophy and political science going into my fourth and final year. Right now, I am protesting to protect the benefits and working conditions of our faculty at OU,” Bradley said. “I want to see these language demands that the university is making get shut down...things like taking away the department chair’s ability to schedule classes, drastically affecting the effectiveness of tenure, so every professor can effectively be [fired] at will.”

A primary concern communicated to me by students was they hoped these negotiations would not set a precedent for future bargaining between professors and the university’s administration. The basic wish to consume the product (classes with instructors in them) provided by the service provider (OU) was common, given that the classes missed on Sept. 2 and 3 cost money.

“I’m Alex Rye, a senior in the English department,” Rye said.

“Especially after everything they’ve [the professors] done with the last year’s pandemic — to keep us educated and classes going — it’s ridiculous how OU slaps them in the face like this. In the end...they are just hurting the students and themselves.”



PHOTO BY SOPHIA HUME
Picketers hoist their signs last Thursday.

Rec Center launches new app, making life easier for students

BRIDGET JANIS

Managing Editor

In an attempt to make fitness more accessible and easier for everyone, Oakland University’s Recreation Center launched a new app for community members.

“For us, the app is a tool to better connect the students to everything the university recreation and wellbeing (our department) has to offer,” Marie VanBuskirk, Assistant Director of Leadership and Engagement said. “And better connect them to support their health — whether it be physical health, mental health, learning [and/or] professional growth.”

The most useful feature of the app is allowing the community to scan in using the barcode on the app, instead of their student ID or driver’s license. To activate the member ID, all users have to do is log into their net ID.

The app is also helping the university improve on sustainability, allowing for less physical paperwork to be used. Students have access to a plethora of Rec Center features at their fingertips.

Students can also enable notifica-

tions to be more informed on the hours of operations the Rec Center has, and any closures that may arise throughout the year.

Additionally, any parts of the app that are the most useful to the user can be favored for easier access. Virtual or in-person classes can be signed up for on the app, allowing students to skip past the in-person or call ahead sign up process.

Group exercises are expanded on the app as well — giving more information on how each class is held. Whether it be virtual, in-person or a live stream, students will know before signing up for the class.

“It allows us to offer fitness classes, program them in, and offer them virtually,” VanBuskirk said. “So now we offer certain fitness classes exclusively virtually and others in-person, and now we have both options. [We will be] carrying forward because people have different preferences.”

Lockers and memberships are also available to be signed up for through the app. There is a resources button that guides users through mental health resources that can be useful at any point of the year. Another

virtual experience is a virtual guided meditation either at 8 a.m. or 12 p.m.

There are also ways to navigate through intramural and club sports. There is contact information for each club, and background information to know before joining. This makes access easier for students, allowing for all the information to gather in one place rather than scattered around many websites through OU.

“We have a lot of leagues and tournaments coming up this semester, a lot of different variety of things for students to do,” Jordan Leslie, Intramural and Club Sports Coordinator said. “All of that can be found on the app. [We] are also doing a new intramural pass.”

The intramural pass is a more indi-

vidualized way to pay and join all the intramural activities instead of paying for each event. This feature is found in the membership button. The app also provides the clubs with a way to work directly with the rec center to pay dues and link through the portal.

To download the app, visit the app store on your device and look up “OU Rec Well”

“We’re really excited to have it ready to roll for the fall right now — people are already scanning in with their phones, it seems to be going well,” VanBuskirk said. “Our main goal is to really roll it out, and let students know the benefit of just having everything in a format that’s easy to access right from their phone.”



PHOTO BY MAGGIE WILLARD
Homescreen of new Rec Center App.

End of COVID-19? Still seems far-fetched to me

RACHEL YIM
Senior Reporter

“When will the COVID-19 pandemic end?” Most people probably have asked this question at least once during this pandemic. After a year and a half since the first case of COVID-19 in the U.S., the answer to this question, however, still doesn’t exist.

When the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines came out, many might have thought we are nearing the end of the pandemic. The vaccines indeed helped bring down the daily COVID-19 cases across the country.

