

Vision 2010 & Communication

November 29, 2001

Dear Colleagues,

To achieve our goal of becoming a university of distinction by 2010, we must collectively focus on creating an environment of quality, and by many measures we are on our way. A few external acknowledgements showcase our progress:

... The School of Education and Human Services gained full accreditation (five years) from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, and the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy granted our physical therapy program in the School of Health Sciences a full, eight-year accreditation.

... DaimlerChrysler named the SECS's Product Development and Manufacturing Center a "Center of Excellence" in recognition of its systems engineering training and consulting work. The PDMC is supported by more than \$2 million in government and industry grants.

... Beta Alpha Psi, a professional/honorary organization for students in Accounting, Finance and Information Technology, recently recognized OU's chapter as "superior," the highest level of recognition. Of the 221 chapters, the OU chapter was selected as one of the three best in the nation.

... The Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES) has awarded Fulbright Scholarships to two College of Arts and Sciences faculty members - John F. Kelly, Political Science, and Barbara Ann Nelson, Communication, Rhetoric and Journalism. Details of their assignments are available in the archived stories section of the News and Info page on our website (www.oakland.edu).

These significant accomplishments are but a sampling of the recognition our dedicated faculty and quality educational programs receive. But how can we as a community continue to move the institution forward to achieve our ambitious 2010 agenda during a period when state budget appropriations are tight?

First, we need to keep our commitment to the student-learning mission at the forefront of our daily work. And, we need to focus our resources on the strategies and initiatives that will both define and tactically support our 2010 vision. Let me give you a few examples of how we have done this successfully in recent months.

Provost Moudgil earmarked \$35,000 for 20-40 student research awards each year. Working with the deans, the goal is to generate excitement and opportunities for research among our undergraduates and to further develop one of Oakland's historic strengths - our faculty's desire and ability to teach through "hands-on" experience.

Since the university's greatest investment is in faculty and staff, we know we can have a great impact on our effectiveness by hiring faculty who share our vision for becoming a university of distinction. Both Dr. Moudgil and I are encouraged by the deans', department chairs' and search committees' focus on hiring new faculty who can support and bring creative new approaches to our 2010 profile (a copy of the profile can be found on the About OU page on the university's website).

Since 1994, our full-time faculty have increased in number from 376 to 441. Just this fall alone, we added 20 net full-time positions. A glance at our new faculty biography section on our website (reached through the Faculty and Staff News site), will give you an idea of the quality of their credentials and experience. You will note that, including replacement faculty, we have 37 new men and women with us. Adding these new faculty (and one new dean, Pieter Frick of SECS) gave us the opportunity to enrich an already strong core. Furthermore, there are 46 active faculty searches approved for Fall 2002.

We can also bring shape and focus to our 2010 profile by strategically adding new academic programs. Bringing high-quality degree programs to our mix requires a deep understanding of fields of endeavor, creative vision and hard work. We owe a lot of thanks to colleagues in Academic Affairs for their diligence in this regard. All of the new academic programs are initiated by the OU faculty. Over the next several semesters, we are pleased to begin offering the:

- ℞ Master of Arts in Liberal Studies
- ℞ Master of Science in Embedded Systems
- ℞ Master of Science in Information Systems Engineering
- ℞ Master of Science in Information Technology Management
- ℞ Doctor of Physical Therapy
- ℞ Doctor of Science in Physical Therapy

Partnerships with business and industry give us flexibility and allow us to bring about quality improvements in relatively short order. While faculty and administrators have dozens of relationships in place and in the pipeline, even one collaboration can have a significant impact on our students and faculty. For example, DaimlerChrysler has chosen Oakland as one of its 15 key institutions for educational and research partnerships. This translates into an initial award of \$160,000, with \$120,000 of that going to scholarships and special DCX initiatives. The remaining \$40,000 is unrestricted for OU's use.

In another recent case, Oakland University and Providence Hospital, a member of St. John Health System, signed a collaborative agreement that addresses recruitment of student nurses, educational opportunities for OU students, support for student retention through scholarships, mentorships and clinical research opportunities for OU faculty and the Providence staff. Such partnerships represent powerful tools to bring about change.

Our focus on 2010 objectives is not limited to strictly academic areas of the university. We have made, and will continue to make, significant administrative improvements to benefit our students. Earlier this month, our new one-stop-shop approach to student

business services opened in North Foundation Hall. The new service is the result of months of teamwork between different administrative departments - primarily in Academic Affairs and Finance and Administration - and is already gaining positive feedback from our student customers.

Also beginning this month, after concerted effort by employees in IT, Finance and Administration, and Academic Affairs, our students are now able to make tuition payments on the Web. Since the Registrar, Steve Shablin, reported recently that 55 percent of students registering for the winter semester had done so online, it won't take students long to begin using the e-payment option. Obviously, our staff saw a student need, and met it with a serious, and consistent, approach to quality service.

Two other key areas support strategic movement toward our 2010 profile - state appropriations and private giving to include exciting news about named professorships. I will share more with you about progress on those fronts in future messages. I do, however, want to remind you that our All-University Fund Drive is under way, and runs through December 20. I encourage all employees to give even a few dollars to the program of their choice, or to the undesignated category (used in areas of greatest need).

When we speak with potential donors outside the university about the importance of our mission, it truly makes an impression when we can say that our employees support our cause with their own hard-earned dollars. And, remember, I am providing a match to all new employee gifts at 50 percent - so a \$100 gift to a program of your choice actually means that \$150 is contributed. You should have received a fund-drive packet in campus mail. Contact Julie Vulaj, our new director of annual giving, at 370-3700 if you have any questions.

Challenging economic times make strategic allocation of resources even more critical. In the next few weeks, I will be sharing with you the budget development process that the university's leadership is crafting. Faculty and staff will have the opportunity for input at various stages, so keep thinking about creative and effective ways we can move Oakland into a leadership role as a university of distinction by 2010.

Gary Russi