

# OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

DEAN OF FRESHMEN'S OFFICE



Freshman Newsletter - #2 June, 1970

## ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

### CURRENT TRENDS AT OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

by Frederick W. Obear, Acting Provost



The educational mission of Oakland University was first expressed by participants in the Meadow Brook seminars, which were convened in 1959 to determine an appropriate role for a publicly-supported new institution created in the post-Sputnik era. Prominent national figures joined with community leaders to broadly outline the goals and purposes of this institution. Although many specific points were made, the major theme emerging from the seminars was that this institution should strive to provide the highest level liberal arts program for its students and that it should seek to develop liberally educated students, regardless of the professional field they chose to enter.

To reach this objective, the academic programs of the university are now organized within a College of Arts and Sciences and Schools of Economics and Management, Education, Engineering, and Performing Arts. Credit-granting programs leading to bachelor's and master's degrees are offered in a variety of major programs within these units. All baccalaureate degree candidates follow educational programs which are conveniently classified into three categories: general education courses, major or departmental courses, and elective courses. Generally, about one-third of a student's work is concentrated in each of these three areas.

The general education requirements of the university have evolved from a very tightly prescribed series of courses required of all students when the university first opened. There are now many options within this program, including the University Course Program of distribution requirements and the optional patterns developed within Allport College, Charter College, and New College. These inner-college programs, together with the freshman exploratories and senior colloquia, are expressions of the University's continued interest in maintaining close student-faculty interaction through small classes offered in the context of a larger and more complex university. Faculty members and students have always been encouraged to be innovative and many of the features of the current general education program are expressions of the cooperative efforts of these groups.

At the request of some students, a Blue-Ribbon Commission on Educational Reform was appointed in the winter, 1970 semester. The twelve member commission consisted of six students and six members of the faculty and staff. Many of the recommendations of this group have already been adopted by the University Senate and others will be advanced during the next academic year. Included in recent changes are the following items:

1. The development of an independent concentration, the significance of which is that students no longer are required to elect a traditional departmental major in order to receive a University degree. With the assistance of an

adviser, students will be encouraged to develop individual programs of study which will frequently cut across discipline boundaries and provide program options which previously did not exist.

2. The commission also recommended the abolition of the grades of 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 from our grading system and recommended substitution of an N grade for a 0.0. Anyone failing to successfully complete a course will simply not receive credit. It is hoped that this system will encourage students to take courses outside their major, particularly in areas that are difficult for them, without fear of receiving a penalty grade for this activity.
3. The commission also recommended that university transcripts reflect only those courses which the student presents for credit toward graduation.
4. The commission also recommended that independent study be offered for credit to students who are able to enlist a faculty member's support to offer such a course. Similarly, group independent study courses may also be planned.

Other commission proposals, including detailed recommendations to modify the distribution requirements in the university's general education program and to provide an optional S-N grading pattern, although not approved last winter, have been referred to the Academic Policy Committee for development and consideration at a later date.

It is my hope that Oakland's curriculum offerings will continue to expand and to be modified in ways designed to meet the changing needs of the members of this academic community. The university will likely grow during your years here as students and new programs will likely develop, particularly in the applied science and social science areas. The outstanding faculty which has been assembled in the college and schools currently in operation will no doubt seek new formats to improve the quality of undergraduate educational experience and to expand their programs into patterns which are meaningful for students attending this institution in the 1970's. During this period, I believe our challenge to be continuous assessment and further improvement of an already high quality undergraduate program at the same time we develop our graduate instructional capability. Oakland University will continue to seek ways to prevent developing one of these levels of instruction at the expense of the other.