Not long after the vaccines were widely distributed, different types of variants started to emerge and spread. Viruses are known to constantly change through mutations. The development of variants of COVID-19 is not an exception.

Currently, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has classified Alpha, Beta, Gamma and Delta as variants of concern, while Eta, Iota, Kappa, None and Mu are classified as variants of interest. Out of the variants listed, the Delta variant has been the most contagious and common form of COVID-19.

First identified in India, the Delta variant is known to be more transmissible and virulent than the other known variants. According to the CDC website, the Delta variant spreads more easily than previous variants and may cause more than twice as many infections.

While the mandate of vaccinations for COVID-19 has been one of the most controversial topics these days, the fact that all FDA-approved vaccines that have been tested are effective and safe against the virus including the Delta variant remains true.

“It is striking to note that 99% of COVID-19 deaths are now occurring in unvaccinated people, when most adults in the USA have been vaccinated,” Stuart Ray, M.D., vice chair of medicine for data integrity and analytics for the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine said. “The more people who are unvaccinated and infected, the more chances there are for mutations to occur.”

With the Delta variant of COVID-19 fueling a new surge in the cases in the U.S., the federal health agency issued revised guidance on July 27th, recommending wearing masks indoors in areas of high rates of COVID-19 transmission, regardless of vaccination status.

It seems that mask mandate laws were lifted and have not been reinforced since the emergence of the Delta variant that led to another surge in U.S. COVID-19 cases. Weak mask mandates across the country have led many people to refuse to wear masks and to receive the vaccines.

According to AARP, to date, 29 states that had orders broadly requiring residents to wear masks in public have lifted them. Two states that previously lifted mandates, Louisiana and Oregon, have reimposed them amid the Delta spike. Eleven states have not imposed mandates at any point during the pandemic.

As long as weak public health policies continue, the end of the pandemic era is not clear.

Vaccines and masks are effective ways to fight against COVID-19 with its new variants. It’s important to always keep in mind that we’re going through the pandemic together and that we should be considerate of others whatever we do.

‘Shadow and Bone’ fans speculate season two

D’JUANNA LESTER
Senior Reporter

The popular Netflix series “Shadow and Bone” — a new hit for the young adult (YA) fantasy genre — has announced a second season, and fans are speculating what’s to come as they eagerly await its release.

The series — based on popular YA fantasy books by author Leigh Bardugo — dropped on Netflix in April of 2021. Since then, the eight episode series has become quite popular.

Fans of the books, as well as new followers, loved the show and praised it for its diversity. The show featured many different characters in terms of ethnicity, sexuality and disability.

After particular casting controversies for some of the main characters and the announcement of a season two, many fans have wondered who will be cast as the roles of Nikolai Lantsov and Wylan Van Eck. Lantsov is a fan favorite among book readers and first appears in the second book in the series “Siege and Storm.” Van Eck is a character from “Six of Crows,” Bardugo’s spin-off series that has been merged with the main series for the show.

Although season one of the series was very successful, many fans pointed out the problematic themes and casting controversies surrounding many characters, specifically Jessie Mei Li as Alina Starkov. Many readers were hoping that there would be a diverse cast, since the world of “Shadow and Bone” was mostly white.

However, there were many issues surrounding the depiction of racism and Starkov’s mixed race identity throughout the show. Many fans were upset with the way the show handled the plot, which was not in the books for Starkov’s character. Zoya is the one who has this subplot.

Fans have also accused the show of erasing Jesper Fahey’s bisexuality. With issues like this, people are concerned about how the show is going to portray Van Eck’s dyslexia. “Siege and Storm” is the second installment in the Grisha trilogy and introduces fan favorite Nikolai Lantsov. The lovable privateer is adored by many fans, a frequent favorite character in the Grishaverse. People have already begun “fan casting” the character — many want



PHOTO COURTESY OF IMDB.COM
The poster for Netflix’s hit YA fantasy show “Shadow and Bone.” Fans speculate about casting and plot decisions for the upcoming season.

either Evan Roderick or Robert Wilde to portray the role.

