OAKLAND UNIVERSITY™

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IT plan quickly restores computer systems

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

A power outage on the main Oakland University campus early Wednesday morning affected many of the main buildings on campus, as well as computer systems for the campus community. Fortunately, an emergency plan put into action by OU's **Information Technology** department had most of the services restored by 1 p.m., and all services restored by 2 p.m.

"We have a large UPS (Uninterrupted Power System) that was down for scheduled maintenance on Wednesday morning," said Terrie Rowe, director of Information Systems. "So when the outage occurred, roughly 80 servers crashed."

The systems affected by the outage included e-mail, all business support systems, payroll, Banner, all file storage systems, access to the university Web site and online learning, and many network support and authentication systems. Rowe said that immediately upon restoration of power at 10 a.m., she and a crew of system administrators set a plan into action to restore systems in a specified, logical order.

"Over the past year we worked with consulting firms to form emergency preparedness and disaster recovery plans," Rowe said. "We had followed up on their recommendations, and had step-by-step plans in place for a 'facility-intact disaster' and 'facility-damaged disaster.' In this case it was a 'facility-intact disaster' – so we invoked a plan that called for specific systems administrators to restore systems in a specific order, using a communications plan that we were ready to follow. First we restored our telecom room, then the network structure, and the file storage systems last."

Rowe said the systems restoration went remarkably well, with no loss of data. The time goal for the restoration was between four and 12 hours. Rowe and her team had the core systems restored in three hours, and all the remaining systems operational by four hours.

"All the systems came back and there were no hardware failures," Rowe said. "This was pretty unusual after experiencing a full power failure. We had just finalized our disaster plans in May. We hadn't had a chance to fully test our plans, but after Wednesday we can verify that they work effectively."

An electrical short in the main high voltage switch panel that feeds into Dodge Hall caused the power outage, which affected nearly all the buildings on the west side of the main campus, said Rusty Postlewate, associate vice president for facilities management.

"The outage occurred at about 8 a.m. Wednesday morning," Postlewate said. "Once we determined the source of the problem we transferred the affected buildings onto the other power line. At this time the campus is operating on one power line and is pretty close to capacity, which means everyone should be careful to monitor power usage and practice conservation whenever possible by shutting off lights and equipment when not in use."

Postlewate said the campus will operate on the single power line for the next month while a new electrical distribution system is being installed. This, coupled with a new Detroit Edison substation, which is under construction on the southern end of the main campus off Lonedale Road, will considerably improve the campus' power supply, Postlewate said.

The **Information Technology** department posts information on its home page on a daily basis to inform the campus community of any technology related issues. For those who experience any residual computer or network problems, the IT Helpdesk can be contacted at (248) 370-HELP (4357). The IT department also is seeking feedback from the campus community on the Wednesday's systems restoration process. Any comments or questions can be directed to Terrie Rowe at (248) 370-4326 or **rowe@oakland.edu**.

SUMMARY
A power outage on the main Oakland University campus early Wednesday morning affected computer systems for the campus community. Fortunately, an emergency plan put into action by OU's Information Technology department quickly restored computer services.

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