

The background of the cover is a photograph of a person's hands holding a bunch of leafy greens with vibrant red and yellow stems. The person is wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt. The overall tone is natural and focused on agriculture or food science.

Fall 2019 OAKLAND UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE



*Unearthing*  
KNOWLEDGE

Discover the educational endeavors of OU's campus community

*Introducing the...*



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**OU Credit Union** embodies a culture of philanthropy, and we will continue to lead the way in encouraging investment in our community. To further our commitment, we've established the Desk Drawer Fund, a foundation to support the communities we serve.

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DESK DRAWER FUND

A Foundation Supporting the  
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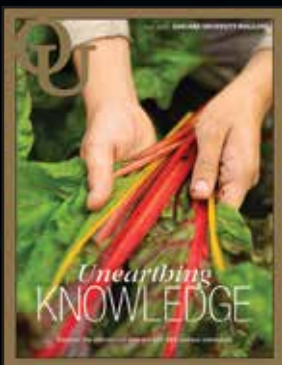
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### ON THE COVER

The University's Student Organic Farm harvests over 50 different types of vegetables, fruits, flowers and herbs, which allows OU students, faculty and staff to conduct research in a variety of interest areas.

Photo by Robert Hall

*OU Magazine* reflects the University's goals, revealing articles that explore the fostering of student success and value of an OU degree, the discovery and utilization of knowledge through research, the efforts in expanding community relationships, and the advancement in diversity, equity and inclusion. Each issue will focus on one of these vital initiatives and the strides being made as the university of choice.

Robert Hall

## PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE



Welcome to Oakland University, and the fall issue of Oakland University Magazine.

This latest issue focuses on the many exciting and engaging ways research at OU is making a difference in the lives of our students, faculty, staff and communities. Conducting impactful research is one of the four primary goals in OU's strategic plan, and it is an endeavor that is not only having a transformative impact on current academic experiences, but will play a central role in our future.

Last December, OU rose to the second-highest tier of research universities in the Carnegie Classification of Higher Education. This tier features colleges and universities with "high research activity," a designation held by only 3.1 percent of the 4,424 colleges and universities on the Carnegie Classification list.

Throughout the University, faculty and students are engaged in research aimed at improving the lives of people and communities. In these pages, you'll learn about the timely efficiency of organic farming, an undergrad geology student studying sign language to help deaf patients communicate with health care providers, OU's extensive collection of medieval literature, how applied electromagnetics is improving wireless communications in vehicles, and a human-interest story about OUWB faculty and students providing care for diabetic youth at a local camp.

We hope you find Oakland University to always be welcoming community of pride and inclusion, and an institution committed to furthering understanding through research and knowledge.

