

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS

OU'S HIGH ACHIEVEMENTS IN NEW YEAR REFLECT OUR SHARED VALUES, PROMISING FUTURE

January 22, 2024

To all faculty and staff,

As we struggle through the gray, wintry weather of January, I am so proud to report several recent achievements that elevate the reputation of and illuminate the bright days ahead for Oakland. Collectively, these achievements demonstrate the momentum of a university on the move.

1.) Today, we officially announced that “Aspire. Advance. Achieve.” has exceeded its \$150M goal ahead of schedule.

In November of 2018, we gathered in the Oakland Center ballrooms for a black-tie campaign kickoff. Our special guest, author Malcolm Gladwell, offered his view on how philanthropy at Oakland can have a major impact, perhaps a much stronger and longer-lasting impact than philanthropy at larger or more elite universities.

It's proven to be provident and a compelling argument.

Nearly two-thirds of the 19,981 donors to the campaign were first-time givers. That's a rate far above the typical average of new donors for a university fundraising campaign. We believe these first-time donors are connecting to the OU story – a story of pride, academic excellence, and the indefatigable will to succeed and contribute to promoting education as the means to opportunity and upward mobility.

“Aspire. Advance. Achieve.” has transformed the university. Of the total funds, \$73M support student success initiatives and scholarship, and 167 new endowments have been created. A sampling of the designated use of selected funds include:

- Corewell's \$10.3M investment in support of student financial assistance for nursing students working toward a BSN or ASDN. And an additional \$10.3M for improvements to learning spaces and the hiring of faculty and staff needed to support

the increase in nursing students and program growth.

- \$1M for the Augmented Reality Center at the School of Engineering and Computer Science
- \$1M from the Ted Lindsey Foundation to the OUCARES, now named the Joanne and Ted Lindsay Foundation Autism Outreach Services at Oakland University
- \$1M to establish the OU Cis Maisel Endowment for Judaic Studies & Community Engagement
- \$1M donation from the OU Credit Union to support university sustainability initiatives
- \$1M to support and name the building of a Meadow Brook Hall MBH Visitors Center, the John H. and Mardell M. De Carlo Visitor Center
- \$500,000 Easterseals donation (over four years) to support the Masters of Social Work and Master of Arts degree in Counseling in Clinical Mental Health program with the goal of increasing social workers and mental health professionals through the creation of the Behavioral Health Partnership Program.
- \$311,000 for the Nursing Simulation (SIM) Lab expansion at the School of Nursing.

In addition, the faculty, staff and retirees of OU were especially generous accounting for \$14.3 million in support. This is remarkable and appreciated!

Thank you to our faculty, staff, alumni, and parents along with the foundations, corporations, philanthropic supporters and nonprofit organizations that contributed to the campaign. And a special thanks to VP Advancement Mike Westfall, and our Advancement team, whose tireless efforts are vital to the ongoing growth of our university.

2.) Oakland University is ranked the safest college campus in Michigan, and the seventh most secure in the U.S., according to Academic Influential, a Texas-based think tank.

Our greatest responsibility is to provide a safe, secure and welcoming campus. The OU Board of Trustees and leadership team is committed to remaining vigilant and prepared for any threat to our health and security.

In the past year, a timely review of campus security led to a new investment of \$655,000 to improve security, including access-controlled doors and enhanced lockdown capabilities. Of course, the key to remaining safe and secure is the dedication and tireless work of the OU Police Department and all those who support security policies on campus.

Factors considered in ranking the safety of colleges and universities include low crime statistics, compliance with the Clery Act, ratio of security officers on campus, blue light emergency phone stations, surveillance systems, lighting Maintenance, and mental health support services.

A special thanks to Chief Mark Gordon and his team at OUPD for making sure we are all safe.

3.) On January 8, Oakland received the 2024 Carnegie Community Engagement Classification.

The designation from the American Council on Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching cites “exceptional commitment and success in community engagement,” and validates our efforts in a range of community engagement programs, especially in Pontiac.

Community engagement activities of our faculty, students and staff are at the core of OU’s mission to be a catalyst in fostering economic opportunity, civic engagement, cultural development, and improved public health throughout the region.

A campus-wide community engagement steering committee is finalizing a strategic plan that aims to adopt the successful model deployed in the OU-Pontiac Initiative and apply it with communities throughout the region.

Our success in community engagement activities is led by Britt Rios-Ellis, executive vice president, academic affairs, and provost, and Glenn McIntosh, senior vice president student affairs and chief diversity officer.

4.) OU has received redesignation as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense (NCAE-C) by the NSA until 2029.

The designation is an endorsement that a school meets the standards of a Center of Academic Excellence (CAE) institution. Further, the status recognizes that Oakland is educating students (who attain a degree or complete a certificate) qualified to work in cybersecurity, and demonstrates an effective collaboration with industry partners to ensure U.S. Government requirements are included in the standards for a more secure cyber future.

Our appreciation to the leadership of SECS Dean Louay Chamra, Professor Huirong Fu, and Professor Darrin Hanna for elevating Oakland as a leader in the fast-growing field of cybersecurity education.

These four recent achievements underscore the dedication of a range of faculty and staff working to advance Oakland as a preeminent world-class university. I am so proud of our OU team for demonstrating the leadership and commitment to the principles of higher education that are at the heart of creating better communities and a better world.

Stay warm, and look forward to seeing you on campus,

Ora

Ora Hirsch Pescovitz, M.D., President
Oakland University