



Monday, October 4, 2004

## Managers briefed on budget, enrollment, capital campaign

Managers from across campus gathered Sept. 29 to hear OU President Gary Russi share the latest on the university's state appropriations, enrollment picture, research support and the capital campaign.

At the time of the meeting, the official budget for higher education was waiting to be signed by the governor. Within that budget, Oakland University has agreed to the state's tuition-restraint proposal under which the state promises to restore 3 percent of the 5 percent cut last December.

Russi reviewed a series of charts illustrating the university's enrollment, which is currently at 16,902, an increase of 326 students from fall 2003. The College of Arts and Sciences and School of Education and Human Services have shown steady increases in enrollment since fall 1995. The School of Nursing and School of Health Sciences each have reversed a downward trend, showing enrollment increases over the past few years, while the School of Business Administration has a lower headcount this year than last year after showing a steady increase since 1995. The School of Engineering and Computer Science has declined in enrollment over the past two years.

"One year does not constitute a trend, but we will closely watch enrollment in the School of Business," Russi said. "And, we will do what we can to reverse the two-year decline in the School of Engineering and Computer Science."

OU's new partnership with Macomb Community College (MCC), which allows students to seamlessly transfer to OU, is increasing overall university enrollment while bringing a four-year institution to growing Macomb County.

"We are trying to have a greater presence in Macomb County," Russi said. "Nearly 30 percent of our students come from Macomb County, and it is the largest county in the country with no university."

This fall, there are close to 800 students enrolled in the OU programs at Macomb.

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Virinder Moudgil reported on a new initiative that supports faculty research and allocates a larger portion of indirect costs to support research. And, soon the university will launch a national search to hire a vice provost for research. Ron Olson, retired dean of the School of Health Sciences, is filling that position in the interim.

In wrapping up the presentation portion of the meeting, Russi briefly highlighted additional areas of importance that will continue to help OU advance in its mission to deliver a distinctive and affordable education to students:

- talented faculty and staff members;
- strategic alliances and partnerships;
- ongoing cost containment efforts;
- OU's unique location.

Managers received the latest version of the case statement for the capital campaign, which is in the silent phase. So far, about \$60 million has been raised, Russi said. The public phase of the campaign will kick off on Founders' Day, April 22, 2005, when the goal of the campaign will be announced as well as the logo and theme.

"OU has a very bright future and we have a great history of success," Russi said. "We are fighters. We have seen success and we will see more."

For more information on what was discussed at the managers' meeting, see the complete [PowerPoint presentation](#) that Russi presented.

Following the presentation, managers had a chance to ask questions, including:

**Q:** What is the latest on the new general education program?

**Moudgil:** This is one of the most important initiatives we have as a university. We now have a plan, designated money and resources for a new general ed program. Right now, faculty are getting together to plan the rollout.

A workshop is planned for Oct. 1 for faculty who are putting course proposals together for general ed.

**Q:** What are the strategies to deal with infrastructure issues in the classroom?

**Moudgil:** There is \$400,000 designated for classroom improvement. We went from \$50,000 to \$400,000 to work on improvements in our classrooms. We are now identifying which classrooms need immediate attention and which can wait so we can prioritize. We want faculty to go in the classroom and feel comfortable and students to feel welcome.

**Q:** What is happening with the Employee Suggestion Program?

**Director of Auxiliary Services Peggy Cooke:** We have received about 100 proposals from about 50 employees so far. Many are quite good. All require review by departments and a few are close to being implemented. We take all suggestions seriously and spend a lot of time evaluating them. We appreciate all the suggestions coming in and encourage each of you to give us your suggestions and encourage your staff members to do the same.

**Q:** How does the All University Fund Drive relate to the capital campaign?

**Vice President for University Relations Sue Goepf:** We are conducting a comprehensive capital campaign, which means we are counting every gift and pledge, including those from the AUF. Employee giving is very important to the success of the capital campaign because many donors – foundations, corporations and even individuals – consider the level of employee support an organization receives when determining the level of their gift.

**Q:** How can an endowment lose value?

**Russi:** Endowment performance is based on the stock and bond market – if the stock/bond market does not do well, there can be a dramatic shift in the value of an endowment. And, if there isn't a lot of new money coming in, that can further impact the overall value. Our endowment is protected by policy. Our board policy states that we can spend no more than 4.5 percent of our endowed principal and that is consistent with other universities.

**Q:** What is the status of the baseball/soccer stadium?

**Russi:** Negotiations continue. The investors are still working to put a package together to fund the project, which calls for private investors to pay for the building while the university provides the land. Once the money is in place, we will begin considering developing it.

It would be a 4,000-seat, lighted stadium that would be the only lighted soccer facility in the state. It would showcase OU's premier men's and women's soccer teams while also benefiting our baseball program.

**Q:** What are the non-traditional methods being examined to deliver education to both non-traditional students and other students?

**Moudgil:** First, we have the OU at Macomb program that many colleagues have worked on to deliver education to students in Macomb County. Second, we also are working with Oakland Community College (OCC) to articulate a similar agreement where students from OCC can seamlessly transfer to OU. Third, we also are looking at partnering with another university to offer a pharmacy program.

**Q:** What is the status of any capital projects?

**Russi:** The key capital projects at this point are:

- The performing arts facility, which would create a venue that would be known as the cultural center for Oakland County. This has Board of Trustees (BOT) support to be funded through the capital campaign.
- We also are looking at an engineering design facility, which also is supported by the Board of Trustees. But in this case, the route will be through state funding. We still need to submit our plans to the state, and I don't anticipate a lot of movement this year on that.
- We also are looking at a career center/advising center for first-year students, which would be part of an

expansion of North Foundation Hall. The design is ready and this is something that likely would be supported by the capital campaign.

- We also are looking at an expansion of Elliott Hall because they are rapidly saturating that building and need specialized research and instruction facilities. This is part of the capital campaign.

**Q:** Will there be a tuition increase during the academic year?

**Russi:** There is no plan to raise tuition for the winter term. We would need to reevaluate that if the state comes back and puts in place another cut.

**Q:** Where can people get the new OU pins?

**Russi:** New employees will receive them at orientation. They also are available at the OU Bookstore.

#### **SUMMARY**

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