Hope to see you on campus,

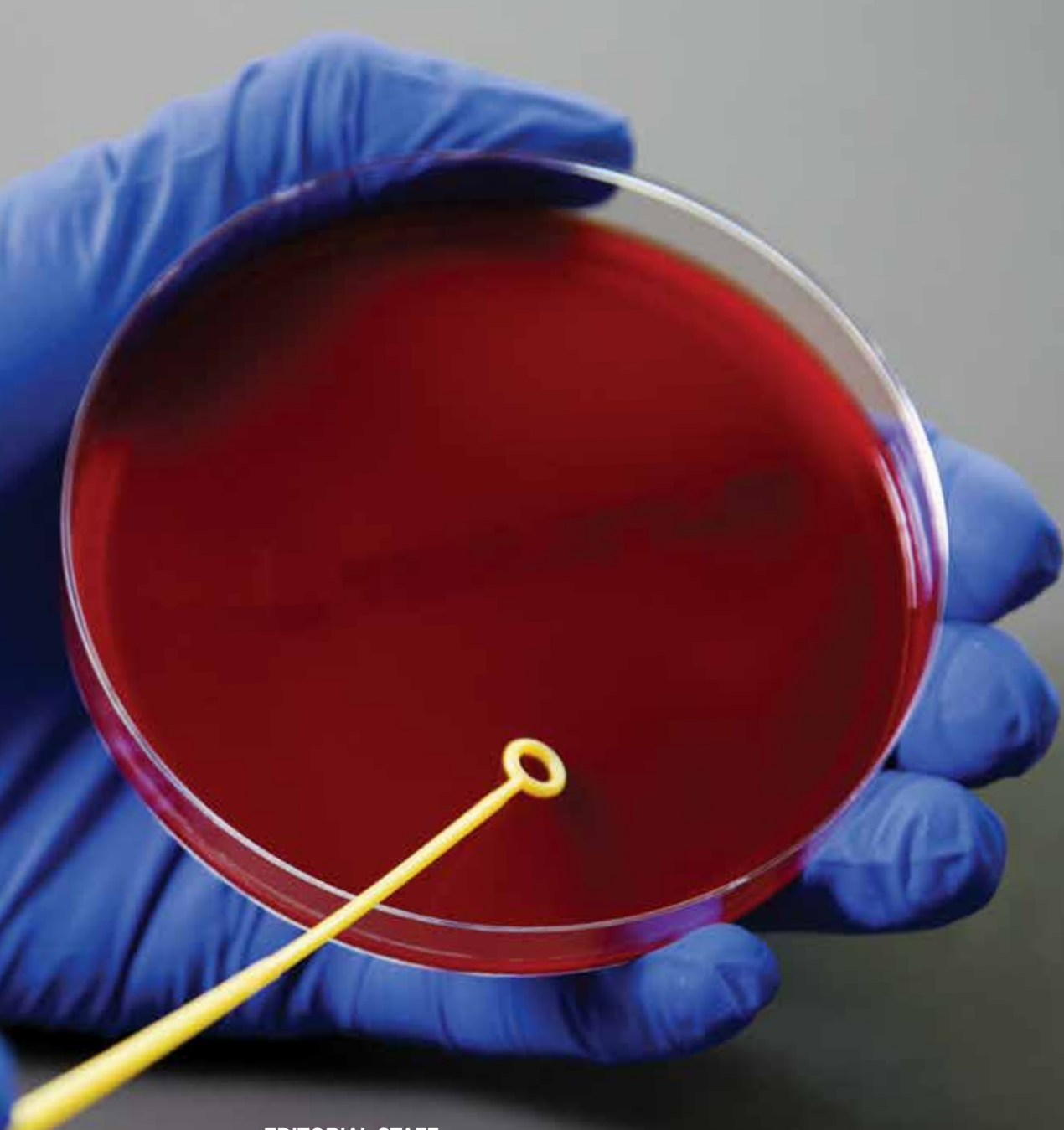
**Ora Hirsch Pescovitz, M.D.**  
President

### 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.



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**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.

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Oakland University is an equal opportunity and affirmative action institution.



The Campus Student Organic Farm (CSOF) at Oakland University provides the campus community with a number of opportunities in experiential learning, research, and health promotion. Recently, CSOF launched a crowdfunding campaign to raise funds to expand their hoophouse, which will allow the farm to become even more sustainable in the future.

With over 50 different types of vegetables, fruits, flowers and herbs grown on the farm, CSOF offers research to students, faculty and staff in a variety of fields including ecology, biological and energy conservation, parasitology, and sustainability. ➤

Explore the CSOF at [oakland.edu/biology/organic-farm](http://oakland.edu/biology/organic-farm).



## IN PURSUIT OF DISCOVERY

### University leadership retreat examines effective ways to enhance research endeavors.

Oakland University is a driving force of discovery, endeavoring to “be recognized as a strong research and scholarly environment focused on creative endeavors and on the discovery, dissemination and utilization of knowledge,” Oakland University Strategic Plan, Goal 2.

In pursuit of this goal, University leadership met this summer to consider ways to enhance OU’s research and scholarly environment for faculty and students. Chief Research Officer, Dr. David Stone, led the group through a series of discussions about targeted investments in research, strengthening research infrastructure and providing more collaborative research across disciplines.

