

STRATEGIC PLAN
OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

TASK FORCE REPORT

OCTOBER 1, 1993

OPENING HEARING

OCTOBER 26, 1993

12:00-2:00PM
KRESGE LIBRARY - ROOM 100

MEMBERS

Ms. Esther Coleman
Dr. Brian Connery, College of Arts and Sciences
Dr. Jerrold Gross, College of Arts and Sciences
Ms. Lynn Hockenberger, Academic Skills Center
Mr. Greg Kampe, Athletics
Dr. David Lau, College of Arts and Sciences
Dr. Sean Moran, College of Arts and Sciences
Dr. Linda Hildebrand, Kresge Library
Ms. Mary Skalsky, Academic Services and General Studies
Mr. Dennis Washington
Dr. John Urice, College of Arts and Sciences
Dr. Joyce Eckart, School of Education and Human Services
Dr. Carl Vann, School of Health Sciences
Dr. Lawrence Lilliston, College of Arts and Sciences
Dr. Hoda Abel-Aty-Zohdy, School of Engineering and Computer Science
Mr. Stephen Sharf, SICA Corporation
Ms. Kristine Thompson, School of Health Sciences
Mr. Phil Williams
Dr. Bonnie Abiko, College of Arts and Sciences

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION TASK FORCE

I. Introduction

Task Force Charge:

"...TO PLAN FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION, INCLUDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE STUDENT RETENTION AND DIVERSITY."

Proposed Vision Statement:

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY WILL BE RECOGNIZED AS AN INSTITUTION OF EXCELLENCE, RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF ITS CONSTITUENCIES, AND PREEMINENT IN SELECTED AREAS OF TEACHING, LEARNING, RESEARCH AND SERVICE.

Interpretation of the Vision Statement as it Pertains to the Undergraduate Education Task Force

"...responsive to the needs of its constituencies and preeminent in selected areas of teaching, learning..."

The primary constituencies we identified were undergraduate students and the faculty who engage them in instruction. Specifically, we focused on advancing the academic undergraduate learning experience of our students. Our considerations were directed towards a vision of Oakland University as a model for undergraduate instruction in the state of Michigan.

Process

In fulfilling the undergraduate education task force we held biweekly meetings after the March retreat through the end of June. We resumed with weekly meetings in mid-August through the end of September. Guests were invited to committee meetings and minutes were put on reserve in the Kresge Library. We concentrated our efforts on four areas of concern: diversity, retention, the classroom teaching/learning dynamic, and attracting and retaining quality full-time faculty. Task force members were asked to submit their top five recommendations in order to create consensus on the committee's "most important" positions. These positions were discussed and developed in later committee meetings into the recommendations and action plan presented in this report.

ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS

STRENGTHS

- Many exemplary scholar-teachers among faculty
- Senior full-time faculty teaching introductory and general education courses
- Maintenance of relatively small class size
- Student support programs, including the Academic Skills Center, Advising, and the Enhanced Studies Program
- STARS and WRITE support group for SEHS junior faculty
- Senate Committee on Teaching, Teaching Excellence Award
- Office of Minority Equity
- Office of Equal Opportunity
- Cultural diversity general education requirement
- Women's Studies Program
- International Studies Program and general education requirement
- College Days Program
- SEHS 7:00AM Scholars Program at Pontiac Central High School
- Enhanced Studies Program
- Student Organizations: BSA, RAICES, Japan Club, China Club, La Reunion Spanish Club, Jewish student Organization/Hillel, UMOJA, Race Relations Club
- Strong commitment to the value of diversity among many administrators, faculty, staff, and students

WEAKNESSES

- Inefficient and ineffective student records system
 - Lack of systematic teaching enhancement
 - Faculty attrition; decreasing faculty/student ratio
 - Economically driven hiring of non-tenure track faculty
 - Lack of analysis of the strategic use of part-time faculty
 - Departments without faculty specialists to cover key disciplinary areas
 - Underrepresentation of people of color among faculty
 - Underrepresentation of women among faculty
 - Low retention rates of students of color (relative to retention rates for white students)
 - Underrepresentation of women and students of color in selective academic programs (e.g., Engineering and Computer Sciences, School of Business Administration)
 - Some administrators, faculty, staff, and students insensitive to issues of race, gender, ethnicity, and class
- Many faculty untrained in their disciplines' engagements with issues of diversity

OPPORTUNITIES

- Diverse local population
- Locally based international businesses

THREATS

- University economic pressures resulting in larger class sizes
- Increased relative attention to research in relation to teaching in hiring, promotion, tenure, and merit decisions
- Shifting focus towards graduate education resulting in the use of graduate assistants, larger undergraduate class sizes, and the inherent status implications for faculty involvement in undergraduate and graduate programs
- Apathy or lack of commitment to diversity among (some) administrators, faculty, staff, and students
- High commitment to diversity by other local schools (e.g., Wayne State University, Oakland Community College, Wayne County Community College, University of Michigan , and Michigan State University)

II. Recommendations

1. Support and strengthen excellence in teaching at Oakland University.
 - A. Establish a Center for Learning and Teaching to facilitate on-going instructional development, staffed with professionals knowledgeable in pedagogy, contemporary educational technology and in faculty skills assessment and development.
 - B. Increase the commitment to quality undergraduate teaching while maintaining excellence in scholarship.
2. Expand and assess student support systems and implement an on-going assessment of the student experience at Oakland University.
3. Aggressively recruit, support and retain minority students, faculty and staff.
4. Create and maintain a comprehensive effective academic management information system.

