

THE OAKLAND POST

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER



CAN YOU DIG IT?

CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION

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this month

August 7, 2013 // Volume 39. Issue 29



ontheweb

The Oakland Post website has a brand new look and new features. Check out the redesigned page and let us know what you think.

www.oaklandpostonline.com



PHOTO OF THE MONTH

DO NOT CROSS // The Bear Lake Bridge is surrounded by orange cones and hazard tape, causing students to find alternate ways between the Oakland Center and Vandenberg Hall. The bridge closure is part of many construction projects in and around the Auburn Hills campus. *BRIAN JOHNSTON // The Oakland Post*

Submit a photo to editor@oaklandpostonline.com for a chance to be featured. View all submissions at oaklandpostonline.com

POLL OF THE MONTH

How do you think the new parking plan will turn out for OU?

- A It will stay the same
- B It's going to be a rough year
- C It will be even better
- D I'm parking at Friday's

Vote at www.oaklandpostonline.com

NEXT ISSUE

The Oakland Post is putting together a campus survival guide for incoming freshmen, transfer students or anyone new to the area. If you have a tip for life on or off campus, send it to us. You could see your suggestion in print.

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THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

AUGUST 25, 1980

After labor strikes delayed the completion of O'Dowd Hall by about 60 days, window problems set back the building even further.

AUGUST 3, 1967

Parking fees for students, faculty and staff were raised from \$2 to \$16 per year, to fund a \$380,250 project which added 2,739 parking spaces.

August 3, 1962

An assistant dean of students, nine faculty and two assistant librarians, were hired by Michigan State University Oakland.



6

NEW PRESIDENT, NEW IDEAS

Interim President Betty Youngblood talks about her plans for Oakland University's future.



7

SMOKING OUT TOBACCO

The 2013-14 school year brings a complete tobacco ban to campus, with fines for violation.



15

SWEET ON TKE

OU alumna Maria Willett is named Tau Kappa Epsilon's International Sweetheart.

BY THE NUMBERS

8,913

Spots originally on OU main campus

903

Spaces closed for construction

298

Handicapped parking spaces

1,009

Temporary parking spaces available during construction

6

Bear Buses available for students

STAFF EDITORIAL

Updated smoking policy is a pain in the ashtray

Oakland University's updated Non-Smoking Policy 475, updated November 2012, will officially be underway as of the Fall 2013 semester.

Smoking, which OU defines as "the burning of a lighted cigar, cigarette, pipe or any other matter or substance that contains Tobacco [sic]," will be completely banned on the campus grounds.

First-time offenders will receive a fine of up to \$100, and subsequent offenses can cost up to \$500.

Item 3 of the Non-Smoking Policy's Procedures section reads, "Enforcement of this policy is the responsibility of all." The policy-makers ask the entirety of Oakland University to be on the lookout for tobacco use, and to report those they see violating the policy.

We envy their optimism but find this more than a little unrealistic.

It isn't necessarily that we are pro-tobacco or pro-smoking on campus. But it seems naïve to expect students to report one another.

Faculty members or staff members should be reported to their immediate supervisor, dean or director.

Complaints against students are expected to go to the Dean of Students office,

We envy their optimism but find this more than a little unrealistic.

after which "The Dean of Students, supervisor, dean or director will investigate and take any needed action to resolve the issue."

Interim Dean of Students Nancy Schmitz most likely has better things to do than sift through complaints of illicit tobacco use in Oakland University's secluded areas. At least we hope so, for the student body's sake.

Two other deans were appointed within the past year, and another dean chair is up for grabs. Operating as a dean while simultaneously getting acclimated is difficult enough. Must we add tobacco tattling to their itineraries?

Even if the deans and supervisors decide they have time to investigate people grabbing a quick puff between classes, how are students supposed to file the complaints?

While the updated Policy 475 offers a phone number at which the Dean of Students Office can be reached, will someone be on call to receive reports? Are students expected to become amateur

detectives, obtaining the names and contact information of violators?

If only there was a police department on campus to look out for smokers and investigate tobacco use.

The rationale given for the policy update is, "The University recognizes that Tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke is a significant health hazard... studies have shown there is no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke."

Curiously, though, smoking is still allowed within Meadow Brook Hall, residences within the Meadow Brook subdivision, and the Oakland University golf courses.

Last time we checked, Meadow Brook Hall and the golf courses don't have magical anti-smoke barriers in place. But they do, on average, have persons of a slightly higher economic status.

The Oakland Post's editorial board wants a smoke-free campus just as much as the rest of OU. We just want a smoke-free policy that makes sense.

The staff editorial is written weekly by members of The Oakland Post's editorial board.



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- Subject pictured on page 10 is not Judith Ableser.