The retreat shed light on effective ways to reach goal 2, focusing efforts on faculty research, including the hiring, retention and workload policies of faculty, the promotion of research funding, and undergraduate and graduate student involvement. The retreat also uncovered ways to identify types of investments that would be best suited to growing research, and the need to integrate research across faculty and students at Oakland University, the Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine, and Beaumont.

Additionally, University leadership discussed allocating more time, effort and resources to the expansion and development of OU as an R2 institution. R2 status strengthens the University’s ability to attract external grants and appeal to industry partners. “This will also enhance our students’ experiences,” says Dr. Stone. 🐾

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Oakland University is ranked as a tier two (R2) research university in the Carnegie Classification of Higher Education. This tier features colleges and universities with “high research activity,” and is categorized as such based on the number of doctoral degrees awarded and amount of total research expenditures.

The R2 status enhances the University’s opportunities for grants, industry partners, high-quality faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate and undergraduate students.



# SIGNING IN

## **Undergraduate biology student shines light on ASL interpreting in health care**

*By Adam DePollo*

Oakland University undergraduate student, RaeAnne Goodwin, found that her curiosity for studying American Sign Language (ASL) opened up a whole new world of experiences.

“I met so many amazing people in my classes, and they were so inspiring,” says Goodwin. “I hadn’t known very much about the deaf and hard-of-hearing community, so it was amazing to learn so much about the community.”

Goodwin, a senior pursuing a Bachelor of Science in biology, is one of many undergraduate honors students who actively conducts academic research. With a specialization in human anatomy, Goodwin’s

career and research goals focused on health care. But, through studying ASL, she learned about the issues experienced by those deaf and hard-of-hearing when trying to communicate with health care professionals, and decided to intertwine these into her research.

“People have told me about having doctor’s appointments canceled because an ASL interpreter couldn’t be found or didn’t show up on time,” Goodwin says. “Some have even had their doctor try to convince a family member to interpret for them, which can be troubling and awkward when you’re talking about sensitive health issues.”



**“I LOOKED INTO STUDIES ON THE AVAILABILITY OF ASL INTERPRETING SERVICES AND FOUND THAT THERE WAS LITTLE INFORMATION OUT THERE.”**



*RaeAnne Goodwin*

“I looked into studies on the availability of ASL interpreting services and found that there was little information out there,” she continues. “And there was even less that was specific to Michigan.”

Finding that gap in research solidified Goodwin’s decision – with the working title of her senior thesis “An Exploration of the Availability of Certified Medical American Sign Language Interpreters in Rural v. Urban Areas in the State of Michigan,” Goodwin will look into the availability of certified medical ASL interpreters in health care settings. Specifically, Goodwin strives

to identify the differences in the availability of ASL interpreters between urban and rural areas within Michigan, paying special attention to how these affect the waiting times and care of patients. It’s a topic with important real-life implications, and her research will be among the first systematic studies on the topic in Michigan.

Goodwin hopes that through this research, shortages of certified medical ASL interpreters can be acknowledged and steps to possible solutions addressed. While she notes being “a bit nervous” about taking on such an important topic at

the undergraduate level, Goodwin is excited about the research opportunity and looking forward to the challenge. ▶

Learn more about Oakland University’s undergraduate research at [oakland.edu/hc/research](https://oakland.edu/hc/research).