III. Action Plan

1. Support and strengthen excellence in teaching at Oakland University.

Strategy

- A. Establish a Center for Learning and Teaching to facilitate on-going instructional development, staffed with professionals knowledgeable in pedagogy, contemporary educational technology and in faculty skills assessment and development. The function might be to:
 1. Provide resources for teachers including learning activities, innovative methods for teaching and learning; methods of adapting teaching technique to accommodate different learning styles and assistance with new technologies.
 2. Promote collaboration and interdisciplinarity.
 3. Promote and assist with orienting and mentoring new faculty.
 4. Help teachers and departments interpret and respond to student evaluations and assist departments in revising criteria for promotion and tenure relative to teaching.
 5. Provide leadership in developing instructional evaluations.
 6. Establish a program for utilizing Master Teachers.
 7. Help teachers become more aware of the impact of ethnicity, gender and class in the classroom through programs, workshops and assist them in incorporating diversity and multicultural issues in their classes.
 8. Provide seminars, mandatory training of new faculty (full and part-time); videotaping of classes on a wide spread basis for improving teaching.
 9. Provide an ombudsman to aid in the resolution of student problems with instruction.
 10. Promote research in pedagogy and curriculum development.

- B. Increase the commitment to quality undergraduate teaching while maintaining excellence in scholarship.
 - 1. Recognize teaching excellence in the reward structure including tenure and promotion and the salary merit system.
 - 2. Include in the reward system recognition for curriculum development, writing and updating of textbooks, and innovative teaching techniques.
 - 3. Increase the emphasis on teaching when recruiting new faculty.
 - 4. Recruit and retain adequate numbers of tenure track faculty.
 - 5. Reduce class size preferably without increasing faculty workload.
 - 6. Encourage departments to provide mentoring support for non-tenured faculty.
 - 7. Require new graduate program proposals to include the implications and impact on undergraduate programs.
- 2. Expand and assess student support systems and implement an on-going assessment of the current student experience at Oakland University.

Strategy

- A. Conduct a survey of why Oakland University students, especially freshmen, choose Oakland University and make the results available.
- B. Increase students' access to academic advising and mentoring and encourage stronger faculty participation in it by recognizing and rewarding advising and mentoring activities.
- C. Expand opportunities for high achieving students through such means as scholarships and grants, Honors College, departmental honors, honor societies (explore affiliation with national honor societies such as Phi Beta Kappa), and student research opportunities.
- D. Increase academic support systems, (e.g., Academic Skills Center, Supplemental Instruction Program, Study Skills Seminars, tutoring).

- E. change the existing voluntary Probation Outreach Program to a mandatory program.
 - F. Continue and expand the Enhanced Studies Program and expand the number of majors participating in the program.
 - G. Conduct a survey to find out why students, especially freshmen, who leave Oakland University do not return and make the results available.
3. Aggressively recruit, support and retain minority students, faculty and staff.

Strategy

- A. Increase contact of faculty with potential student populations through visits and contacts with high schools.
- B. Identify appropriate inner city feeder schools throughout the state as a means for recruiting minority students with scholarships and support from faculty and staff.
- C. Establish programs for supporting and mentoring minority students on the part of all faculty, especially in programs in which the students are underrepresented.
- D. Establish programs for supporting and mentoring minority faculty.
- E. Enable admissions and financial aid staff to offer admission and financial aid to qualified students at high school college nights.
- F. Increase financial resources to attract and retain minority faculty and students.
- G. Create a network of Oakland University alumni to recruit students.
- H. Work towards a climate of zero tolerance for racism and prejudice among faculty, staff and students.
- I. Pursue affirmative action in recruiting and retaining under-represented gender groups in specific university areas.
- J. Implement the ethnic diversity requirement approved by the Faculty Senate.
- K. Help faculty become more aware of the impact of ethnicity, gender and class in the classroom through an alumni/student videotape production of prejudice in the classroom.

4. Create and maintain a comprehensive effective academic management information system.

Strategy

- A. Provide early identification of students in academic difficulty.
- B. Provide retention data and the success rate of students.
- C. Include a computer program which will not allow students to register for levels of classes where they have not successfully completed prerequisite coursework.
- D. Provide demographic (especially minority) data for departments and schools.
- E. Provide for the input of advising information on students academic records.
- F. Provide faculty advisers with direct computer access to students academic records.
- G. Provide a more efficient enrollment system for students.
- H. Ensure that the processing of grades is done as efficiently as possible to enable teachers to have adequate time for submitting final grades and for students to receive their grades promptly.