



# A PLACE OF PRIDE

Uncovering the choices that lead students, faculty and donors to Oakland University

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### ON THE COVER

*OU swim champions carry on a family tradition.*

Photo by Robert Hall

**Oakland University** is a nationally recognized public, doctoral research university located on 1,443 acres of scenic land in the cities of Rochester Hills and Auburn Hills in Oakland County, Michigan. The University enrolls more than 19,000 students and offers more than 275 bachelor's and graduate degree and certificate programs.

Robert Hall

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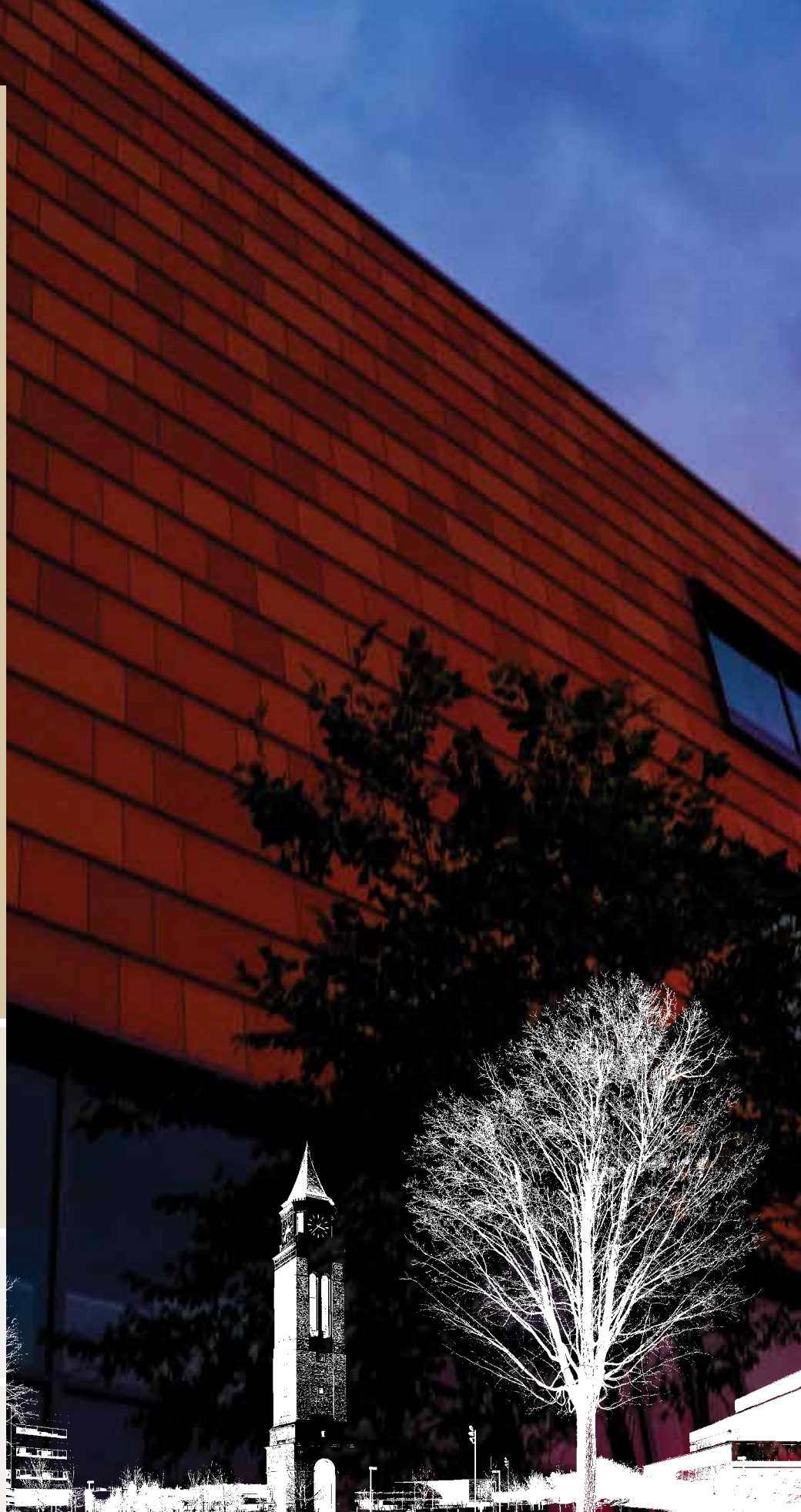
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## Mission

Oakland University cultivates the full potential of a diverse and inclusive community. As a public doctoral institution, we impact Michigan and the world through education, research, scholarship and creative activity.

## Vision

Oakland University will unlock the potential of individuals and leave a lasting impact on the world through the transformative power of education and research.





The lives we lead are defined by the choices we make. And, our choices, reflect our values, expectations and aspirations.

As an institution of higher learning, Oakland University is defined by the strategic decisions and long-term plans where students, faculty, staff, alumni and donors find a common purpose, shared identity, and a sense of belonging in a distinguished place of pride.

We take pride in being a university of choice. That means Oakland University is the prime selection as a place of learning, teaching, research, and as a vital cause for friends who support our mission to serve our students and communities.

Examples live all around us.

In the following pages, you'll learn how OU faculty are serving as mentors and educating students to become cybersecurity experts. You'll read about how OU's Executive MBA program is providing motivated professionals with an innovative way to advance their careers. And, you'll meet a Nigerian-born basketball player who's had a life-changing relationship with OU Coach Greg Kampe.

You'll be inspired by one family's impact on OU's swimming program. And, you'll be deeply moved by OU students who rely on Disability Support Services and are finding a "second family" on campus.

These diverse stories are connected by a central theme: They define OU as a place of pride and as a university of choice.

We hope you too are filled with pride as you learn more about your Golden Grizzlies community. 🐻

**Ora Hirsch Pescovitz, M.D.**  
President





## EXPERIENTIAL *Engineering*



Michael Latcha

In a competitive job market, students in the School of Engineering and Computer Science (SECS) are jumpstarting their career paths in a Senior Design course. The semester-long class is required for all SECS students, and offers invaluable training and career opportunities.

“The Senior Design course brings seniors from computer, electrical and mechanical engineering majors together to solve real-world projects,” says Michael Latcha, Ph.D., professor of mechanical engineering.

Students in the course also receive opportunities to network with companies that request work on specific projects. These projects are industry-sponsored, and an increasing amount of companies continue to volunteer with SECS seniors, including single investors, nonprofits, large corporations and the U.S. Army.

“These students interact directly with professional engineers,” Latcha explains. “Not only is it an exceptional learning experience for the students, but the project sponsors also frequently hire students from the course.”

For Alex Dietrich, SECS '18, his design project led to a job offer with the U.S. Army Tank and Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center (TARDEC). “The way things came together, it relieved a lot of stress I might have had if I was graduating and still trying to find a job,” Dietrich says. “There’s no doubt that my OU education and experiences helped me every step of the way.” ➤

## Project SUCCESS

As part of a long-term plan to foster student success critical to support the region's talent pipeline and ongoing economic development, Oakland University will renovate and expand **Wilson Hall and South Foundation Hall.**

### Enhanced Student Services

The Wilson Hall project is a key part of Project SUCCESS, a reference to the consolidation and enhancement of the range of student services currently located in several campus buildings. SUCCESS is an acronym for Support of University Community by the Creation of Enhanced Student Services.

The \$20.5 million Wilson Hall construction project to be designed by Albert Kahn & Associates was approved in January by the OU Board of Trustees. The new construction will accommodate a range of student services to further improve graduation rates and job placement throughout Southeast Michigan.

"The reinvention of Wilson Hall is a priority project and a strategic use of land that reflects the University's mission and aspirations," says OU President Ora Hirsch Pescovitz. "The newly configured, expanded Wilson Hall improves efficiency and responsiveness to student academic and career needs, which is key to the overall goals of student attraction, retention and success."