It was discovered that “Game of Thrones” star Toby Sebastian has auditioned for a role. Many speculate he’s trying for Sturmhond, a character that will appear in season two if the show follows the plot of the books. There have also been rumors circulating about Sturmhond and Lantsov being played by two different actors. In the books, Lantsov first appears as Sturmhond to kidnap Starkov and Mal.

The second season will most likely cover “Siege and Storm.” The book picks up where the first book left off, with Starkov and Mal in hiding from the Darkling and the characters searching for the next amplifier — a source of forbidden magic. Many people wonder where the Crows will fit into this plot, as the show has merged the two series into one central story.

“Six of Crows” characters Kaz Brekker, Inej Ghafa, Nina Zenik, Matthias Helvar and Jasper Fahey were introduced in season one on the show, but the fourth book in the Grisha series. Fans await casting news about the sixth Crow, Wylan. With more rumors surrounding casting and auditions, hopefully it won’t be long until fans get their answers.



PHOTO TAKEN BY NOORA NEIROUKH
Some of the Moderna vaccine made available by the OU administration. The university’s is now mandating vaccination for the campus community.

Esports adds two members to their Overwatch team

CHRISTIAN TATE
Sports Reporter

Oakland University is setting up for their inaugural Esports season with a few select games. One team in particular has signed two new members.

The two new additions, Mark Kuzmanovic and Adam Kobane, have been signed to the Golden Grizzlies' Overwatch roster, and their Head Coach Carl Leone seems to be ecstatic about it.

"I am very excited to bring Mark and Adam on board," Leone said in a press release. "These DPS players will be a solid foundation for our inaugural Overwatch season and I am looking forward to seeing them perform at the start of the season very soon."

Kuzmanovic, coming from Macomb, uses the online alias of "HiddenHippo" and chose to come play at Oakland University for a litany of reasons. The newly-minted Esports program being installed for the school officially enticed him to sign on as a player. The stellar amount of academic programs offered at Oakland University and the scholarships he received also played a big part in him choosing to sign on.

Kobane, otherwise known as "Skrrrt" online, comes from Sterling Heights, graduated from CSI (UCS Center for Science and Industry) and is looking to transfer the skills he learned playing Overwatch for fun over to the college leagues. He's even reached the level of Grandmaster in Overwatch, which is considered to be the top 1% of all Overwatch players.

The Grandmaster ranking, home to only the

elite of the elite when it comes to Overwatch, has Kobane competing alongside and against top Overwatch League stars and some of the biggest Twitch streamers in the world. In terms of Overwatch, the Esports team has landed a member who is already considered to be in the upper echelon of competitive Overwatch and he is sure to grow while competing against the best that the Horizon League has to offer.

He chose to sign with Oakland because of its close proximity to his home and the top notch engineering programs the university offers. He also said that, similar to his signee counterpart Kuzmanovic, the multitude of scholarships available to him played a part in his decision to sign on with the Golden Grizzlies as well.

Overwatch isn't the only game that has an official team under the Golden Grizzlies banner, though. The Esport category has extended to include multiple gaming titles with incredibly popular professional circuits and tournaments like League of Legends, Rocket League, and Super Smash Bros. Ultimate.

With Oakland University being the first Division I university in the state of Michigan to add a varsity esports team to its athletics program, collegiate gaming could become a pipeline to the professional gaming leagues for talented students. It will be interesting to see how the collegiate sport grows and develops from here.

As excitement and expectations grow for the newborn collegiate sport, the team has scheduled its first of what will hopefully be many future tournaments. Taking place on September 19th and September 20th, the Golden Grizzlies' Esports team will take part in the HJE Invitational.

Baseball finalizes its 2021-2022 roster; adds 14 new players to the mix

CHRISTIAN TATE
Sports Reporter

The Golden Grizzlies' baseball team has just put its finalized roster down for the 2021-2022 season and boasts 14 fresh faces who are ready to don the black and gold.