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## GUT Feeling

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*By Adam DePollo*

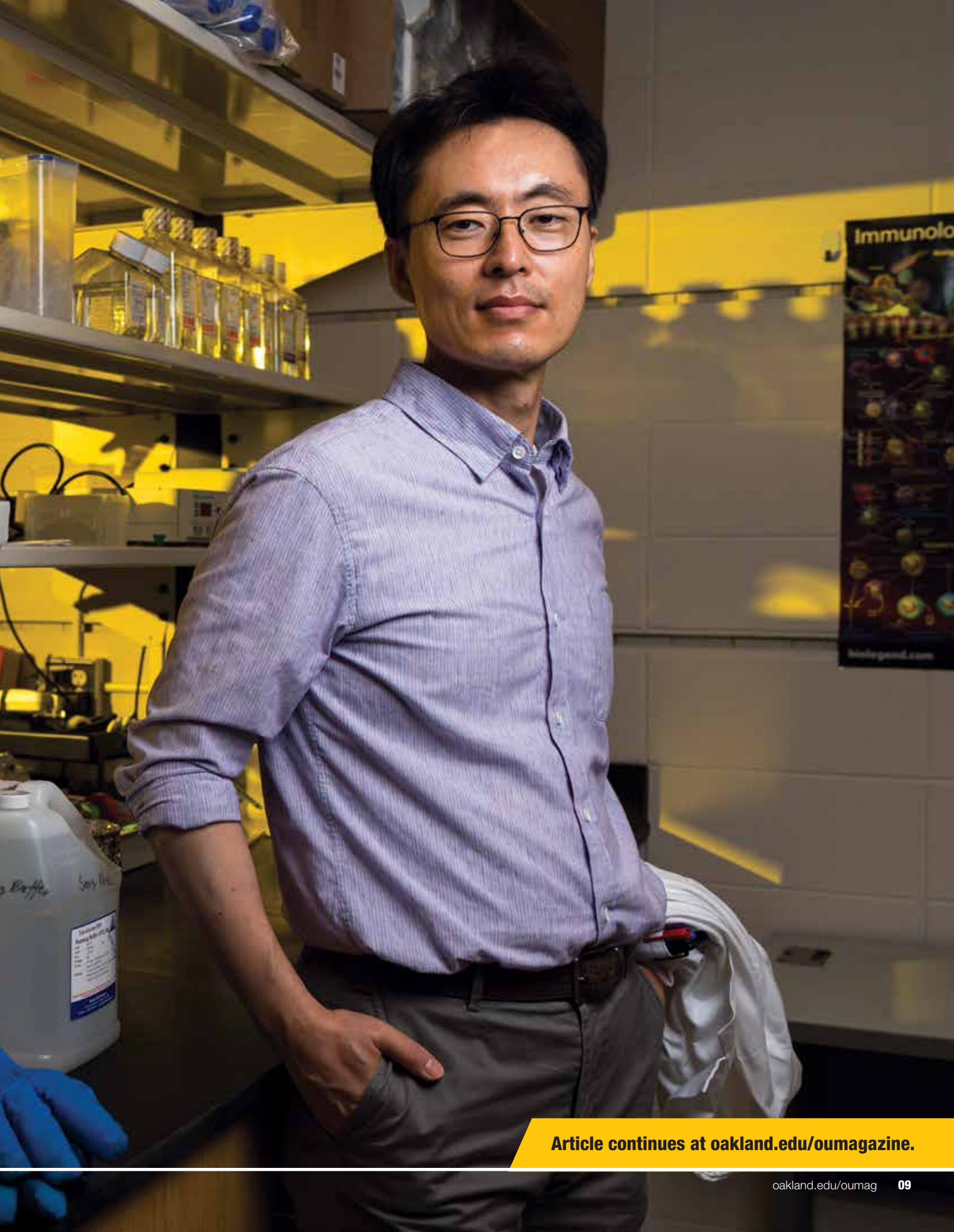
Most of us might not like to think too hard about the inner workings of our digestive systems. But in recent years, scientists studying the alimentary canal have been making fascinating discoveries that suggest our stomachs might be doing a lot more for us than just digesting our dinner.

One of the most fertile areas of study for those scientists has been a colony of bacteria living in our intestines. We've known for decades that our intestines are populated by a large collection of microbial organisms mainly bacteria that help with digestion and can boost our immune systems. But in the last ten years or so, researchers like Dr. Sang Rhee, an assistant professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at Oakland University, have begun to develop a much more nuanced understanding of what else those bacteria can do — or not do — to our bodies.

Rhee's specialty is mucosal immunology, which is the study of immune responses in our mucus membranes, including the throat, lungs, and, of course, intestines. In the past, his research has focused on cancer and inflammatory diseases affecting the digestive system, which he says are serious health threats in the United States.

In the past few years, however, Dr. Rhee's research has expanded, sparked in part by research showing a surprising link between gut bacteria and brain health.