Nearly 70 percent of the 54,000-square-foot renovation and 40,000-square-foot addition to Wilson Hall is dedicated to student activities. Project SUCCESS features Wilson Hall and North Foundation Hall as homes of programs, classrooms, tutoring, first-year advising, disability center, student business services, financial aid and potentially a testing center. In addition, the revamped Wilson Hall, originally built in 1965, will be the consolidated site for admissions, including a new OU Welcome Center and several administrative offices.

### Education key to talent pipeline

"With the latest expansions and renovations on campus, Oakland University is providing state-of-the-art classrooms and is well-positioned to accommodate more students in a range of academic areas, including STEM, health professions, education, humanities and the arts," says Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost, James P. Lentini.

"Wilson and South Foundation are distinct, yet complementary projects," he says. "We are mindful to address how we can be more efficient and effective in providing excellent student services, and we are equally aware that we must provide the best possible learning environment for students."

Providing comprehensive student services and improving graduation rates are critical to maintaining a talent pipeline to support the regional and state economy.

After graduation, more than 90 percent of OU graduates remain in Southeast Michigan, and are employed in pillar industries, such as automotive and manufacturing, along with a range of engineering, health services, education, finance and business-related fields.

"Many of our students have grown up and live in the region, and when they graduate, most get jobs and remain in the area," Pescovitz says. "They identify with OU and are instrumental in building the economy and shaping the economic future of Southeast Michigan."

The financing is similar for both projects, in which construction costs will not be funded by a tuition increase. Financing will come from bonds, general reserves and University debt reserves. ➤



## STATE-OF-THE-ART CLASSROOMS

In December 2018, OU received \$30 million approval of state funding for South Foundation Hall reconstruction as part of a broader state funding package for capital outlays to public universities.

The renovation of 55,000-square-foot of existing space and 25,000-square-foot South Foundation expansion will reconfigure teaching spaces to increase the number of available classrooms. The building is among those originally built when campus opened in 1959. The South Foundation plan calls for an improved utilization of rooms that are more in line with current pedagogical teaching methods and technology. ➤



© Robert Hall

# MENTORSHIP

## Undergraduate research mentorship benefits both student and faculty endeavors *By Kelli M. Titus*



*Amy Banes-Berceli*

Through guidance and collaboration in research, Oakland University (OU) faculty mentors and undergraduate students foster relationships that benefit both faculty and students.

“All collaborations have the potential to bring diverse perspectives to a problem,” says Amy Banes-Berceli, associate dean of OU’s College of Arts and Sciences. “Mentors benefit from the increased productivity and publications, while students build their resume, career skills and gain a deeper understanding of the material.”

Throughout the University’s 142 undergraduate degree programs, faculty are involved in research. These studies range from a photographic study of the Netherland’s coffee culture in journalism to reversing audio compression from amplifiers in mechanical engineering, and improving the methods of recognizing osteoarthritis in physics. The diversity of research at OU is extensive, offering unique opportunities for undergraduate students in every major.

“I am a research mentor because I love working with students,” Banes-Berceli says. “Helping a student grow professionally is incredibly rewarding.”



As a biology researcher, professor and mentor, Banes-Berceli has run a research lab since her arrival to the University in 2009. Although her role change to associate dean allows her to support research on a higher level, Banes-Berceli still mentors students and stays connected with her former mentees.

“Most of my students worked with me for 2-3 years,” says Banes-Berceli. “They worked on projects for their thesis and I helped them develop their lab skills and life skills. I’m still in touch with most of my former students.”

One of those alumnus is Zachary Walker, CAS ’18, now a first-year medical student at MSU College of Osteopathic Medicine. “Dr. Banes-Berceli served as a mentor for me throughout my four years at OU,” says Walker.

*“She taught me so much in the research lab. But also, she is compassionate, caring and always willing to listen to life concerns.”*

It is this connection between OU’s faculty and students that makes the research experience so impactful.

“These students are an inspiration to me,” says Professor Susan Lynne Beckwith, Honors College mentor and special lecturer for the Department of English.

Beckwith often mentors students who are working on their thesis projects. She encourages students to pursue subjects that are thought-provoking, and to study interdisciplinary topics.

“They take your breath away every day with their perspectives, insights and ideas,” she says. “It’s why I do what I do and why I love it.”

OU’s Honors College offers special programming for high-achieving students, including a research-driven thesis project in their field of study. Mentorship is held so strongly in The Honors College, that students recently showed appreciation to their Honors College mentors by nominating them for Inspiration Awards. The event also marked the launch of the Oakland University Mentorship Institute, an initiative intended to foster mentoring relationships among faculty and students.

“Mentorship has a direct relationship to leadership,” says Graeme Harper, dean of The Honors College and vice chair and councilor at the At-Large Division of the Council on Undergraduate Research. “At OU, mentorship is thoroughly embedded in the culture of professor-student interaction. We frequently work with undergraduate researchers on projects that are impacting at the highest level on multiple fields and disciplines.”

The Michigan Center for Undergraduate Research (MCUR) also offers guidance to undergraduate researchers across campus. Launched in 2012, the center helps guide students through their field of study, emphasizing the significance of undergraduate research in the future of institutions of higher learning. Experience in well-developed and meaningful research is essential for students as they apply to graduate school and embark on their careers post-graduation.

“This [research] process has allowed me to create a substantial piece for my graphic design portfolio, that also demonstrates my research and writing abilities to potential future employers,” says Sarah Lawrence, graphic design and communication major.

“Mentorship is priceless when it comes to working toward any goal,” she continues. “Having the opportunity to work with someone who has expertise in the field and is willing to share their talents and advice with you is a great privilege.”

Numerous degree-specific programs are also available to undergraduate students seeking research mentorship opportunities, including the Eye Research Institute Summer Undergraduate Program in Eye Research (SUPER), the Summer Research Program for biological sciences or chemistry majors, and the School of Engineering and Computer Science’s Automotive Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Program.

While students gain experience, faculty are able to expand on their own projects while also guiding ambitious students toward their goals.

“We are all here to support students,” Banes-Berceli says, “and serving as a mentor is a way of engaging, educating and fostering long-term success for students.” ➤

## CARNEGIE CLASSIFICATION FOR RESEARCH

In December 2018, Oakland University was elevated to a tier-two (R2) research institution by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. This is a significant development in the ongoing transformation of OU as a world-class research university. The Carnegie rating elevation will help researchers compete for federal and foundation grants, while making the university attractive to industry partners for joint ventures in research and development projects.

Investing in world-class research faculty has allowed us to develop graduate programs, attract excellent students, and compete effectively at the national level for funding to support research activity conducted at OU. With the R2 ranking, OU now claims the distinction of “high research activity,” a designation held by only 3.1 percent, or 137, of 4,424 colleges. Along with R1 institutions (the highest ranking), OU is among the top 5 percent of all higher education institutions. ➤



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# UNITY

Each year, Oakland University celebrates Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy of goodwill at the Keeper of the Dream Scholarship Awards Celebration. During this year's 27th annual gathering – hosted by the Center for Multicultural Initiatives on Jan. 21 – nine students received scholarships in recognition of their leadership on and off campus. ➤

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By Derek Blalock

Three years ago, Babatunde Sowunmi was living in Lagos, Nigeria with his parents and four siblings, focused on school and playing soccer.

Then, an essay competition changed his life. Giving international students an opportunity to immerse themselves in the American experience, the competition winner would attend a private school in the U.S. Winning the competition, Sowunmi received a scholarship from Solid Rock Academy in Riverdale, Georgia.

"It's tough. Sometimes I just break down because I miss them. But, I am thankful for technology and thankful for phones," Sowunmi says. "It was difficult because all I knew was how to play soccer."

