

Wednesday, December 17, 2008

Message from the Dean

Even though we have finished celebrating Oakland University's golden anniversary, thoughts about our unique origins and how far we have come since the early days of Michigan State University at Oakland linger in the afterglow. For example, as we continue to review our curriculum in the College and position ourselves to endure tough economic realities, it's quite productive to be guided by the wisely crafted academic program our first students experienced. (Do you remember the famous course entitled "Remedial Wisdom"? Or the "exploratories"?)

With the introduction of a new general education program based on student learning outcomes, we design the curriculum and teach courses in ways that recall our origins. The operative question is now, as it was then, "How can we prepare students for success?" I will report new developments in the curriculum in future newsletters.

In the afterglow of the anniversary, I have also been thinking about the special qualities of the founding faculty, some of whom continue to be active members of our emeriti faculty group. In each of the past three years, we have added between 18 and 23 new faculty members. These new colleagues are mostly replacements, but we have also had some new positions to cover areas of growth. I have come to think of each cohort of new faculty as replacements for the founders.

I have tried to get better acquainted with these new faculty members by inviting them in small groups to leisurely lunches at Meadow Brook Hall. Having these lunches has been the highlight of my service as dean of the college. Even in the short time we spend talking about scholarship, students and service, I have found them to be exemplary in every way.

Exceptionally well grounded in their disciplines, they are productive scholars who chose Oakland University partly because they recognized in our programs and personnel a reflection of the kind of academic experience our founders launched for the first students.

Apart from their excellence in scholarship, however, I have found in our new faculty a well-balanced attitude toward living the life of a university professor. They are passionate about student learning, and they are eager to contribute to the life of the college and the university as a whole. I should not be surprised. Still, I wish more people outside the university knew what I know about our faculty. Please spread the word when you get a chance.

SUMMARY

Even though we have finished celebrating Oakland University's golden anniversary, thoughts about our unique origins and how far we have come since the early days of Michigan State University at Oakland linger in the afterglow. For example, as we continue to review our curriculum in the College and position ourselves to endure tough economic realities, it's quite productive to be guided by the wisely crafted academic program our first students experienced. (Do you remember the famous course entitled "Remedial Wisdom"? Or the "exploratories"?)

Created by Sandra Dykstra (dykstra@oakland.edu) on Wednesday, December 17, 2008
Modified by Sandra Dykstra (dykstra@oakland.edu) on Tuesday, December 23, 2008
Article Start Date: Wednesday, December 17, 2008