

THE OAKLAND POST

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER

October 17, 2007

Volume 33, Number 37



Piecing together the presidency

Dr. Gary Russi talks to the
Post about his job, your
school and our future

page 4

SPORTS

Midnight Madnezz
a success,
angers some

page 17

YOU

New fraternity
on campus?

page 12

CAMPUS

International
relations major
has people talking

page 8

Classifieds Employment

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THE OAKLAND POST
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Perspectives page 6

Label politics a no-label subject. Plus, 4-on-4 featuring 2008 presidential candidate Mitt Romney's son.



Campus page 8

Foreign leaders visit OU to discuss new international relations major. Plus, high-tech prizes given out at cyber conference.



you page 12

Student organization aims to bring new fraternity to Oakland. Plus, give DIY a try.



The Mix page 14

All about Halloween: costumes and haunted houses. Plus, check out the new Word of the Week.



Sports page 17

Midnight Madnezz: major announcement regarding OU basketball coverage; students angered over prize distribution.



Local page 22

Detroit close to reaching a decision on Tiger Stadium's future fate. And, new service tax sparks debate in Michigan.



the Scene page 24

A look at the movie that brings the music of the Beatles to a new generation. And, a break-down of the Michael Myers' flicks.



MOUTHING OFF page 26

Check out some effective ways of wasting time on the Internet. Plus, the king of homecoming queens.



Nation | World page 28

Former Vice President Al Gore is awarded a Nobel Peace Prize. And, a mother of a U.S. soldier to send 80,000 cans of Silly String to Iraq for troops.

Special Feature:

Are OU fraternity members living in a haunted house?

Check out our special feature on page 16.

Oakland University President Gary Russi talks to the Post

By KELLY KOZLOWSKI AND PAUL GULLY
Editor in chief and Managing editor

Oakland University is approaching some milestones. Enrollment is up, a medical school is in the works, and degree programs are multiplying. With so much opportunity on the horizon, it is important for students and faculty to get to know those leading the way. The Oakland Post staff plans to schedule regular interview sessions with some of OU's most high-profile administrators to help you piece together who they are, what they do and why it matters. Check out the first installment with President Gary Russi.

A capital idea

Post: Tell us about OU's capital campaign.

Russi: This is Oakland's very first comprehensive campaign, and what that means is it's a campus-wide campaign. In our history, we've had little mini-campaigns that are focused on units. This campaign is for the entire campus. The target is \$110 million, and we are now halfway into the public phase, that's a 5-year deal, so we're at two and a half years. As of this morning (Monday, Oct. 15), we're at \$81 million toward this campaign, and I will tell you that it's remarkable the amount of men and women who are supporting this. Most of the money that's coming to us is not corporate money. It's private, individual money, and that says a lot about the nature of the university and what they believe is really the future of the university.

Post: How do you go about raising the funds?

Russi: A lot of dinners. (laughs) Actually, it's relationship building. Men and women will not invest their life savings in anything unless they have a strong relationship with the men and women who are there and they trust you. The trust factor is really important. Also, enormous amounts of meetings, dinners, conversations, cultivations. ... In the last 20 days, I've not been home once at night, just to give you a sense of what it takes. It takes time.

Post: Are there any plans for allocation?

Russi: The gifts typically come as designated gifts. Most of the money is designated for a



Photo courtesy of Ted Montgomery
President Gary Russi offers ice cream to students during Welcome Week festivities at OU.

Musical Chairs

"President" isn't the only title Russi holds. Here are a few others he is also known by:

Co-chair, Oakland County Business Roundtable
Vice chair, Oakland County Automation Alley
Member, Board of Trustees of Crittenton Hospital and the Citizens Research Council of Michigan
Chair, Presidents Council of State Universities of Michigan
Member, Detroit Renaissance Board of Directors

certain purpose or function or activity within the university. There are a few donors who will just hand the money to me and say, 'go do as you wish,' which is an unrestricted gift. Typically what I do with that is to support the campaign functions to help us raise money. The unrestricted piece is pretty small.

Post: Is OU in good shape financially?

Russi: At this point, we (the state of Michigan) don't have a budget bill, and it's a tragedy. We were supposed to get it at the end of last month, and as you know they gave themselves another 30 days. To answer your question, it

all depends on what they do. It's so unknown right now. We did do our best to be as conservative in our budgeting as possible, so whatever would come we would be in good shape. I can tell you, if they leave us alone or they give us a little increase, we'll be just fine. But I cannot tell you what they're going to do.