Once at Solid Rock, he soon turned from kicking soccer balls to kicking for the school's football team and playing basketball, where he joined an Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) team. Sowunmi also focused on academics, becoming valedictorian of his small high school.

While playing at an AAU tournament in Milwaukee, Sowunmi met coaches from Oakland, and that's when the process of becoming a Golden Grizzly started to become a reality.

"I didn't feel like basketball was going to take me to college. I felt like my grades were going to take me to college," Sowunmi says.

*"So, I listened in class, and when the opportunity (to play at Oakland) came, I thought, why not? It's everybody's dream to play sports at the college level and in the pros."*

The transition to college had its struggles, though, and he found the help he needed during his freshman year from OU basketball coach, Greg Kampe.

"The first semester was tough because everything was coming fast. I had to catch up on time management," Sowunmi says. "[Coach Kampe] is amazing. He understands. At first, I thought he was tough on me, but by him being tough on me, it actually made me better." 🐻

## EMPOWERING Possibilities

By Mandy Summers

When determining where to go to college, Mia Bridges knew she wanted somewhere close enough to home to attend family dinners and events if she wanted, but far enough away to have a complete college experience. Oakland University fit the bill. Born and raised in Detroit, Bridges loves the environment at OU. "From the moment I stepped on campus, there was something about this place that caught my attention. It was beautiful for sure, but it was the people and culture that stood out for me," says Bridges.

Bridges entered college with the intention of focusing on the sciences, but after an impactful conversation with a writing and rhetoric instructor LaWanda Dickens, Bridges was ready to explore a new field of study in communication. Her women and gender studies (WGS) minor was a part of that journey as well. "My intro to WGS instructor, Kathy Patterson-Hawes, was a major reason I chose WGS as my minor. She made me realize things about myself and the world that I wanted to continue to explore."

In addition to finding exceptional mentors and expanding her academic interest, OU provided Bridges with that full college experience that she was hoping for. Bridges currently lives on campus and has been a part of the Ballroom and Latin Dance club at OU for almost two years. "OU has given me the space and opportunity to become who I am today," says Bridges. "Coming here allowed me the comfort of being close to home, but distant enough to explore in a way I hadn't be able to before." 🐾



© Robert Hall



Maggie Schneider

Rachel Levy

© Sarah Griffith

## ACADEMICS Athletic Excellence

By Derek Blalock

The intersection of excellence both as a student and athlete is no more apparent than with redshirt sophomore Maggie Schneider and redshirt junior Rachel Levy.

Led by Schneider and Levy, the women's cross country team set the gold standard in athletics and academics with the highest team GPA of any sport at Oakland University with a 3.6 team GPA in fall 2018.

Schneider, who plans to attend graduate school for philosophy at a major Catholic university, is a two-time Horizon League Female Athlete of the Year, winning back-to-back titles at the Horizon League Championships in the 6K.

"It's perfect because whenever one thing starts stressing me out a lot, I can kind of rely on the other," Schneider says. "Our team is like a family, but Oakland especially. When I visited other schools, I felt like they didn't care as much. I really like the people here."

Levy's performances also speak for themselves with multiple school records, being named Horizon League Freshman of the Year in 2015, Athlete of the Year in 2016, winning the league title in 2016, and finishing second in 2017 to only Schneider. An Academic All-League member in 2016, Levy also wants to attend graduate school with a focus on dietetics.

Head cross country coach, Paul Rice, knows how lucky he is to have not just Schneider and Levy, but attests to an entire team of high achievers that succeed both in and out of the classroom. 🐾

# CONNECTIVI

## OU programs join forces to prepare students for a career in cybersecurity

By Adam DePollo

The end of the 2010s have been boom times for cyber criminals. Nearly every month, there seems to be another story about a massive user data security breach, whether it's at social media giants, cellphone conglomerates, or even election systems.

It should come as no surprise, then, that companies and government agencies are investing heavily in cybersecurity — according to a report from Business Insider Intelligence, an estimated \$655 billion will likely be spent on cybersecurity initiatives by 2020.

It's a good time to look into work in the cybersecurity field. And for those interested in breaking into the industry, there are some very good reasons to start looking at Oakland University. At Oakland, students interested in cybersecurity will find themselves in an interdisciplinary program with modest size, but an impressive array of opportunities at their fingertips.

Students enrolled in several different departments — including the School of Business Administration, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the School of Engineering and Computer Science — can tailor their studies to focus on

cybersecurity through an array of majors, minors, and concentrations that incorporate classes from different schools.

Given that cybersecurity often involves a significant crime prevention and investigation component, many of the students studying it at OU start out in the College of Arts and Sciences' criminal justice program.

According to Kim Byrd, director of field services and student support for the criminal justice program, the interdisciplinary experience available to students focusing in cybersecurity is one of the strongest elements of the program, and offers an experience that's hard to find at other universities. In her role, she works closely with Dr. Vijayan Sugumaran, who chairs the Department of Decision and Information Sciences, to provide students with a highly personalized course of study with ample support from both departments.

"We partner with Dr. Sugumaran's department to offer students courses in our engineering center," she explains. "There, they have access to the high-tech closed computer labs so they can do risk analysis and learn the IT portion of that specialization. On our side, meanwhile,

# TY

they get instruction in criminal justice, investigation and surveillance. They get the best of both worlds between the two of us.”

Dr. Huirong Fu, a professor in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, agrees that the education in the technical aspects of cybersecurity at OU makes the program unique in the Field.

“I’m not boasting, we are the best program because we focus on technology,” she says. “We also have the legal part and social part of cybersecurity, but our focus is really on the technology, whereas other programs focus mainly on cybersecurity policy.”

Fu also noted that OU’s program stands out because of its certification as a Center of Academic Excellence (CAE) in Information Assurance and Cyber-Defense Education, a designation conferred by the National Security Agency and the Department of Homeland Security.

“Our IT program is very strong — every year we graduate more than 100, maybe 200 from the IT program. They all get the certificate approved by the NSA and DHS. That’s the official certificate, and it will

help them get a government position after they graduate.”

That certification from the NSA and DHS is just one facet of a robust group of programs available to cybersecurity students at OU, all of which aim to prepare them for transitioning to the workplace after graduation.

Students enrolled in the Criminal Justice program, for instance, are required to complete an internship before graduating. But unlike other universities where students might be left to find an internship on their own, at OU, they receive ample assistance from their academic program, as Kim Byrd explained.

“The internship portion is unlike any other place you will find,” she says. “The students don’t have to fumble and stumble and find their own places — I’ve already made connections throughout the tri-county area to place them to get their experiences.”

Some of the students in the Criminal Justice program choose to complete their internship at another standout aspect of cybersecurity at OU: the Velocity Hub and Cyber Institute located at the Macomb-OU Incubator.

The Velocity Hub is a computer lab designed specifically for cybersecurity exercises, and it offers students room to gain real-world cybersecurity skills in a secure, safe environment. While studying at the Velocity Hub, students are also exposed to a range of potential employers who send representatives to discuss the skills they look for in candidates. The Velocity Hub also offers certification courses, managed through OU’s Office of Professional and Continuing Education.

David Piotkowski, a current OU senior who recently completed an internship at the Velocity Hub, explains that the early exposure to what to expect in job interviews is a major advantage for students like him, who are getting ready to move into the workforce.