THE LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES: Core of the University  
by George Matthews, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

With roots going back to the Middle Ages and Classical Antiquity, liberal arts--the 'studies which make men free'--have remained the core of undergraduate education in America. Despite the tremendous growth in importance of higher education as professional training, study, for its own sake, in the humanities, the social sciences or in the natural sciences and mathematics, is still the central instructional and scholarly concern of colleges and universities. Students and faculty seek in the Liberal Arts and Sciences the sources of intellectual freedom as well as the specialized knowledge required for services in the learned professions or in the various vocations open to educated men and women in our complex society. It is the dispassionate yet total commitment to the Liberal Arts and Sciences that gives us the free man's perspective on the world.

The College of Arts and Sciences of Oakland University offers instruction leading to the degree of Bachelor of Arts and to the degrees of Masters of Arts and Master of Science. Jointly with the School of Education it offers instruction leading to the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching.

General, liberal education is a fundamental component of all undergraduate curricula in the College of Arts and Sciences. It occupies approximately one-third of all students' degree work and is scheduled such that some time is concerned with general education outside the major in each of the students' eight semesters of study leading to the BA degree.

Students may fulfill the general education requirements through two distinctive approaches. The first is the University Course Program which is divided into freshman exploratories, prescribed distribution requirements, and the Senior Colloquia. The exploratories are small classes in which the instructors are given freedom to explore ideas and subject matter; great emphasis is placed on the development of the student's ability to think, discuss, and write intelligently and critically.

The distribution requirements for other University Courses taken through the four-year program are designed to provide all undergraduates with at least minimal experience in the fields of literature, Western history and philosophy, fine arts, social sciences, symbolic systems (natural and artificial languages, linguistics, mathematics) and natural sciences. In addition students are required to study at least one civilization other than European or North American, (i.e., Africa, China, or Latin America.)

Senior Colloquia provide students with an opportunity to study outside their major fields in either of their last two semesters. Structured as seminar-size classes, the Colloquia deal with significant cross-disciplinary issues of either academic or public policy import.

The second approach to general education is to be found in the Inner Colleges of which there are three, Charter, New and Allport. Each of these Colleges offers a special program equivalent, in whole or in part, to the University Course Program. Each College is distinctive--Charter with an open student-directed general education, New with a carefully developed curriculum featuring an off-campus semester, and Allport with an emphasis upon behavioral sciences.

Each student seeking the Bachelor of Arts degree must complete a required concentration of study in a particular discipline. The College of Arts and Sciences offers twenty-three liberal arts majors in arts, letters, mathematics, natural sciences, and social sciences.

In addition to the departmental majors listed above, a student may make arrangements to pursue a variety of interdisciplinary concentrations, that consist of a combination of a modified departmental major and a 'concentration' of courses in another field. Area Studies concentrations, for example, provide an integrated view of a civilization (Chinese, Indian, Latin American, and Slavic) through study of such things as language, history, government, social organization, and literature.

The concentrations presently offered in addition to Area Studies include the concentration in Linguistics, a systematic study of this exciting new discipline, and the concentration in Pre-medical Studies which prepares students for entrance into dental and medical schools.

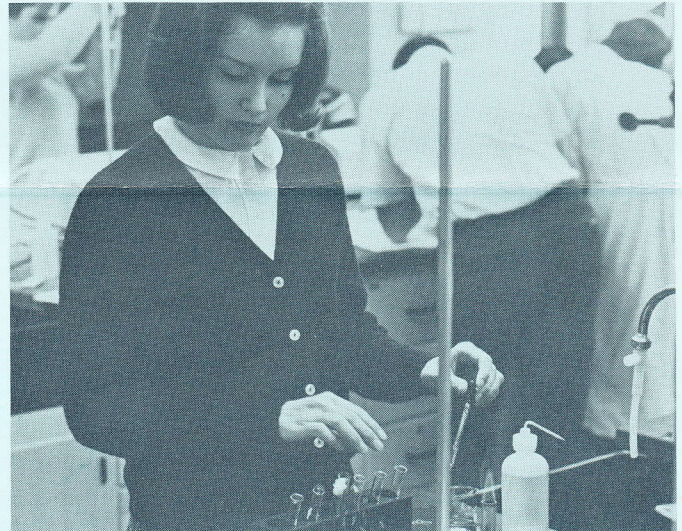
#### TEACHER EDUCATION AT OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