Players Brandon Decker, Caleb Fuller, Brad Goulet, Aleksei Goldhill, Brett Hagen, Thomas Green, Chase Keeney, Josh Korson, Quinton Kujawa, John Lauinger, Peyton McGregor, Hunter Pidek, Chas Sagedahl, and Christian Stelling now play under the Golden Grizzlies banner. Head Coach Jordon Banfield seems happy with the team that he and his staff have built, and seems to have high hopes for the upcoming season.

"I couldn't be more excited about the group of newcomers we've added to the roster for the 21/22 season," Banfield said in a press release. "I'm confident that this group, in addition to our earlier signees, address the main areas in terms of pitching and infield defense we need to improve in order to make a move toward the top of the Horizon League."

During the 2020-2021 season, the Golden Grizzlies' baseball team won 18 out of their 47 games and finished the season with a .383 win percentage. Coach Banfield is hoping these new players will shore up the holes in his team and help them get to a positive win percentage — maybe even making a run at the Horizon League championship.

Many of the players signed were pitchers, both right-handed and left. The majority of them have both high-school accolades and collegiate level experience playing baseball against the best the NCAA and high school circuit has to offer.

Some players in this group of signees already have experience playing against the best players in the nation, and one of the standout players amongst the group is Chas Sagedahl. The former Dallas Baptist left-handed star allowed only one run when he faced off against North Carolina, who was ranked 13th in the nation.

Sagedahl would then notch a 6-6 record with a 2.47 ERA in 14 starts, while having a team-best four complete games to his name. He would lead his team in innings pitched with 83.2 and finish the season with the fifth-most strikeouts



PHOTO TAKEN BY EMILY MORRIS
The baseball team held game two of their fall world series on Saturday, Oct. 24. Their season will resume on Friday, Feb. 19.

in the nation with 110, averaging out to 11.3 strikeouts per nine innings.

Chase Keeney, a former left-handed pitcher for Southeastern Community College, has built quite a reputation as a shutdown player who can toss a shutout on any night. The three-time Iowa High School Baseball Coaches Association Class 4A Northeast All-District player has been selected for the All-Metro (Cedar Rapids) team three times, has made the Mississippi Valley All-Conference team in his high school career three times, and threw four consecutive complete game shutouts while recording 86 strikeouts with only six walks allowed in 59 innings of play during the 2018 season.

Keeney was a standout in the 2020-2021 season as well, making 11 appearances with 11 starts and posting a 7-2 record with six complete games. He notched 45 strikeouts and a 3.96 ERA in 63.2 innings of work.

With other pitching signings like national standouts Illinois Springfield Christian Stelling and Quinton Kujawa, the Golden Grizzlies' pitching core has definitely been strengthened. Coach Banfield has also made efforts to improve the fielding positions to make a more well-rounded team with infielders Thomas Green and Brad Goulet, as well as outfielders John Lauinger and Peyton McGregor.

With the team's holes shored up, a solid returning cast of players and a good coaching core, the outlook for this season gets more positive with each passing day. Still awaiting the release of the 2021-2022 schedule, the date of the first game is currently unknown.



COURTESY OF OAKLAND UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS

Carl Leone, coach of the varsity Esports team. Esports now is adding 'Overwatch' to its roster.

Volleyball sweeps Eastern Michigan on Family Day

MATTHEW SCHEIDEL
Sports Editor

The Oakland University volleyball team swept the Eastern Michigan Eagles 3-0 on Sunday afternoon at the O'rena.

It was Family Day, where all the players were introduced and escorted by their family members before the game. Head Coach Rob Beam said it was nice to be able to do things like this again in order to bring back a sense of normalcy.

"I think this is such a great time for all of us being back in the arena, being back on the soccer fields, being at the track and cross country events, just being involved in collegiate sports," Beam said. "It's great after 18 months of [everything] being so different than it's ever been before. It's very nice to have the energy in the gym, be able to have celebrations before the match, have interchange and be able to honor teams."

The first set was pretty intense. After trading points for the first few minutes, four straight for the Eagles forced a Grizzlies' timeout. The timeout seemed to pay off as they went on a 10-3 run to take the lead 13-10.