“I think when you’re in college there’s a difference between what you learn in the classroom and how it’s applied in the real world,” he says. “So it was a great thing to be exposed to.” 🌙

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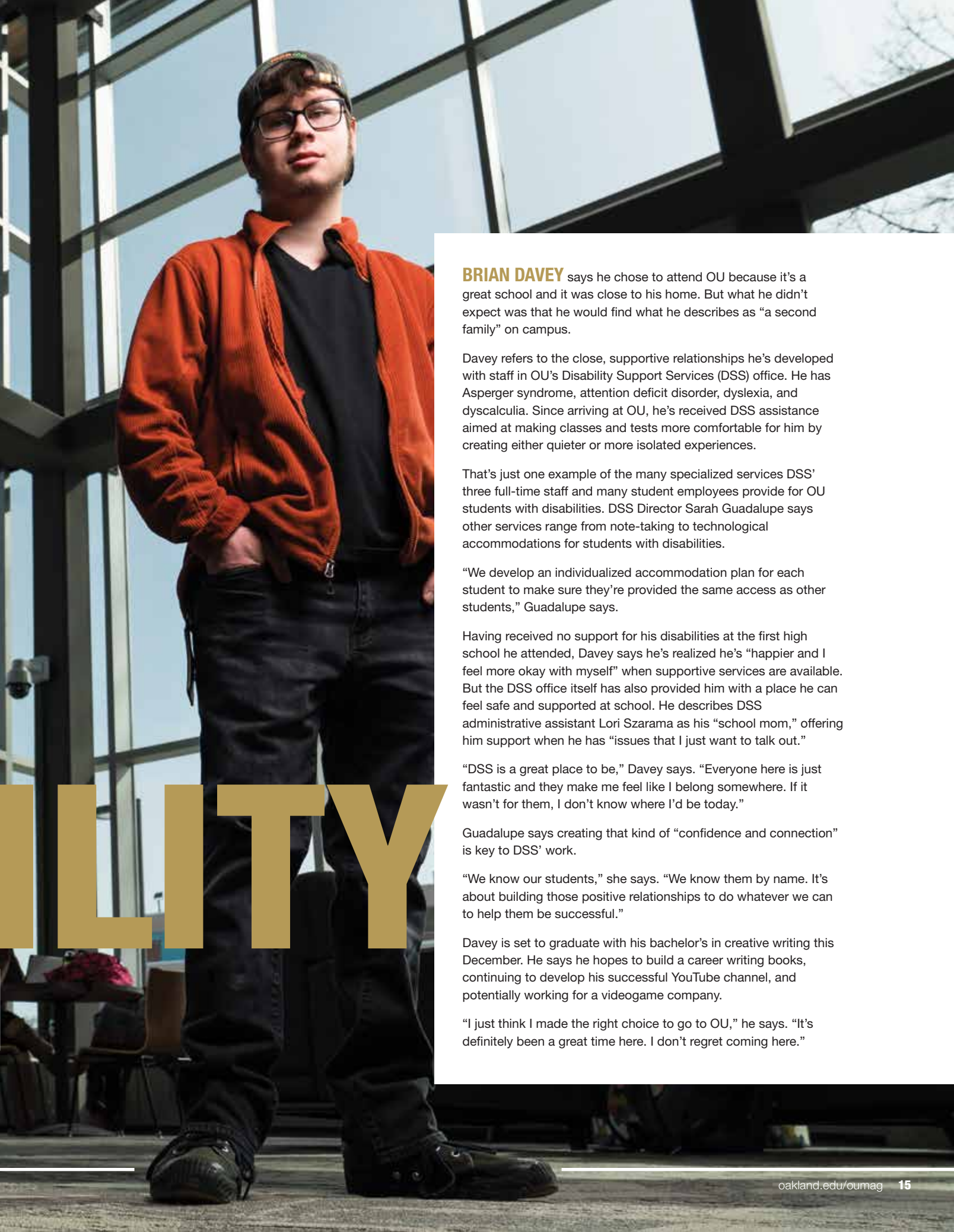


# ACCESSIBLE

**OU's specialized disability support services help students succeed**

*By Patrick Dunn*





**BRIAN DAVEY** says he chose to attend OU because it's a great school and it was close to his home. But what he didn't expect was that he would find what he describes as "a second family" on campus.

Davey refers to the close, supportive relationships he's developed with staff in OU's Disability Support Services (DSS) office. He has Asperger syndrome, attention deficit disorder, dyslexia, and dyscalculia. Since arriving at OU, he's received DSS assistance aimed at making classes and tests more comfortable for him by creating either quieter or more isolated experiences.

That's just one example of the many specialized services DSS' three full-time staff and many student employees provide for OU students with disabilities. DSS Director Sarah Guadalupe says other services range from note-taking to technological accommodations for students with disabilities.

"We develop an individualized accommodation plan for each student to make sure they're provided the same access as other students," Guadalupe says.

Having received no support for his disabilities at the first high school he attended, Davey says he's realized he's "happier and I feel more okay with myself" when supportive services are available. But the DSS office itself has also provided him with a place he can feel safe and supported at school. He describes DSS administrative assistant Lori Szarama as his "school mom," offering him support when he has "issues that I just want to talk out."

"DSS is a great place to be," Davey says. "Everyone here is just fantastic and they make me feel like I belong somewhere. If it wasn't for them, I don't know where I'd be today."

Guadalupe says creating that kind of "confidence and connection" is key to DSS' work.

"We know our students," she says. "We know them by name. It's about building those positive relationships to do whatever we can to help them be successful."

Davey is set to graduate with his bachelor's in creative writing this December. He says he hopes to build a career writing books, continuing to develop his successful YouTube channel, and potentially working for a videogame company.

"I just think I made the right choice to go to OU," he says. "It's definitely been a great time here. I don't regret coming here."

## “A real success story”

When **Lauren Denson** was wrapping up high school, her school counselor encouraged her to seek assistance in college for her learning disability.

“She told me there’s nothing wrong with seeking help when you need it,” says the St. Clair Shores resident, a junior in OU’s psychology program.

Following that advice, Denson has benefited greatly from DSS’ supportive services. Denson says she originally chose OU because of how “welcoming” it felt when she toured the campus during her senior year of high school. She was pleased when she began school to find ample support available for her learning disability, which can affect her writing skills and her reading comprehension.

“It takes a little time for me to learn things,” she says. “When I go in the classroom it takes me out of my focus.”

So, a few times a week Denson visits Oakland’s Writing Center, Tutoring Center, or consults with an academic peer mentor for help. She says the staff help her to understand unfamiliar words in her reading, or help proofread her papers. She recalls one occasion when she had a particularly important paper due, and she “wanted to make sure it was really good.” Although she’d already asked two people to proofread it, she took it to the Writing Center as well.

The result?

“I got a 90,” she says proudly.

Guadalupe describes Denson as “a real success story of how students use our services.” After changing majors three times, Denson has settled into her psychology major and is planning to apply for grad school at OU.

“I really wanted to know how the mind works and why certain people do the certain things they do,” she says. “I want to help people, mostly adolescents, children and families.”



# ACCESSIBILITY

## “Above and beyond”

When **Robbie Ivey** was 12, a severe form of muscular dystrophy began weakening his muscles, leaving him unable to perform simple tasks like turning on lights or changing the TV channel. At age 17, Ivey’s life changed again for the better when retired tech worker Bill Weis helped Ivey’s family develop a voice-activated system that could accomplish those tasks and more for him.

“It’s a game-changer,” Ivey says of the system, which uses both Google Home and Alexa. “It allows me to do most things that everybody else can.”

But just shortly after the system restored much of Ivey’s independence in his parents’ Iron River home, it was time for him to move away to college. Ivey chose to attend OU in part because his sister also attends the school and could serve as his caretaker, and partly because he could pursue his dream of studying sports management. However, he needed special accommodations to make voice-activated tasks possible on campus, including a dedicated dorm room and the installation of a high-speed router.

Fortunately, Ivey says DSS and OU’s Housing and University Technology Services departments made the transition “pretty much flawless.”

“The school was really accommodating to everything we needed,” he says. “Bill was able to quickly and easily set up the system in a couple of days down here.”

Ivey says OU has also gone “above and beyond” in supporting him outside his dorm room as well, including providing services that allow him to confidentially communicate test answers to a proctor.

“Anything I needed, it was there,” he says. “OU has been pretty awesome in helping me out.”