by Laszlo J. Hetenyi, Dean of the School of Education

The preparation of teachers at Oakland University rests on three fundamental assumptions. First, a teacher must be a broad-gauged, sensitive, mentally alert individual. For this reason all Teacher Education Programs stress in their curriculum the importance

of general education. Secondly, teachers must be well prepared in the subject area they plan to teach. All Teacher Education Programs at Oakland are heavily weighed in the direction of subject matter preparation in the student's major field. Thirdly, as a practicing professional, a teacher must know how to work with children in a variety of settings, know how to perceive accurately, and learn to deal with the problems caused by social background, community pressures, and the like. Our programs, therefore, contain a variety of experiences designed to offer the best professional preparation we can make available to beginning teachers. It should be emphasized, however, that in an undergraduate program the student can do no more than prepare himself to perform adequately as a novice in the teaching profession.

Ever since World War II there has been a persistent teacher shortage in the nation's elementary and secondary schools. In the past moderately competent individuals were utilized to fill the vast number of teaching positions needed to educate the nation's growing population. This is no longer the case. All signs indicate that in the next few years there will be more young graduates seeking entrance into the teaching profession than available teaching positions can accommodate. Only those who are genuinely interested and dedicated should think of entering the teaching profession. We anticipate that selection will be based on something more than grade point average and that personality characteristics, commitment to teaching and dedication to work with children will count as much or more than mere success in the college classroom.



Subject Matter Preparation Is  
An Important Part of Teacher Education

It is our conviction that if a student is to prepare himself adequately for his professional role, he must begin working early with children in a variety of settings. We anticipate, therefore, that as a part of a student's preparation at the university he will be expected to work as a teacher's aide, to work in social service agencies dealing with children or in camp situations. It becomes apparent to us that concentrating on classroom work in the university, excepting a few brief periods of observation and then expecting the student to move into the student teaching and professional situation almost without transition is less than ideal. During your stay at Oakland, it would be surprising if you were not exposed in an ever-increasing extent to work with children. In this way you will have a chance to discover whether you really wish to work with children the rest of your professional life, and should you decide to do so, if your present notion of age group and level on which you plan to operate is indeed the one most suited to your interests and personality.

#### SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

by Norton Seeber, Dean of the School of Economics and Management

Modern business enterprise is characterized by diversity, complexity, and rapid change. The problems faced by modern business organizations, as well as methods for handling these problems, are changing at unprecedented rates. New tools, such as the computer, have revolutionized certain business practices, and promise to have increasing impact in the future. There is increasing awareness of the social responsibilities of corporations in areas of pollution, community affairs, and social action. All of these factors lead to different requirements for success than heretofore--and make for more exciting careers in 'business' and 'public' management than ever before.

Education for management at Oakland University, taking into account these facts of contemporary America, provides students with the competence to handle the increasingly complex and changing problems facing people in managerial and administrative positions in both public and private organizations. As a new university, Oakland has established a program reflecting the most advanced thinking about management education by business leaders, government officials, and academic scholars. Our program is designed to generate growth in the individual and his behavior, and to enable him to think, adjust, and learn independently, both in the university and after graduation. The student learns to identify, analyze, and solve problems and to devise new approaches to problems faced by managers at all levels in today's business and government organizations.

Rather than train students for specific first jobs, the program at Oakland is committed to developing the decision-making and problem-solving skills essential for success. The student also gains the competence enabling him to compete successfully in the job market. Oakland has a well-deserved reputation as a center of good teaching-learning experiences. In keeping with this tradition, we believe the following concepts to be important: 1) there should be informality of student-faculty relationships; 2) the foundation of an effective education is knowledge of a small number of widely useful skills, and the ability to apply these skills to concrete problems; 3) students learn by doing; 4) the acquisition, handling, and use of information are essential to effective management. In order to understand the uses of information, students must have access to well-developed library and computer facilities.