Letters to the Editor

Writers must provide full name, class rank, phone number and field of study. Please limit letters to 250 words or less. Letters may be edited for content, length and grammar.



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Russi era ends without benefits

Outgoing President gave up housing, cars, possibly more

By Victoria Crow
News Manager

Since former Oakland University Women's Basketball coach Beckie Francis was fired June 12 and her husband, Oakland University President Gary Russi, announced his retirement the same day, much speculation has surrounded the reasons for their departures and whether there was a connection.

Although there has been extensive local reporting about the reasons for Francis' termination (see sidebar), there has been a complete dearth of information about the reasons for Russi's retirement. But the timing certainly was not advantageous for him.

According to contracts obtained by The Oakland Post, Russi may have forfeited \$270,000 in deferred compensation, and he and his wife lost numerous

employment perks when he unexpectedly retired.

Russi and Francis lived at Sunset Terrace on campus free of charge. According to Russi's contract, the University also paid for

- 20 hours per week of maid service
- interior and exterior maintenance
- furniture
- a telephone at the residence for business use
- a FAX machine
- a computer
- cable or satellite television,
- liability insurance
- option to drive a leased or owned vehicle or receive a monthly vehicle allowance, in addition to
- all gasoline paid for by the University.

Francis' employment contract also included a fully insured car for business and personal use. Her contract

stated that the University would pay for all fuel.

According to documents retrieved by the Post from the Freedom of Information Act, Francis made several requests for cell phone allowances.

Francis Cell Phone Allowance Timeline:

- April 1, 2007: \$70 per month
- February 2008: increased to \$75 per month in addition to a one-time cell phone purchase amount of \$555.43. Her business justification was "recruiting and team business."
- July 1, 2008 - increased to \$125 per month
- June 1, 2009 - increased to \$150 per month. Her business justification was: "recruiting, travel, etc." The allowance end date was "until notified."

Russi signed a deferred compensation agreement in 2011 that would have paid him \$270,000 dependent on

have paid him \$270,000 dependent on his employment through June 30, 2014. However, it is unclear whether his retirement will be interpreted as a resignation.

Resignation or retirement

Lawyer Jane Briggs-Bunting, former Director of the Michigan State University School of Journalism and chair of the Department of Rhetoric, Communication and Journalism at Oakland University, said she believes "OU will say retirement means he resigned."

If Oakland does treat Russi's retirement as a resignation, then it appears Russi forfeited at least \$270,000 just a year before he would've collected that money. That's in addition to the \$357,875 salary he would've earned.

The Post will continue to update this story as it develops.

Athletics 'unaware' of Francis allegations

By Victoria Crow
News Manager

Although there has been a litany of media reports about Beckie Francis being fired for emotionally abusing basketball players, former Board of Trustees Chair Henry Baskin, who served on the board from 1996 to August 2012 and was Chairman for four years, said he was not privy to Francis' behavior.

"During that time I was unaware of any allegations concerning Ms. Francis and the weight or religious discrimination that is alleged to have been perpetrated by her," he said. "Indeed if any of these allegations have been brought to any member of the board they would have been referred to the administration for direct action or reaction. The board to my knowledge was completely unaware of the issues which are now being reported concerning her actions as a basketball coach."

Jenna Bachrouche, a former OU women's basketball player, said Francis pushed her players to embrace Christianity.

Bachrouche said she reached out to

Athletic Director Tracy Huth about her concerns.

"He just apologized," Bachrouche said. "He said, 'Anything I can do to help you find another place.'"

Huth is supposed to report directly to the Board, according to Baskin.

"Presumably any such matters would have been handled by the administration and the athletic director and then presented to the Board," Baskin said.

Among other reports from the Detroit Free Press, Francis reportedly:

- pressured players to cut down on food intake
- played "head games"
- challenged one player to a weight-loss contest
- penalized a player for not cheering loudly enough at a game
- read Bible verses at a requisite Christmas party for players
- pressured a player to go with her to Christian services

Although no connection has been reported, Oakland University announced three players were leaving the women's basketball program the same time "indications of conduct and

behavior of the women's basketball head coach ... came to the attention of an Oakland University administrator in April."

Sisters Annemarie and Liz Hamlet transferred to play Valparaiso University

Shelby Herrington transferred to "The board to my knowledge was completely unaware of the issues which are now being reported concerning her actions as a basketball coach."

Henry Baskin, former OU Board of Trustees chair

play at Saginaw Valley State University Liz Hamlet declined to comment on the situation saying, "I would not like to be a part of this."

She referred the Post to Valparaiso's Assistant Director of Athletics for Media Relations, Aaron Leavitt.