Ivey is currently making his way through his general education courses and looking forward to tackling his sports management studies. A football and baseball fanatic, he says his dream job would be general manager of the Green Bay Packers. Although he says the prospect of going to college was at first “a little bit intimidating,” his experience so far has been very positive.

“Having family close and being able to learn the ropes so quickly, it wasn’t so bad,” he says.

Because of OU’s dedicated faculty and staff, accommodating resources, and specialized support services, students like Ivey, Denson and Davey can have a fulfilling, successful college experience.

“All students deserve to have the same access to learning and campus life,” Guadalupe says. “Oakland provides that for students with disabilities, regardless of the amount of support needed, so they can have the confidence they need to succeed.” 🐾



© Robert Hall



# INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES *in Macomb County*

By Patrick Dunn

© Robert Hall

OU student, Zach Wood, envisioned a career with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. But his internship at the Shelby Township Police Department in fall 2018 sparked an interest in community policing. Now, he's in line to become an officer there.

The criminal justice major says Kimberly Byrd, OU director of field and student support, suggested the internship at Shelby Township PD and coordinated everything on his behalf.

"Many of our students live and work in Macomb County and want to secure jobs there," says Byrd.

*"We've worked with the county for many years to place OU students for practical learning experiences. Our students are able to network and open doors for future employment in the communities they call home."*

When the Chesterfield Township resident began his internship at the police department, he was immediately impressed with the firsthand experience he received riding along with officers.

"They were so willing to not only answer my questions but show me anything I wanted to learn," Wood says. "When we would be in a squad car on a stop, several officers would turn their laptops toward me. They told me they would go to the vehicle — but coached me through what I needed to do on the laptop."

Wood also spent time learning about other areas of the police department's work, shadowing the department's court officer and dispatcher.

"I sent him through the gamut of the department," says Lt. Jeff Bellomo, the Shelby Township PD's intern coordinator. "It's not just showing up for your tour of duty and then just riding with an officer all day."

Bellomo, a 19-year veteran police officer, says that's to give students a well-rounded experience to complement their classroom studies and prepare them for bigger things.

"We like to find our future 'best-and-brightest' when they're in college. And, if they show promise, are ambitious and eager and display the attitude our chief is looking for, they have a fast track all the way up," he says.

Wood says Bellomo was "super helpful" in guiding him onto that "fast track." Wood became a Shelby Township cadet in Jan. 2019 — positioning him to potentially go on to the police academy and become an officer at the Shelby Township PD when he graduates from OU in April 2019. He expresses excitement about his new career pathway and says an internship with Shelby Township PD is "something I would suggest to anyone."

"I was learning a lot and it was just something that really piqued my interest, seeing how officers affected people in a positive way." 🐾

# Excelling as AN EXECUTIVE

By Michael Silverstein

With a laser focus on leadership and professional development combined with a curriculum that covers executive-level business functions and global understanding, the revamped Oakland University Executive MBA (OU EMBA) is designed for experienced professionals with clinical, technical, or engineering expertise. In less than two years of alternating weekend classes, OU EMBA students graduate with the skills, credentials and confidence to lead in a dynamic global business environment.



Donna Free  Josh Scott

“The Oakland EMBA is for working professionals already in or aspiring to leadership roles,” says Donna Free, EMBA faculty director.

“Our EMBA students learn with experienced colleagues whose professional and personal diversity adds valuable perspectives to classroom discussion and projects.”

The 21-month cohort program meets Friday afternoons and Saturdays on alternate weekends. The all-inclusive EMBA tuition includes assistance registering for classes, books and meals delivered in class, and the full schedule set at the start of the program.

“The majority of our EMBA students are mid-career executives preparing for senior management or executives enhancing their business and leadership skills,” adds Free. The average Oakland EMBA student has 15 years’ professional experience; and 62 percent hold advanced clinical or technical degrees.

With dual bachelor’s degrees in engineering and law and proven global product development experience and cross-functional team leadership, OU EMBA student Denis Jordao, GM senior product engineer, knows an MBA is essential to fuel his career trajectory.

“Learning alongside experienced, high-potential professionals in a cohort model enhances the business and leadership curriculum,” he says. “Discussing concepts with classmates from different industries, countries and roles brings the concepts to life,” adds Jordao. “The emphasis on case studies and real-world situations means I’m able to apply what I learn the next day.”


The program’s focus on leadership and career development piqued Fernanda Turco’s interest. While seeking to deepen her business education and experience, she recognized that strong leadership skills deliver the power to boost careers.

“The leadership emphasis and rigorous business curriculum are clear differentiators for Oakland’s EMBA,” says Turco, GM’s Marketplace marketing manager. “As a leader, you need to have the ability to know what each part of the organization is doing, what they are communicating to you and how to use all the data effectively.”

Fellow EMBA student Liz Halabu values the leadership emphasis. “The in-depth focus on leadership helps me ensure I am treating the members of my team right, listening more intently, and giving them the tools they need to succeed,” says Halabu, owner and COO of three title agencies, as well as an attorney and partner at Halabu P.C.

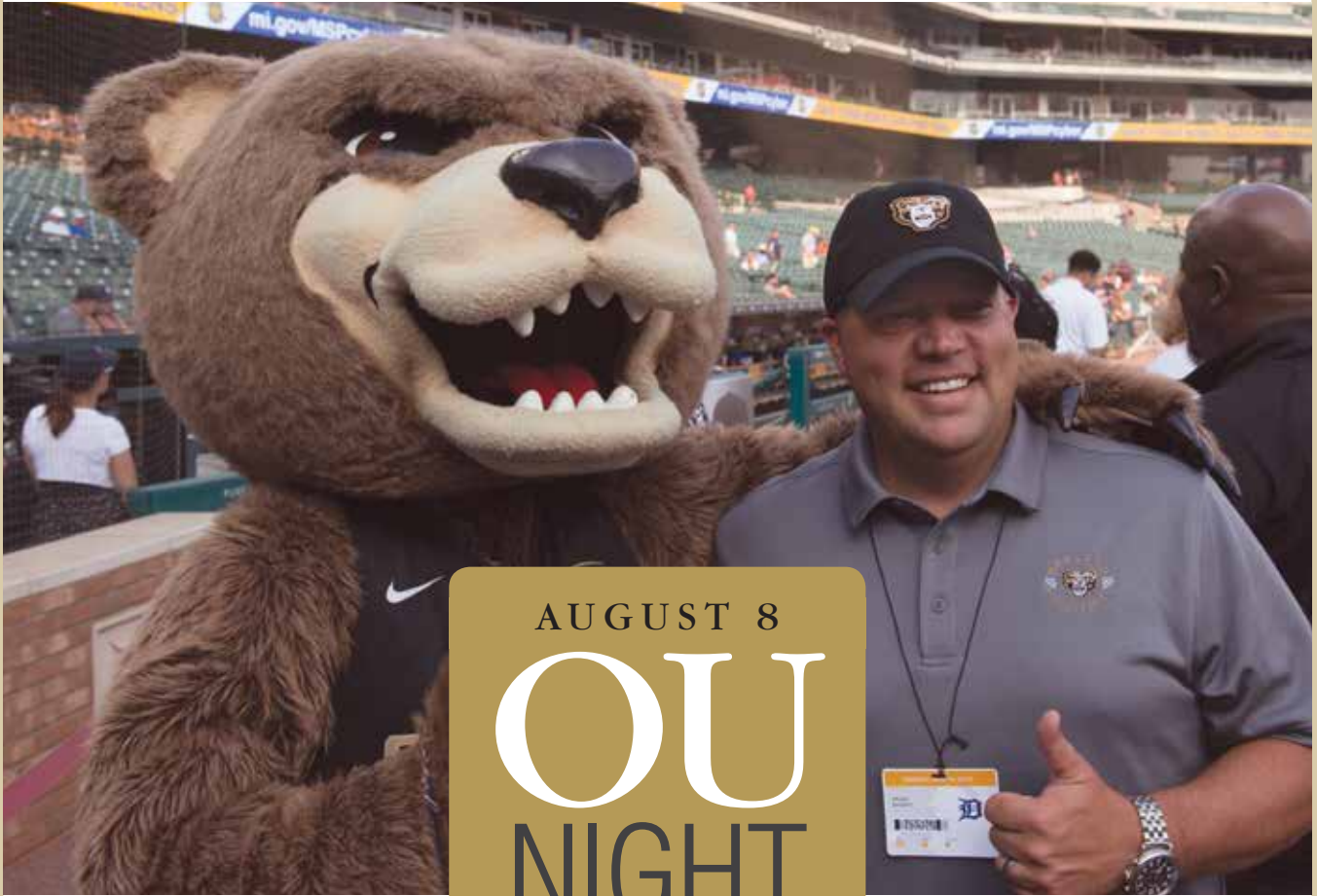
“I didn’t realize how valuable the EMBA program’s support services would be,” adds Halabu, CAS ‘12, who holds a JD from Wayne State University. “The personal touch and concierge approach Oakland’s Executive MBA staff provide is vital,” agrees Turco. ➤



