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Baker president gained leadership skills at OU

By **Rebecca Wyatt Thomas**, OU Web Writer

Peter Karsten's career started out in the business world. With a bachelor's degree in accounting and a master's in business administration, Karsten first worked at a large accounting firm and earned the certified public accountant title. While working on his MBA, Karsten had the opportunity to serve as a teaching assistant for an introductory accounting course. The experience caused him to examine his career path and move toward teaching. Armed with a master's in education leadership from Oakland University, Karsten will combine his love for education and his business background in his new role as president of Baker College in Owosso.

"Although I still thoroughly enjoy teaching, higher education administration allows me to seek out new opportunities, overcome challenges and help people achieve their potential on a much larger scale," Karsten said.

After a start in corporate accounting, Karsten earned his master's in education with a secondary certification in economics and social studies from the University of Michigan. He spent a little less than a year teaching high school social studies before moving to his first job at Baker College in Clinton Township where he served as a career services and financial aid officer.

Karsten transferred to the Auburn Hills campus and was named the first full-time accounting instructor. After a few years as an instructor, Karsten was promoted to Dean of General Education and Accounting. In 1998, he was selected as Chief Academic Officer and Vice President of Academics for the Auburn Hills location. In September 2008, Karsten will take over the role of Owosso campus president.

"For many years, I thought I would be content being a college instructor. However, as the Auburn Hills campus has grown, I have been fortunate to be in the right place as new opportunities have arisen," Karsten said.

To help attain higher education administrative positions, Karsten turned to Oakland University, where he found a number of invaluable resources in his education, faculty and peers.

"I was considering several different institutions and degree programs at the time," Karsten said. "Oakland was not only close to my home and work, but it also offered a program that would accommodate my work schedule."

Karsten said he met with Bill Keane, chair of the Educational Leadership program and associate professor, about the program. He said it was that meeting that solidified his decision to attend OU. He said the program is fortunate to have leaders with real experience that they can share with their students.

Karsten said Sandra Packard, professor of education, provided a unique view of higher education administration.

"(Packard's) experience in higher education administration, including the presidency of Oakland University, is invaluable to the quality of the program," Karsten said. Through her class ED912 Administering College/University, the students visited various colleges and universities to talk to educational leaders firsthand.

"This is an excellent opportunity to listen and discuss issues and strategies with a current postsecondary administrator," Karsten said.

Karsten said the required mentorship component was also invaluable as it allowed him to apply the theory in practical environments.

In addition to the quality education and faculty, Karsten said he also gained a lot from his peers.

"The program's cohort format allows students to build collegial and supportive relationships. I have invited two former classmates, K-12 administrators, to sit on advisory boards at Baker College of Auburn Hills," Karsten said.

In September, Karsten will take over as president of Baker College in Owosso. He plans to stay focused on Baker's mission. The Owosso campus is the fifth largest Baker campus with more than 2,700 students enrolled in fall 2007.

"I will be taking over a very successful campus in the Baker College family," Karsten said. "I plan to build upon my predecessor's accomplishments and seek out new strategic opportunities with a continued focus on improving the education experience of Owosso students."

SUMMARY

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