Leavitt wrote in an email, "I can confirm that both Elizabeth and Annemarie Hamlet have transferred from

marie Hamlet have transferred from Oakland to Valparaiso - Elizabeth will play out her final season of eligibility this year without having to sit out a season since she is a fifth-year graduate transfer. Annemarie will have to sit out this season and will have three seasons of eligibility remaining beginning with the 2014-2015 season."

Contact News Manager Victoria Crow at vcraw@oakland.edu



Scott Wolchek / The Oakland Post

Former Oakland University's Women's Basketball player Jenna Bachrouche said Beckie Francis pressured players to embrace christianity.

"Hot for Teacher" lawsuit doesn't hold up in court

Kevin Graham
Staff Reporter

Former student Joseph Corlett, the 57-year-old who sued the university over his suspension for inappropriate class writings, had his case thrown out of federal court last month.

U. S. District Judge Patrick Duggan, in an opinion accompanying the July 23 dismissal, said Corlett's speech, while possibly protected in other settings, had no place in an academic environment.

"When Plaintiff referred to his Oakland University English professor as 'stacked' and graphically compared her to a sitcom character he fetishized in a writing assignment, he brought a pig into the parlor," wrote Duggan.

Corlett wrote a two-part journal entry entitled "Hot for Teacher" in which he discussed his attraction to a former OU female professor who was teaching his Advanced Critical Writing course.

"Kee-Rist, I'll never learn a thing," he writes in one entry. "Tall, blond, stacked, skirt, heels, fingernails, smart, articulate, smile. I'm toast but I stay."

When Corlett turned it into the professor for grading, she turned it over to the Dean's office and the student judicial process followed.

A Reason to Proceed

The case, filed March 15, was Corlett's response to Oakland University suspending him for three semesters beginning winter 2012 for being in violation of university regulation 6.02, "Unlawful Individual Activities." Regulation 6.02 reads in part: "... nor shall any person in any way intimidate, harass, threaten or assault any person engaged in lawful activities on campus."

Corlett said it isn't over.

"My team and I are assessing the situation," he said. "I have no regrets. The corpulent woman has not harmonically vocalized."

Glenn McIntosh, Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment, formerly Dean of Students, declined to comment, citing Corlett's rights under the student judicial process.

Drawing Parallels

The Oakland Post contacted numerous parties involved with the case at OU. All either declined comment or failed to return phone calls.

Corlett's case had two basic premises: his freedom of speech had been violated and that university regulation 6.02 was unconstitutional.

Taking up the First Amendment question, Duggan quoted a 1995 decision in *Settle v. Dickson County School Board*.

"Students do not lose entirely their right to express themselves as individuals in the classroom, but federal courts should exercise particular restraint in classroom conflicts between student and teacher over matters falling within the ordinary authority of the teacher over curriculum and course content.... The free speech rights of students in the classroom must be limited because effective education depends not only on controlling boisterous conduct, but also on maintaining the focus of the class on the assignment in question."

Crossing the Line

Devin Schindler, a professor of constitutional law at Thomas M Cooley Law School, agreed with Duggan's assessment. "In this context where you have a specific assignment and the assignment has certain parameters and certain rules and the goal of the assignment is not one of expression but rather learning how to write, I believe that (OU) was within its rights," Schindler said.

Duggan went on to further state that Corlett's physical description of the professor did not fall under protection of the First Amendment.

He quoted the Seventh Circuit decision in *Brandt v. Board Of Education of City of Chicago*. "Self-expression is not to be equated to the expression of ideas or opinions and thus to participation in the intellectual marketplace."

Schindler said that although the penalty for inappropriate speech or failing to meet the conditions of the assignment is usually a zero grade, the penalty imposed by OU is not unheard of.

"If the speech is so far beyond the pale to constitute what is essentially sexual harassment, the school is also within its rights to take further action above failing the student, which is exactly what they did here," he said.

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Turnover and over and over...

OU is again looking for a Dean of the School of Education and Human Services.

Kevin Graham
Staff Reporter

Interim Dean Mary Stein has stepped down following revelations in *The Oakland Press* that she and education professor Timothy Larrabee self-plagiarized in science education journals.

The pair, along with a professor from Indiana University Purdue University of Indianapolis, published a paper entitled "A Computer-Based Instrument That Identifies Common Science Misconceptions" in one journal. They managed to self-plagiarize when then went on to submit a paper based on substantially the same research to another publication, a practice which is frowned upon.

Provost James Lentini said Stein would continue to serve the University.

"As you know, Mary has provided valuable leadership to Oakland University in her roles within the SEHS and in the Office of the Provost," Lentini said in an email to SEHS faculty on Tuesday. "It is Dr. Stein's desire to return to the faculty to continue serving the university and our students. I would like to thank Mary for her dedicated work and accomplishments to further the mission of our institution, and I look forward to her continuing contributions."