"We've known for a long time that people suffering from inflammatory bowel diseases often experience problems with memory and language use. It's sometimes called 'brain fog,'" Rhee says. "Several studies, including ours, have shown there may be a link between those diseases and degenerative neurological conditions like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's." ➤



Article continues at [oakland.edu/oumagazine](http://oakland.edu/oumagazine).



# *Control* UNDER PRESSURE

*By Laura Phillips*

Sitting in a hospital waiting room while a loved one is in surgery, we all have a similar hope. We want the medical team in that operating room to be the smartest, best trained and most capable group. However, according to OU School of Nursing (SON) faculty, Andrea Bittinger, DNP, CRNA, we should also want those professionals to have high emotional intelligence (EI).

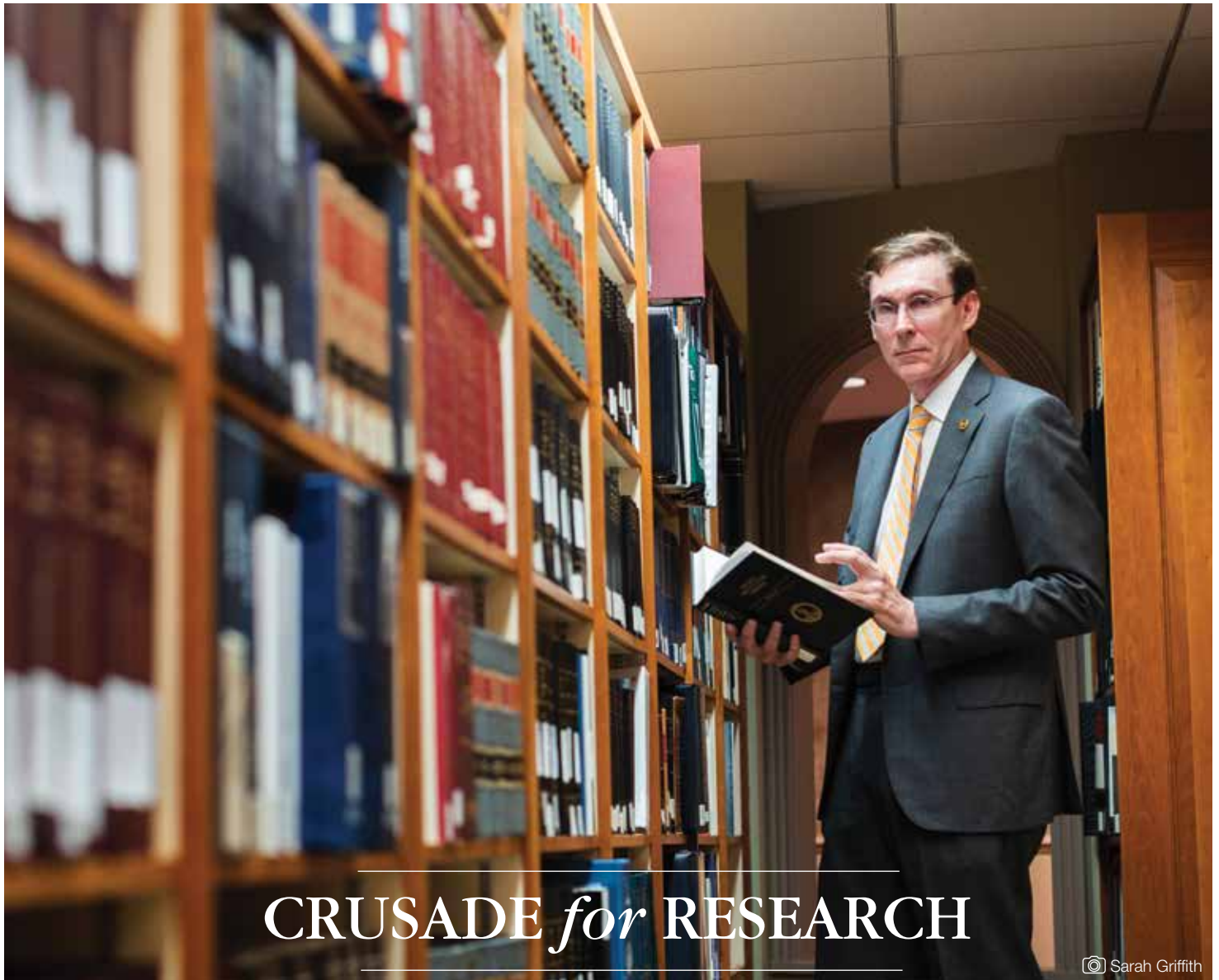
“If you think about the operating environment, it has high stress conditions that can change on a dime. It can be overwhelming, when things are not going well and people are upset,” Bittinger explains. “You have to have control over your own emotions, filter out stress and communicate well.”

