

Tuesday, April 21, 2009

## Special Tuition Assistance Fund to continue into winter 2010

By **Dave Groves**, staff writer

As Michigan's economic climate will likely continue to strain students' ability to finance their college education, Oakland University will extend the availability of its Special Tuition Assistance Fund to the fall 2009 and winter 2010 semesters.

Established late last year, the fund is designed to support students who face the possibility of discontinuing their studies because of a significant deterioration in their financial circumstances.

The university has allocated \$250,000 to keep struggling students enrolled in classes. In order to qualify, students must first have utilized all federal financial aid resources available to them.

"By providing this assistance, we're encouraging students to stay in school and keep working toward their degree," said Financial Aid Director Cindy Hermesen. "Students shouldn't need to interrupt their studies because of the difficult economy."

OU provided \$79,000 in Special Tuition Assistance Fund awards to a total of 32 students during the 2008-09 school year. Hermesen expects these numbers to grow in the coming year because OU is going to great lengths to make students aware of the program, as well as to seek assistance through federal aid programs.

Already, the university has seen a 25 percent increase in the number of students seeking federal financial aid – a jump Hermesen attributes to students who've inquired about help through the Special Tuition Assistance Fund.

"This has allowed students to really take advantage of the federal aid package," she explained. "Many have found that the federal aid can provide them with plenty of funding to cover tuition."

Meanwhile, Oakland University has taken other dramatic measures to assist students with tight personal finances.

The 100% Tuition Grant program, for example, eliminates the prospect of student loans for need-based freshmen entering OU this fall. Michigan residents who apply for financial aid and are found to have need according to U.S. government standards will receive a grant covering tuition in excess of other awards and an expected family contribution.

Oakland also has increased scholarship awards for incoming freshmen by as much as \$1,000, created two new scholarships and maintained its commitment to provide five merit-based scholarships for new students.

Students and families also will find reassurance in the fact that OU is the only public university in the state that charges no fees of any kind – not even an application fee.

Students whose declining financial circumstances have put their ability to pay for college in jeopardy are encouraged to visit the Financial Aid Office to see if they qualify for help through the Special Tuition Assistance Fund. All students planning to apply for financial aid are strongly encouraged to do so as soon as possible. An online application is available at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

For more information, students are encouraged to call the Office of Financial Aid at (248) 370-2550, e-mail to [finaid@oakland.edu](mailto:finaid@oakland.edu) or visit [www.oakland.edu/financialaid](http://www.oakland.edu/financialaid).

### SUMMARY

Oakland University will extend its Special Tuition Assistance Fund to the fall 2009 and winter 2010 semesters to support students with a significant change in their financial circumstances.

Created by Katherine Land - Deleted ([land@oakland.edu](mailto:land@oakland.edu)) on Tuesday, April 21, 2009  
Modified by Katherine Land - Deleted ([land@oakland.edu](mailto:land@oakland.edu)) on Tuesday, April 21, 2009  
Article Start Date: Tuesday, April 21, 2009