Students on the move

Post: Given your involvement with the budget crisis in Michigan right now, what are your thoughts on the student involvement and OUSC going to protest in Lansing recently?

Russi: It's one of the best things I've seen. I

think the student leaders this year have done an incredible job on behalf of higher education in general but Oakland in particular. Our group has been there more than once, and we are so delighted because I can tell you when I do my rounds with legislators, senators and representatives, they will comment about the Oakland students. They're perceived as being very professional. They raise the points, they make their points, and they do not offend anybody. Our students have done a great job. They maintain that high standard of communicating the point and showing the impact of what it would mean to them if tuition were to increase again. I hope they continue. We need more advocacy in the city.

Looking ahead

Post: What are your plans and goals for the current academic year?

Russi: Here are some things I think about. Number one: state appropriations. Number two: fundraising. Number three: the quality of the academic programs and offering the courses for students. That means adequate staffing, facilities, support, and all the things that go into providing quality organization. Four would be continuing to reposition Oakland as one of the top institutions in the state of Michigan. That means leveraging our strengths with partners. One of the most important partnerships that we just announced was the medical school. I believe that there's been no other announcement that has greater impact in the community right now than that announcement. There is more buzz about that in the community than I can explain to you today. Everywhere I go, people are talking about it. Maybe it's one of the best pieces of news that we've heard in this region in a long time. We've become a very different university.

Post: How is the medical school progressing?

Russi: It's great. You know, we've got a great partner with Beaumont. We hired a consultant who has been engaged in start-ups of other medical schools, and he reports we are ahead of schedule. Fundraising looks good right now. This is a privately-funded school, and we have a very active donor list. I can tell you that parents have talked to me, and students are already here wanting to get into the medical school.



Photo courtesy of Ted Montgomery
Dr. Gary Russi

see it. One thought, and it's only a thought because we're not there yet, is the corner of Squirrel and Walton.

On the scoreboard

Post: What are your expectations for the upcoming basketball season?

Russi: That is a volatile question. I think we've got a chance of being very good this year – both teams. Coach Kampe has his core back from last year. He's recruited some really powerful athletes and their conditioning through the summer has been exceptional. We saw a little bit of that at Midnight Madnezz. They are as fit and as strong as any team I've seen since I've been here. They've got a pretty good chance of doing well this year. On the women's side, they had one of the best recruiting classes they've had in a long time. They're young, but coach Francis has a core of starters. We'll see if they can bring the freshmen along. They've got a chance at being pretty successful too. I think at the end of the day, we certainly will be doing well in the Summit League Tournament. If I had a dream, it would be to leave Tulsa with two wins.

Post: Are there any other sports teams that you follow?

Russi: I watch them all. The teams that have really distinguished Oakland over the years

have really been men's and women's basketball, men's and women's soccer – remarkable teams this year, and men's and women's swimming and diving. Remarkable efforts. I think some of the other teams are coming along. I think baseball's got a chance to be pretty big this year. Softball team looks to be good. Some of the other teams are moving. I know the new athletic director is trying to upgrade those.

Spare time

Post: Rumor has it, you're a runner. Is that a hobby you've been able to maintain during your presidency?

Russi: Yeah, I do it really early. Most people are still sleeping. I try to maintain a fitness routine every day. It's a huge stress relief, and it's quiet time. I get a chance to put together what I think about the day. It's just a special time for me. Sometimes, when the weather is good, I run around campus. If it's not good, I'll be primarily in the athletic center; sometimes I'll show up at the Rec Center because I like to rub elbows with the students. It's pretty cool.

Post: Any other hobbies?

Russi: I play golf, but don't get to do as much as I'd like. Most of the golf is related to building relationships. I love to read. My favorite author is James McGregor Burns. He's a historian, and I really like the stuff he's done.

President Russi on paper

What's on his resume?