Emotional intelligence, in short, is the ability to perceive, understand, integrate and regulate one’s emotions. Bittinger, SON ’89, ’96 and ’18, has conducted innovative doctoral research that links EI to workplace stress levels for Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNA), which may help to shed light on overall professional performance and longevity.

According to SON Dean Judy Didion, RN, Ph.D., this research not only helps with the CRNA program admission decisions, but can also impact student learning. “Working with individuals, side-by-side as a health care team, as well as patients and families requires excellent communication skills, sensitivity to others’ needs and perspectives, as well as a sense of self understanding and reflection,” Didion says. “We want to consider this as we shape the future nursing workforce.” ➤

**Article continues at [oakland.edu/oumagazine](http://oakland.edu/oumagazine).**

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© Sarah Griffith

## CRUSADE *for* RESEARCH

by Jennifer Hogan

Oakland University houses an extensive collection of medieval literature from renowned scholar Jonathan Riley-Smith, Ph.D. The collection, which focuses on the Crusades, includes close to 1,000 books and publications, 5,810 slides, thousands of digital images and more from Riley-Smith's personal library.

Now, history alumnus Lee Casey, CAS '79, is making it possible for students to have access to this collection.

"The Crusades have always been an interest of mine," says Casey, a partner in the law firm of BakerHostetler in Washington, D.C. "Riley-Smith was a leading crusades historian, and I wanted to make sure that students and other scholars have access to this important compilation of historical documents."

Casey created the Riley-Smith Crusades Scholarship for Research. The gift supports graduate or advanced undergraduate students in the history department who are studying the crusades as part of their degree program. "I hope this

scholarship allows students to focus on their research so they can share what they learn from the collection," says Casey.

James Naus, associate professor and chair of the history department, says Casey's gift will help students attend conferences and publish papers about the Crusades, bringing attention to important issues from that time period.

"People need to study the Crusades to better understand current global conflicts," says Naus. "Mr. Casey's gift enables students to contribute to the understanding of how history impacts the world today." 🐾

Explore Oakland University Special Collections at [library.oakland.edu/collections/special](http://library.oakland.edu/collections/special).

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*Lee Casey, CAS '79, peruses books inside the law library of BakerHostetler in Washington, D.C.*

# STRENGTHENING THE SIGNAL



## OU grad makes sure car antennas are up to snuff

By Patrick Dunn

From GPS data to phone calls, the modern car antenna transmits far more than just FM and AM radio signals. And at OU, graduate student Esosa Ekoragbon is one of the people who makes sure these crucial functions work correctly.