Oakland's program in management is relatively new and embodies up-to-the-minute approaches to management education. Even so, the School of Economics and Management is constantly updating its programs as educational needs change. Projected future program developments include an optional concentration on problems of organizations in the public sector, more work in the management sciences, and a master's program which will embody the latest approaches to graduate education for management.

#### ENGINEERING AT OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

by John E. Gibson, Dean of the School of Engineering

The undergraduate program of Oakland University's School of Engineering is built on a broad intellectual base and is designed to provide academic preparation for a wide range of engineering careers in industry and at the same time to prepare those students who are interested in pursuing graduate study. It is fully accredited by the North Central Association of College and Secondary Schools and by the Engineer's Council for Professional Development, which is the official accrediting agency for the engineering profession in the United States and Canada.

Traditionally, engineering schools were organized around specialities such as electrical, mechanical, and chemical engineering. In the past these departments had a well-defined job to do. However, today engineering is concerned with many problems that do not fit into a single category. Today's engineering student will be designing systems and devices and solving problems unthought-of now. The common thread that runs through engineering is design, or the organization of the man-made world to serve the needs of society. The pattern of engineering design is constantly changing. Then, too, engineers must cooperate with their fellow citizens trained in other disciplines in arriving at solutions to many of the problems that face society. Therefore, today's engineering student must be prepared to meet the challenges of the future rather than rehashing the problems of the past. To meet these objectives the undergraduate engineering student takes work in the fundamentals of the physical and life sciences and mathematics as well as courses in a range of the liberal arts area. Starting in the first semester of his freshman year he adds a series of nine required basic core engineering courses ranging from thermodynamics and electronics to the mechanics of solids. With this academic base, senior engineering students are

permitted to elect course sequences in fields of their choice. Engineering design projects are available for further study in systems, electronics, mechanics, and transport phenomena. Other courses involving problems in computer science, environmental and materials engineering are offered in the program. Arrangements can be made by the student to study in such areas as advanced nuclear physics, mathematical analysis, or business administration if he is interested in these fields. Through the laboratory sections of all these programs the senior engineering student is expected to gain considerable understanding of how to approach practical projects of some magnitude. Since the computer is the tool of modern technology, Oakland's engineering students have access to the computer each day in every course they take.

The engineering curriculum is constantly being reviewed and up-dated as new developments in technology and applied science indicate the need for new or revised course offerings. To better insure that these courses meet their educational needs, engineering students at Oakland have a part in the investigation and planning of new curricula offerings.

#### PERFORMING ARTS

by W. W. Kent, Dean of the School of Performing Arts

The performing arts enclave of Oakland University combines professional training programs with artistic enterprises in drama and in music. The training programs are joined administratively in the School of Performing Arts, of which the Academy of Dramatic Art and the Summer Master Classes in Music are divisions. The correlative enterprise of the Academy is the Meadow Brook Theatre; the John Fernald Company is the resident professional troupe. The Summer Master Classes in Music are linked with the Meadow Brook Music Festival through artists-in-residence.

In the Academy students who seek to make careers in the professional theatre receive two years of intensive training in acting technique. The culmination of that training is the opportunity of performing in productions of the Studio Company. Here senior students aspire to round out their professional capabilities under the leadership of John Fernald, Director of the Academy and Artistic Director of the Theatre, and the expertise of the resident professional actors and of other members of the faculty.

In music the continuance during the summer of 1970 of the distinctive Master Classes offers to talented senior pianists and violinists rare opportunities for individualized study with two great concert artists, Vladimir Ashkenazy and Itzhak Perlman. At the Meadow Brook Music Festival, which runs on campus concurrently with the Master Classes, students may hear their teachers and other internationally celebrated artists in solo performance. This ongoing program of distinctive classes in the milieu of a great symphonic festival constitutes an event of signal importance for emergent concert artists wishing to concentrate upon interpretation of the repertoire.

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