Education

Southwestern Oklahoma State University
-BA in pharmacology

University of Kansas
-Ph.D. in pharmacology and toxicology

Work Experience

Kansas University
-teaching/research assistant

Drake University
-tenured professor of pharmacology and toxicology

Written work

-17 articles and abstracts published in professional journals
-13 scientific book reviews

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Perspectives

6

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October 17, 2007

STAFF EDITORIAL

Lose the political labels and find yourself

Liberalism. Conservatism. Right-wing. Left-wing. Moderate. Democrat. Republican. Libertarian. Socialist. Green. Independent. Apathetic.

We love labels, especially in politics.

The urge to group poses several hindrances in modern politics, much of which goes overlooked. It is helpful to understand the categories that we create and the effects they have on us all.

More and more, the media has become obsessed with such brandings. Dichotomies are easy and theatrical.

They make the blood boil, and make rallying trouble-free. Everything is much simpler when painted as either/or.

Blame is basic — the common foe provides a scapegoat for problems. It compartmentalizes our thinking and takes us hostage.

Before we know it, we forget it is all theatrics — and are victims of deceptive disunion.

Instead of actually focusing on issues, we oftentimes play the partisan game.

We label, libel, name-call and condemn, many times prior to, or in lieu of, actually discussing the issue.

We forget that all sides are victim of certain flaws by merely being involved in politics.

Partisan politics does not have to translate into full-blown polarizing politics.

Naturally, we will share beliefs with others. This political unity strengthens the power for each individual to get his or her version of the world through power in numbers.

This can be taken too far, when the labels dehumanize and do no more than attack the opponent for existing as a certain title.

Rather than placing the person first and the ideology second, we make the ideology paramount.

In our passion, we forget we are all human beings. The labels take away the humanness.

Another challenge is the notion of individuality. Political dichotomy, at times, harms free thought.

We pigeonhole ourselves to think a certain

way just because our label states we should think that certain way.

A brief talk with most on political issues will demonstrate this phenomena. In fact, most encounters with mainstream media provide immaculate examples.

We eventually forget the main purpose for political activity — achieving specific results for what we individually want in the world.

We have these ideas, wants and beliefs independent of political labels or -isms.

Before we enter any ideology, we should not forget our foundation and understand the theatrics before entering the game.

These -isms and labels also face the difficulties found in ideology. Ideologies can blind and detach. They can remove the reality of the situation.

We happily throw the words around, pejoratively and positively, as absolute. There are no absolutes, especially in politics.

There are so many versions of what each word or -ism means that the definitions can be nothing more than cloudy and opaque.

The absolutist mentality, coupled with the ambiguous definition of terms and labels poses a major challenge.

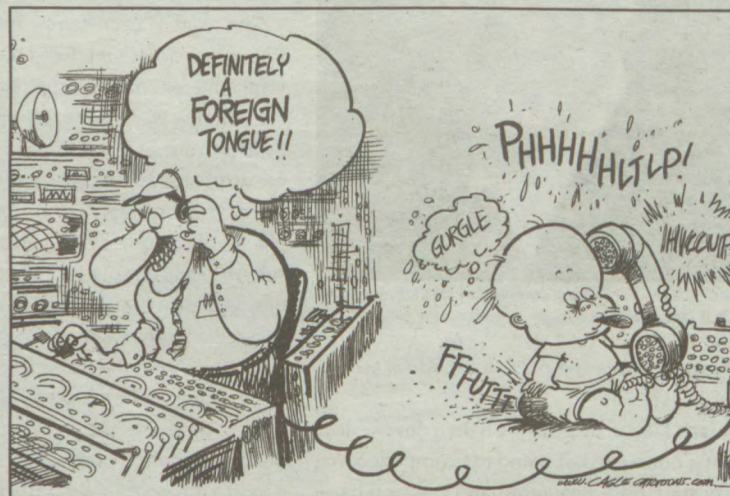
There is no true Republican, Democrat, liberal, or conservative. Just watch political debates between parties or ideologies or chats between groups of similarly-minded individuals. There is no exact agreement, and any who proclaim there is are hiding an important element of their individuality.

In this sense, these words and labels have their place, however, end up causing more harm than good.

The challenging nature of the words confounds when used over-excessively or inaccurately. Any attempt at a holistic perception is greatly stunted by such terms.

As a substitute, focus on what you personally believe. Put the issues of humanity first, and political theatrics second.

Do not allow your political efforts to be marginalized by such terms.



MIKE LANE, Cagle Cartoons

“When warrantless wiretaps go bad.”

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