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## Departing OUSC president reflects on term

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

Departing Student Body President Derek Dickow presented an impressive list of **Oakland University Student Congress** accomplishments in the annual **State of the Student Body Address**, which he delivered at the last official OUSC meeting of the 2001-2002 administration on April 15 in the Oakland Center Fireside Lounge.

Reflecting afterwards on his address, Dickow noted that his fellow student leaders helped him with the challenges he faced as the new student body president last fall.

"When I became elected, I asked myself how I would best represent the nearly 16,000 students we have at Oakland," Dickow said. "The first thing I and (student body vice president) Vesna Saveski did was hire an executive staff to surround ourselves with experienced student leaders. Without their help, we couldn't have accomplished what we did this year."

"Our team has been responsible for our success. I've been fortunate to learn and grow with a lot of the students on campus and on our board. We accomplished a lot and learned a lot from each other. I'm happy and satisfied with the level of accomplishment and dedication that we have had as student leaders of Oakland University."

Among the accomplishments Dickow cited were:

- A record \$230,000 dispersed by the Student Activities Funding Board to help finance student organizations.
- An increase of \$200,000 to Kresge Library's base budget, which occurred as a result of a meeting with OU President Gary Russi and library officials.
- A successful voter registration drive for general elections.
- A successful initiative to designate majors on the diplomas of OU graduates.
- OUSC's support of initiatives to build a campus parking structure and expand the Oakland Center.
- An increase in student attendance and involvement at campus sporting events.

What Dickow said he least expected as a student leader were the challenges the campus faced after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

"We have students from over 50 nations at OU, and we wondered how September 11 would affect our campus," Dickow said. "Our goal as student leaders was to stress that we not ostracize our classmates or neighbors because of their religion or culture. Holding events such as the **memorial service** and '**Day of Understanding**' helped because they were good ways for students and the OU community to become unified."

Where OUSC made the most progress, Dickow said, was in the implementation of its online voting system. Altogether, 1,250 students voted in the election, which is 300 more votes than last year's total of 921, and more than double the 2000 results when 543 students voted.

"Online voting was revolutionary for us," Dickow said. "As students adapt to the system and with more promotion, I think our biggest voter turnouts have yet to come. I think next year there will be a big jump in the number of voters. People will recall this year's election (in which Brian Tomina won the election for student body president by just one vote) and realize that they should get out there and vote because just one vote can make a big difference."

Dickow said his only regret is that there hasn't been enough time to complete all the tasks he'd like to accomplish.

"Any time you're in a student leader position, you're confined to a calendar. Realistically, you could take no classes at all and still be unable to finish all the things you'd like to do," Dickow said. "The next leaders of the student administration will be picking up a very powerful machine and will have plenty of opportunities to serve the students. They should keep their fingers on the pulse of the campus and know what the students are saying, thinking and feeling. As long as they work with their advisers and stay committed, they'll do a good job."

Dickow will graduate with a BA in political science and philosophy on May 4. See the **State of the Student Body Address** for

Dickow's complete speech and the **OUSC** Web page for more information on student government at Oakland University.

**SUMMARY**

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