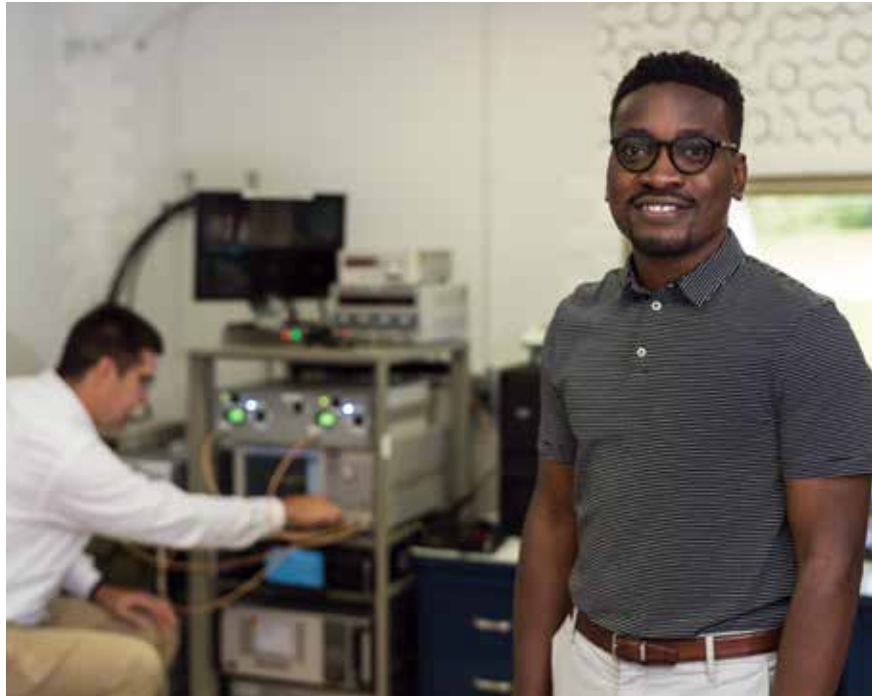
Ekoragbon, who is pursuing a Master of Science degree in electrical and computer engineering, is a graduate research assistant in OU's Applied Electromagnetics and Wireless Lab (AEWL). The lab includes both an outdoor antenna range and an indoor antenna anechoic chamber used to test car antennas. Its services are used by a variety of area automakers and original equipment manufacturers (OEMs).

"It's very hands-on," Ekoragbon says. "We're solving a real problem."

Ekoragbon comes to OU from his home country of Nigeria, where he completed his bachelor's degree in electrical and electronic engineering at the University of Benin. He's loved technology from a young age, but when it came time to consider grad schools he was interested in studying somewhere he could work on real-world problems. The opportunity to work with numerous major companies at the AEWL proved an ideal fit for him.

"I'm in a really good location," Ekoragbon says. "Auburn Hills and Rochester are close to the industry. That's really how I made the final decision."

He says his work at AEWL so far has been "intense," due to the rigorous testing required to ensure the products he's working on are ready for consumers. But Ekoragbon relishes that challenge. He and his fellow students work closely with automakers and OEMs, not just running tests but also offering analysis and input



on the results to help their clients solve problems.

"We're helping them to achieve their goals," he says. "It makes you feel good, being a part of the process of new technology."

AEWL director Dan Aloï says people often assume that his work entails "punching away at a computer or reading books, coming up with formulas." But in actuality, he says his students are working with "very high-end equipment" and using interpersonal skills to communicate with major companies who might one day offer them a job.

Ekoragbon's experience moving from Nigeria to America has been eye-opening. He praises the well-equipped labs and ample resources available to him at OU, as well as the opportunity to work with hands-on projects at AEWL.

But as in Nigeria, he's also notices broader social challenges – and works to address them. At home, he volunteered with the Girl-LEAD Project, which provides much-needed entrepreneurial education to young Nigerian women, as well as AIESEC, an international youth-run organization that provides young people with leadership development skills, and

ImpactLabs Nigeria, a program that works with students to develop engineering solutions for targeted communities. And he spent his spring break helping homeless people in Los Angeles' Skid Row as a volunteer with OU's International Oasis program.

"Coming from a developing country, we have lots of problems, too. I see these things every day," Ekoragbon says. "But in America, some people don't believe things like that exist. Being able to go [to Skid Row] and see for myself what was happening, I was able to do something and contribute to an extent."

Ekoragbon aspires to continue making the world a better place – and to eventually pursue a Ph.D, ideally while continuing to work closely with industry. But he doesn't anticipate moving any time soon. He says he hopes to stay in Michigan, praising the state's combination of major career opportunities and a "peaceful" environment. ➤

Discover more research opportunities in the School of Engineering and Computer Science at [oakland.edu/secs](http://oakland.edu/secs).



### TIME TO COME HOME

# HOMECOMING AND REUNION WEEKEND 2019

It was one of those perfect Michigan fall weekends – the air was crisp, the leaves were falling and OU alumni were coming home.