 Garrett MacLean

*Denis Jordao and Fernanda Turco, both from General Motors, are building high-level leadership skills and strengthening their business knowledge in Oakland's weekend Executive MBA program.*

BASEBALL ★ PRIZES FRIENDS



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NIGHT  
*at*  
COMERICA PARK

Join us at OU Night at Comerica Park!

Meet your fellow Golden Grizzlies for a special pre-game pit stop followed by the game. Guests receive a limited edition Detroit Tigers - OU baseball cap with their ticket and a chance to win other prizes.

For tickets and more information, visit [oakland.edu/events/comerica](http://oakland.edu/events/comerica)

SAVE THE DATE  
**HOMECOMING**  
OCTOBER 11 - 12 AND REUNION WEEKEND



# FAMILY TRADITION

*By Adam DePollo*

This February, Oakland University's men's and women's swim teams were both crowned the 2019 Horizon League Champions, continuing an impressive run of championship success for the Golden Grizzlies — 41 consecutive league titles for the men's team, and 25 consecutive titles for the women.





Hundreds of swimmers have helped secure that long string of victories, but one family in particular has had an oversized impact on the history of swimming at OU.

From 1985-88, Nancy (Schermer) DeJonge and Jeff Cooper were rock stars on the men's and women's teams. Cooper was named All-American 13 times in those three years, and Nancy secured 24 All-American nods while setting 14 different school and pool records. She would go on to be inducted into Oakland Athletics Hall of Honor in 1994.

Shortly after Jeff and Nancy graduated from the University, Nancy's sister, Lynae, began making waves herself on the women's team. From 1989-92, she was named All-American a whopping 27 times while securing seven national champion titles. She followed her sister into the Hall of Honor in 1998.

Jeff and Lynae eventually married. Nancy, meanwhile, married and has two sons, Philip and Micah, who are keeping the OU family tradition alive by

swimming the 500 meter, 1000 meter, and mile events for Oakland's men's team, which now competes in NCAA Division I.

Philip, a freshman, is two years behind Micah, but the brothers have been swimming together since high school in Zeeland, Michigan. Philip has been enjoying the opportunity to swim with his older brother again at OU.

"Micah really pushes me," Philip says. "I love that about his training mentality — he always wants to get better. That really helps me, especially in this first year transitioning into the college lifestyle." For both brothers, following in their mother, aunt and uncle's footsteps enhances their own experience of swimming at OU.

"Oakland just won its 41st championship, but that goes back to when they were swimming," Micah says. "We're on the same consecutive streak as when they were here, so it's really cool for us to be part of that and help keep it going."





The brothers are proud of their relatives' successes, but when asked how they feel about seeing their mom and aunt's names up on the record board when they're about to dive into the pool, they say they don't worry too much about living up to the family name.

"It doesn't put any pressure on me at all," Philip says confidently. "Swimming has evolved so much since my mom and my aunt and uncle swam." Both brothers concede that a hint of the family competitive streak has helped them achieve so much in the water. "When my sons were going through the college decision making process, I prayed they would find a place that would feel like home to them," says Nancy. "The fact that Micah and Philip have both found that at my alma-mater, is icing on the cake."

"It feels amazing to know that they live, learn, experience new things, build relationships and of course swim at the same place that I did many years ago," she says. ➤

## OU SWIMMING FACTS

69 | league championships

186 | All-Americans  
121 men, 65 women

49 | student-athletes named to Horizon League Swimming and Diving All-Academic Teams

### UNSTOPPABLE FORCE: PETE HOVLAND

For nearly 40 years, Pete Hovland has led OU's swimming and diving teams to victory after victory, with 41 consecutive league titles for the men's team, and 25 consecutive titles for the women. Under his tutelage, the 2019 men's swimming and diving team became the only institution in Horizon League history to win six consecutive championship titles, and the women's team has never lost to a conference opponent since joining the Horizon League.

On top of his lengthy conference titles streak, Hovland has produced 13 NCAA championship qualifiers, coaching the NCAA Division II Swimmer of the Year in seven of the 18 seasons he coached. Additionally, Hovland has been named conference coach of the year 26 times, and, in 2016, was inducted into the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame. Hovland is also tied for second-longest tenured coach (39 seasons) among current NCAA Division I coaches.

Prior to becoming head coach, Hovland served as an assistant to Oakland head coach and Oakland Hall of Honor member Ernie Maglischo for two seasons, one of which was Oakland's NCAA Championship year. ➤

Robert Hall



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# 2019

## OAKLAND UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION GOLF CHALLENGE

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Join fellow OU alumni on June 10, 2019 for a unique opportunity. Engage with fellow Golden Grizzlies and support future students through the OUAA scholarship program. Join us and you'll be passing the torch to the next generation of Golden Grizzlies, helping ensure they succeed at OU.

Golfers select from the R&S Sharf course featuring a best ball format or can choose scramble play on the Katke-Cousins golf course. The cost of \$200 includes 18 holes plus cart, afterglow reception and a player gift.

**SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES STILL AVAILABLE.**

Register at [oualumni.com/events](http://oualumni.com/events).

For more information, contact Kristen Lemire  
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**INSPIRING ITALY** | September 1 – 12, 2019

**SHADES OF IRELAND** | September 7 – 16, 2019

For more information on upcoming trips, contact Amanda Fylan at (248) 364-6128 or [fylan@oakland.edu](mailto:fylan@oakland.edu).

# CAMARADERIE

By Kelli M. Titus

Military veterans know about facing challenges. Their perseverance and life experiences are unique, and require a supportive community of like-minded individuals to integrate back into civilian life.

“The military had a big impact on shaping me to be the person I am today,” says Mike Brennan, Oakland University alumnus and United States Army veteran. “I gained strength, discipline, perspective and confidence from that part of my life.”

“I feel like my education had just as big of an impact,” he says.

Brennan, CAS '11, SEHS '15, was instrumental in implementing support for veterans at Oakland University as the first liaison of Veteran Support Services (VSS) and founder of Student Veterans of OU (SVOU) student group. His role was just one of many, he attests, who played a part in improving the way OU embraces veterans.

Enlisting in the United States Army directly out of high school, Brennan was trained as a helicopter turbine mechanic, and throughout his six years of service spent much of his time traveling. In 2008, Brennan finished his enlistment, and was ready for a new adventure back home in Michigan.

“I had learned a lot about how people live in different parts of the world,” Brennan says, “so I discovered a love for sociology and anthropology, which became my undergraduate major.”

While pursuing his undergraduate degree at OU, the University established the VSS office to better accommodate veteran students, and Brennan became the first veteran liaison, helping to advocate for greater credit transfers on military training, as well as offering red, white and blue chords at graduation — honors sought to make veterans feel appreciated.