The set kept going back and forth. Every time it seemed like one team had momentum, the other team would come roaring back.

In the end, it was the Grizzlies who pulled away on a Sydney Mann ace to take the first set, 25-20.

The Grizzlies took that momentum into the second set, starting it on a 7-1 run and forcing an Eagles' timeout.

The set was being utterly dominated by Oakland, as they led by as many as 11. Eastern Michigan would then go on a 7-0 run to make things interesting.

The Eagles forced two Oakland timeouts while trying to mount a comeback. They got as close as 23-20, but that's as close as they would get. The Grizzlies would take the second set 25-21.

Oakland once again got off to a hot start in the third set, starting on a 7-2 run. It always seemed like they were one step ahead of the Eagles. Another dominating set saw the Grizzlies take it 25-15, sweeping the match.

"Obviously in our sport, when you reset to 0-0, it's an even game," Beam said. "And that's the hardest thing — when you get out ahead, you know it's going to be back to 0-0 for the next set... I think once we started passing the ball well, then we had a lot of control."

Beam was pleased with the overall performance of his team.

"I thought we were a little slow in the first set," Beam said. "And then I



PHOTO BY MAGGIE WILLARD
The Volleyball team huddled up during a timeout.

thought as the match went on, we really started to play the kind of volleyball we wanted to play. The last set was fantastic. Offensive was clicking, defensive was clicking, [we had some] great passing. Overall, [I'm] very happy, and I really like seeing how we can have a slow start and work our way out of it."

With the win, the Golden Grizzlies

improved to 2-3 on the season. Their next game is on Friday, Sept. 10 at 5 p.m. when they take on the University of Pennsylvania Quakers to kick off the DePaul Invitational.

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Women's soccer falls to University of Toledo

D'JUANNA LESTER

Senior Reporter

The Oakland University women's soccer team lost 1-0 to University of Toledo (UT) in an intense game on Thursday, Aug. 27 at the Oakland Soccer Field.

Even before starting the game, the weather was a highlight. Temperatures were around 69 degrees with high winds. It was a great contrast from the earlier hours of the day. Many spectators were bundled up in jackets and wearing sweatpants during the duration of the game. The wind only grew stronger as the game progressed.

The Toledo Rockets scored the only goal of the match just over two minutes into the game. The Rockets were a tough team to go up against. Despite the early goal, the Golden Grizzlies held possession of the ball for 58% of the match.

OU took more shots than UT, tallying 10 versus the Rockets'

two for the game. Both teams took two shots total on goal, with Jessica Shears taking them for the Grizzlies. There were three total corner kicks throughout the game, with UT taking two and OU taking one.

It was an intense game, with OU's Head Coach Juan Pablo Favero noting they were up against "a very aggressive team." Fans agreed — they shouted in disbelief at missed foul calls.

The second half started off as fierce as the first, with a goal kick just eight minutes in. There were several fouls in this half, with the Rockets and the Grizzlies each receiving a yellow card. The match was brutal with 14 total fouls and the game stopping part way into the second half for a possible injury. Despite the loss, the Grizzlies put in a great effort and fought hard.

Coach Favero said their strategy for this match was to shift things around for

the difficult opponents. He's "very proud of the team's performance." His plan for the next match is to get the team physically recovered.

"The toughest part about coaching a college athletics team is knowing how to help your team be successful in every circumstance," Coach Favero said. "Tune out distractions for

college students, which there are a lot of. I want to keep them focused on why they're here."

He noted being a college athlete is very difficult, and the importance of keeping the team concentrated on the game.

The next women's soccer game will be against the University of Kentucky — Sept. 5 at 4 p.m. in Lexington, Kentucky.



PHOTO BY NOORA NEIROUKH
Golden Grizzlies Battled Toledo in a hard fought loss.

FALL 2021 PAYMENT DUE DATE

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY'S FALL PAYMENT DUE DATE: AUGUST 15, 2021.

Students who do not pay their balances in full or sign-up for a payment plan (and make the required installment(s)) may be dropped from classes and University housing (if applicable), and may be subject to late payment penalties and registration holds.

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