

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Board approves new degree programs

By Laura Angus, media relations assistant

Oakland University's Board of Trustees approved three new degree programs that will be available beginning in the fall 2008 semester during its May 7 meeting.

Two of the new programs are in the College of Arts and Sciences, which will offer a bachelor of arts and minor in writing and rhetoric, and also a bachelor of arts in Japanese. The third is a Ph.D. in electrical and computer engineering in the School of Engineering and Computer Science.

"The new programs developed by faculty and approved by the Board of Trustees reflect sustained growth of Oakland University as a dynamic institution offering relevant and in-demand education and courses," said Virinder Moudgil, OU's vice president for academic affairs and provost. "The approval of new programs is consistent with our institutional priorities to provide global experience to our students, arm them with degrees that help them intellectually and in the marketplace, while simultaneously strengthening their communication skills."

The new writing and rhetoric program will produce students who are able to write clearly and effectively in many different styles and fill the demands of the changing workplace, said Marshall Kitchens, associate professor of rhetoric. There are three tracks in the program: writing for professionals, writing for new media and writing as a discipline.

The Japanese program is an expansion of the existing Japanese minor. It will correspond to other modern language majors, and allow students to study the Japanese culture, language and literature, said Chris Clason, professor of German and chair of Modern Languages and Literatures. Students can also study business focused Japanese, including translation.

The Ph.D. program in electrical and computer engineering used to be part of an umbrella degree, and will allow students to study this field with more focus. This new program will increase the visibility of Oakland University and will give graduates a more competitive edge in the workforce and research, said Manohar Das, professor and acting chair of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

In other board business, non-mandatory student fees have been restructured. The fees, which include orientation fees, graduation fees and transcript fees, will be rolled into tuition, which will allow the more than 70 percent of Oakland University's students who get financial aid to qualify for more financial aid.

Vice President for Student Affairs Mary Beth Snyder said she expects this will increase the number of applications received to the university, which will allow for a more diverse student population.

SUMMARY

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Created by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Thursday, May 8, 2008
Modified by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Thursday, May 8, 2008
Article Start Date: Thursday, May 8, 2008