SVOU also focused on creating a welcoming space for vets, hosting “events and gatherings to foster a community among veteran students that proved vital to them succeeding in college,” Brennan says.

This camaraderie is necessary for veterans acclimating to life out of the service, agrees Eric Wuestenberg, staff coordinator at VSS.

“What we have found is that we can replicate that camaraderie here with folks who we never served with and who are from a different military branch,” Wuestenberg says. “VSS and engaged SVOU members will once again serve a greater good — they’ll help their fellow student veterans with all their questions and develop charity events and ways to give back.”

Today, there are more than 350 military-connected students at OU. The VSS has a new, welcoming space equipped with computers, meeting and lounge areas, and office spaces. And for the third straight year, the University received a gold ranking from the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency — the highest possible rating for veteran-friendliness.

“None of this happens, none of this even exists without Mike,” says Wuestenberg. “He laid the foundation to what VSS and SVOU would become: an all encompassing ‘one stop shop’ for all things military connected.”

Brennan’s drive for helping others didn’t stop at veterans — after completing his degree and time as liaison, Brennan became an admissions adviser at OU, working with inner city kids on college preparations. With this new knack for connecting with high schoolers, Brennan pursued a Master of Arts in counseling, and is now employed as a high school counselor in Ortonville, Michigan.

“As a 17 year-old kid who was enlisting in the army, I never thought I would set foot in a high school again,” confesses Brennan. “Now, I get to help students navigate the tough parts of life, as they figure out their dreams and aspirations.”

Brennan used his military experiences as stepping stones to carve his path in life. And in doing so, enhanced the lives of not only the young students he counsels, but the lives of every student veteran that passes through OU and finds comfort and camaraderie in the support services.

“Coming to school as a veteran and a non-traditional student was a challenge at first, but I realized we bring perspectives into each class that no other student could bring,” says Brennan. “We veterans have overcome so much during our military careers, that college is just one more challenge to face down.” 🌟



While Ted Lindsay made an incredible impact on the ice during his days with the Detroit Red Wings of the National Hockey League, his work with the Ted Lindsay Foundation and efforts to combat the challenges related to Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) will now leave a lasting legacy at Oakland University.

In 2018, his foundation announced a pledge of \$1 million to the Oakland University Center for Autism Outreach Services (OUCARES) to aid in teenage and adult autism programming in the community. As part of the gift agreement, OUCARES changed its name to the Joanne and Ted Lindsay Foundation Autism Outreach Services at Oakland University.

“This gift by Mr. Lindsay and his foundation is a game-changer for OUCARES and our ability to provide outreach programming to our teenage and adult populations,” said Kristin Rohrbeck, director of OUCARES. “The generosity of this commitment will allow us to dramatically change the quality of life of so many families impacted by autism in our region.”

OUCARES plans to use the gift to offer pre-employment training, and develop social programs for teens and adults impacted by ASD, such as clubs like the Teen Social Club, Women on the Spectrum Connect, Social Connections for Adults and After Hours Adult Social. With the help of the Ted Lindsay Foundation, OUCARES will also enhance programming for parents and caregivers of people with autism.

The Lindsay Foundation partnership was also appreciated by OU President Ora Pescovitz. “Because OUCARES operates as a nonprofit and is funded partly through donations, the power of this commitment, one of our single largest pledges to date for OUCARES, cannot be overstated. We are grateful to Mr. Lindsay and are committed to being good stewards of the trust he put in us.” ➤

*Note: Mr. Lindsay passed away at the age of 93 on March 4, 2019.*



© Rick Smith

## Supporting FUTURE NURSES

By Jennifer Hogan

Oakland University alumna Judith L. Ganton, SON '78, is on a mission.

Throughout her career, Ganton has focused on optimal patient care. “OU was instrumental in changing my life,” says Ganton. “I was 30 years-old when I started college. During my second year, the School of Nursing (SON) was created, and I was thrilled to get into their program.”

Ganton helped set standards for the SON. She designed the pin that is still used at the traditional pinning ceremony. She was also instrumental in establishing the OU chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society in Nursing.

“A commitment to education and patients was emphasized,” says Ganton. “Faculty prepared us for these careers in a thoughtful way.”

Today, Ganton continues her commitment to OU. She and husband Lloyd made a gift to create the Judith Colson Ganton Healing Garden. Recently, Ganton delivered the keynote address at the December 2018 commencement ceremony. Lloyd Ganton marked the occasion by creating a \$25,000 scholarship in his wife’s name. The Judith L. Ganton Nursing Scholarship will support students enrolled in an undergraduate nursing degree program, including the traditional Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), Accelerated Second Degree BSN, and RN to BSN programs.

The Gantons have dedicated more than 50 years to the care of others. They own Ganton Retirement Centers in Spring Arbor, Michigan. Judith still uses the principles she learned at OU. “My goal was, and still is, to make a positive difference in our residents’ lives,” she says. 🌟



© Adam Sparkes



## *Building a Culture of Philanthropy:* **ASPIRE. ADVANCE. ACHIEVE.**

— STUDENT CELEBRATION —

*By Jennifer Hogan*

A kickoff event engaged more than 500 OU students in the launch of the Aspire. Advance. Achieve. campaign in November 2018. The gathering brought students together at the Oakland Center to learn about the importance of philanthropy.

“We really wanted students to feel that they are a part of the campaign,” says Alison Gaudreau, senior director of campaign management. “They were given a voice and a vote to make a difference for their fellow students. It was a powerful experience.”

Students were invited to nominate an OU initiative that mattered to them such as scholarships, academic programs, student organizations and more. Students filled out nominations and hung them on banners representing five institutional campaign pillars. The Student Philanthropy Committee, along with University Advancement staff and volunteers, answered questions and handed out campaign-branded scarves to thank students for their participation.

Thanks to the generosity of OU donors, three nominations were randomly selected to receive \$1,000 each in honor of the students who submitted the nominations.

Ryan Niderstedt’s nomination for an OUWB medical school scholarship was one that was selected. OUWB student Humayra Sullivan was the lucky recipient of Niderstedt’s thoughtful idea.

“It came as a complete surprise,” says Sullivan. “I am filled with gratitude. The extra support is crucial to helping me become a psychiatrist.”

Sullivan’s area of study is mental health. Through her community service project at the HOPE Hospitality and Warming Center in Pontiac, Sullivan is an advocate for health care for the homeless.

“OUWB helps you to succeed,” says Sullivan. “You’re given emotional and mental support to get through medical school. It’s unique to have that level of care.” ➤



# CAMPAIGN UPDATE

*As of March 31, 2019*

## BY PILLAR

**STUDENT SUCCESS**  
**\$18,606,701**

**TEACHING RESEARCH  
AND DISCOVERY**  
**\$14,215,184**

**COMMUNITY COLLABORATION**  
**\$4,984,007**

**CAMPUS EXPANSION**  
**\$7,060,303**

**INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS**  
**\$10,272,106**

**TOTAL**  
**\$55,138,301**



© Rick Smith



## CELEBRATING *SMTD Students*

By Jennifer Hogan



Donald and Jan O'Dowd are iconic figures in the history of Oakland University.

President Emeritus O'Dowd and his wife came to OU in 1960. A founding faculty member of the psychology department, President Emeritus O'Dowd served in many administrative positions until he was named the first president of the newly independent Oakland University in 1970.

"Being involved in OU from its earliest days was the most important thing we ever did," says O'Dowd. "My original goal was to provide a high quality liberal arts education to young people in Southeast Michigan."

President Emeritus O'Dowd played a leading role in many initiatives, including the development of Meadow Brook Theatre. The O'Dowds love the performing arts, and that passion led to the creation of the Jan and Don O'Dowd Performing Arts Scholarship Endowment to benefit students in the School of Music, Theatre and Dance (SMTD).