Stein will continue in her role until a replacement is named. She replaced former Dean Louis Gallien who left in the spring to take the same position at Appalachian State University.

She becomes just another name shuffling positions in a time of extraordinarily high turnover at OU. In recent months, Pres. Gary Russi resigned following the firing of his wife and former women's basketball coach Beckie Francis amid allegations of emotional abuse and intolerance.

Also gone is former vice president of student affairs and enrollment management Mary Beth Snyder who retired at the end of April.

Lentini and College of Arts and Sciences Dean Kevin Corcoran are newcomers to OU. Michael Mazzeo who will leave Michigan State, will join OU as the Dean of the School of Business Administration August 15, pending Board of Trustees approval.

'Proud graduate' leads OU in presidential search

Betty Youngblood, interim president, returns to Oakland to aid The Board of Trustees in finding a president

Brian Johnston
Managing Editor

After Gary Russi's announcement that he'd be stepping down as President of Oakland University, the Board of Trustees appointed Betty Youngblood as the university's interim president.

Youngblood grew up in the Macomb County area. Prior to her role as interim president, she served as executive director for OU-Macomb and was Oakland University's vice president for outreach.

"I've lived a lot of different places and I've loved them all," Youngblood said. "When you're involved with education, every place has its special emphasis and special needs."

Youngblood served as president of Lake Superior University in Wisconsin from 2002-2007, and she was provost of Western Oregon University from 1995-2002.

Describing herself as a "proud graduate" of Oakland University, Youngblood said being selected to serve as interim president is "a real honor and a distinct privilege."

Not in the race

While former President Gary Russi was originally provost and served a year as interim president before becoming officially named Oakland University's president, Youngblood said she will not pursue a permanent presidency.

"If I were younger, I would consider it," Youngblood said. "I believe I can be far more effective and far more helpful to the Board of Trustees by not being a candidate." She also listed her duties at Oakland University's Macomb County operations as a reason she would not consider a permanent presidency. "One third of our students come from Macomb County. Macomb county is important to Oakland University, just as Oakland University is important to Macomb County."

Finding a president

The Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for

"I believe I can be far more effective and far more helpful to the Board of Trustees by not being a candidate."

Betty Youngblood
Interim president

hiring a new president, according to Youngblood. As a three-time president, Youngblood said she would like to help with the presidential search.

"A lot of people here haven't experienced a presidential search," Youngblood said. "But it actually can be an invigorating and exciting time for a university."

Of her predecessor, Youngblood said, "President Russi made tremendous contributions here. But the university has changed a great deal during the time that he's been here, and he has made his decision to move on in his life. It's an exciting time at Oakland University to bring in new leadership."

"We have a new provost, two new deans and a new dean's position that we'll be searching for this coming year," Youngblood said. "So we have a lot of change going on. And change can be sometimes unsettling, but it's also exciting. It invokes a real spirit of hope and optimism for the future."

On the agenda

Youngblood said her agenda, as interim president, is to assist in the presidential search in any way she can, and to help prepare the university for a new president by dealing with individual deans and vice presidents to address issues in their departments.

Specifically, Youngblood said she would like to help improve retention and graduation rates.

"We need the support of the entire campus," Youngblood said. "One way to get that is to make sure everyone knows what's going on and why."

Youngblood will serve as interim president of OU until a new president has been hired by the Board of Trustees.



Courtesy of Ted Montgomery

Betty Youngblood was chosen to be interim president. She and The Board of Trustees will choose the permanent president for Oakland Univer

POLICE BRIEFS

Possible theft of ring at theatre

The Oakland University Police Department investigated possible theft at Meadow Brook Theatre July 1.

A woman at the theatre reported a White Gold Filigree ring was taken from her purse around 4:30 p.m.

The last time the woman saw the ring was 9:30 a.m. the previous day. She placed the ring in a pouch on her purse, along with other jewelry, and placed the purse on a counter in the women's dressing room upon arriving. The door to the room was unlocked.

She said the ring was the only item taken from the pouch. The ring's approximate value is \$1,600.

Fraudulent activity over class refund

A student entered the OU Police Department to report fraudulent activity on his refund money from the university July 22.

The student stated that he dropped a class Jan. 15 and never received a refund from the university.

After contacting Oakland University officials, the student was informed of two direct deposits into a Chase Bank account. The student has never had an account with the bank. Chase Bank stated the account number on the deposit did not exist and there was no account attached to the student's social security number.

A faculty member from Student Business Services presented a signed document approving the deposits, where the student said the signature was not his and he had not seen the document before.

An affidavit of forgery, alteration or missing signature/endorsement was completed through Comerica Bank.

Compiled by Haley Kotwicki,
Chief Copy editor