OU students Claire Little and Kristin Rebera are the first O'Dowd Scholars. Little is studying dance at OU, while Rebera is pursuing musical theatre.

"When I found out I was a recipient of the O'Dowd Scholarship, I just burst into tears," says Little. "It was so humbling. There are not many scholarships for



students in the performing arts. Having this support will help me pursue a professional career in dance."

Rebera adds, "We need artists to tell stories, to reflect and be a part of the culture. After vocal surgery this year, I wasn't sure if I could continue. Receiving this honor was the sign I needed to continue to study musical theatre."

The O'Dowds are proud to help SMTD students. As President Emeritus O'Dowd says, "The performing arts are vital to the world." 🎭

*O'Dowd Scholarship recipients Claire Little (left) is a dance major in OU's School of Music, Theatre and Dance, while Kristin Rebera (right) is a musical theatre major.*

© Robert Hall





## CORPORATE *Collaboration*

*By Jennifer Hogan*

Ten Japanese companies came to OU on February 7, for Japan Career Day. The purpose of the day was for the companies to tour the campus and take part in a career fair with students.

FANUC, the largest manufacturer of industrial robotics in the world, participated in the event. FANUC is a longtime partner of the School of Engineering and Computer Science (SECS). The company made a significant gift of equipment that led to the development of an industrial robotics and automation program, and continues to support the program to this day. Paul Aiello, director of education for FANUC, America says the future is bright for OU engineering students.

“We’re very proud of the strong relationship we’ve built with Oakland University,” says Aiello. “By embracing technologies such as robotics and Industrial IoT, these graduates will secure rewarding jobs. We look forward to working with OU in the future.”

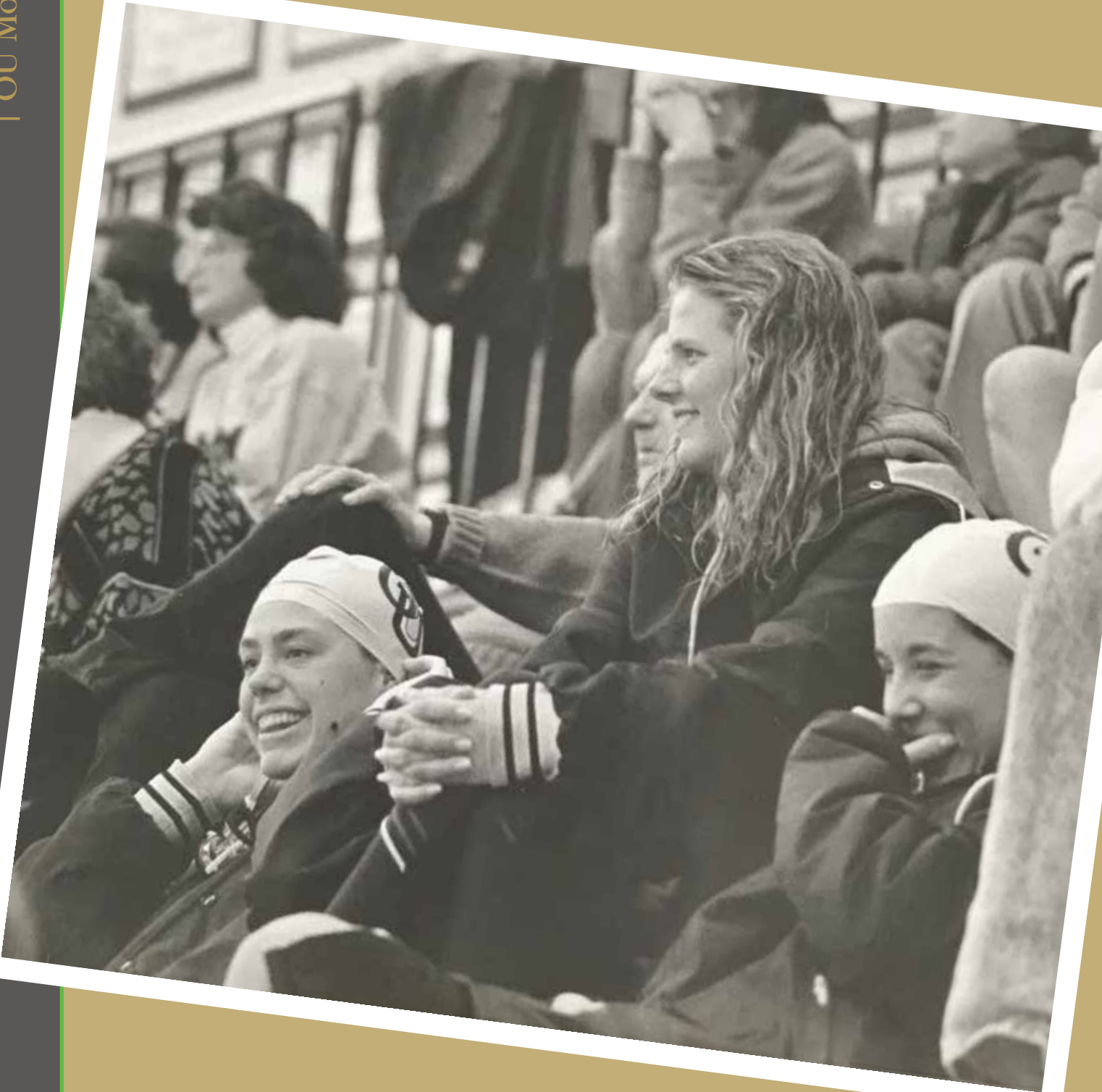
Creating a skilled and knowledgeable future workforce is essential for these companies as well as the state of Michigan. The Japanese business community is a vital partner in economic development. Today, 250 Japanese companies employ approximately 13,000 Michigan residents. A goal of Japan Career Day is to connect talented, motivated students with professional opportunities at these companies.

“My experience at the Japan Career Day was special,” says Padra Xiong, human resources representative at FANUC. “It’s impressive how many technical skills these students already have.”

Japan Career Day was the result of a collaboration with event partners JETRO, Oakland County Workforce Development and SECS. ➤



© John McTaggart



In 1988, OU students on the women's swim team watch their classmates compete in a diving competition. From left: Nancy (Schermer) DeJonge, Kristi (Spicer) Moore and Ginnie Johnson. ➤



# 2019 Downtown Rochester Events Calendar

Farmers' Market  
May 4 - October 26

Deck Art  
May 9 & 10

Music in the Park  
June 13 & 20, 27  
July 4, 11, 18 & 25

Junk in the Trunk  
June 22

Sidewalk Sales  
July 11-13

Explorers Club  
July 11- August 3

Dancin' in the Street  
July 12

Movies in the Moonlight  
July 13, 20, 27 & August 3

Rockin' Rods in Rochester  
August 11

Junk in the Trunk  
August 17

Art & Apples Festival@  
September 6 - 8

Farm to Table Dinner  
September 22

Rochester Mills Oktoberfest  
September 27 & 28

Rochester Posed  
October 3

Trick or Treat Downtown  
October 19

Winter Farmers' Market  
Thursday Nov. 7 - Dec. 19

Holiday Expo  
November 11

Festival of Trees  
November 22-24

Lagniappe  
November 25

The Big, Bright Light Show  
November 25 - January 5, 2020

Small Business Saturday  
November 30

Kris Kringle Market  
December 6 & 7

Christmas Parade  
December 8

Caroling in the City  
December 15

Fire & Ice Festival  
January 17 - 19, 2020

For more information call 248.656.0060 or visit [downtownrochestermi.com](http://downtownrochestermi.com).

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## GRADUATE PROGRAMS

**ESOSA EKHORAGBON** is in his element when he's solving real-world problems. It's why he came to OU from Nigeria. Now he's a graduate research assistant in OU's Applied Electromagnetics and Wireless Lab, helping to improve wireless systems — and making the world a better place.

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