This year's Homecoming and Reunion Weekend, held October 11-12, was comprised of athletic events, academic unit reunions and alumni celebration activities. The weekend kicked off with a rousing performance by the Oak Park High School Marching Band at Matilda's Birthday Bash event held at the Elliott Tower. The premiere event on Saturday was the Homecoming Festival, where guests reconnected with fellow alumni, and enjoyed fun and games with a family festival, pumpkin decorating, and more. Featured reunions at the festival included Center for Multicultural Initiatives and Black Alumni Chapter Social, English department, and athletics reunion. ➤

See the recap of events, photos and more at [oakland.edu/oumagazine](http://oakland.edu/oumagazine).

📷 Chuck Cloud, Robert Hall, Garrett MacLean, and John McTaggart





MAKE NEW FRIENDS AND KEEP THE OLD,  
ONE IS SILVER THE OTHER IS GOLDEN.



# PREVENTATIVE PT

By Maiya Goldston

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in four Americans aged 65+ fall each year. Oakland University physical therapists are finding new ways to help reduce these risks.

*“Preventative measures such as exercise, fall prevention and home modifications have been found to be effective for older adults.”*

*says Dr. Sara Arena, associate professor of physical therapy at OU.*

To better utilize these measures, Arena, alongside colleague Dr. Chris Wilson, have created the Home-Based Older Person, Upstream Prevention, Physical Therapy (HOP-UP-PT) program. This program provides early preventive care for older adults that are at-risk of being homebound.

“This program has the potential to improve the quality of life of the older adult participants at a significantly lower cost burden than that which has been reported for a fall-related injury,” Arena says. ➤



Article continues at [oakland.edu/oumagazine](http://oakland.edu/oumagazine).

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# WE'RE TAKING THE SHOW —≡ ON THE ROAD ≡—

**No need to pack your bags or jump on a plane... we are bringing Oakland University to Florida!** Alumni, retirees and friends are gathering in Bonita Springs to enjoy the best of campus life. Join President Ora Hirsch Pescovitz and OU faculty for a day of fun activities while connecting with fellow Golden Grizzlies and Pioneers. Top faculty experts will present on interesting and thought-provoking topics.

## **OU ON THE ROAD: *CLASSES WITHOUT QUIZZES*** February 28-29, 2020 | Bonita Springs, Florida



**Election 2020:  
The State of the Race**  
Dave Dulio, Ph.D.  
Professor, Political Science  
Director of the Center for  
Civic Engagement



**The British Invasion of  
American Rock and Roll**  
Mike Mitchell, DMA  
Professor of Music, Choral Music  
Director of Choral Activities  
Conductor of the Oakland Chorale,  
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**Mini Med School**  
Rebecca Pratt, Ph.D.  
Professor, Biomedical Sciences  
Oakland University William  
Beaumont School of Medicine

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Bernie Kent, JD, CPA, PFS School of Business Administration '71

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Special hotel rates available.

For more information, visit [oakland.edu/giving/engage](https://oakland.edu/giving/engage).

# HAPPY, HEALTHY CAMPERS



## Faculty and students at OUWB care for youth with diabetes in the great outdoors

*By Mary Gunderson-Switzer*

Summer camps make for lifelong memories of new friends, swimming, horseback riding, archery and campfire songs – and Camp Midicha is no exception, although it serves another important purpose.

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) Camp Midicha is a place that encourages hundreds of diabetic campers (ages 5-18) to achieve effective, independent daily management of their diabetes.

During the two one-week sessions of overnight camp, a caring community of medical professionals, medical student volunteers, trained counselors and certified dieticians ensure campers have an enjoyable, educational and safe time.

For the Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine (OUWB) students, involvement with the camp began when David Tobin, OUWB '17, and Julia Orlovskaja, OUWB '17 (both who have Type 1 diabetes),

volunteered at Camp Midicha in 2013, and suggested opening this rewarding opportunity to other students. Endocrinologist and OUWB associate professor, Dr. Lowell Schmeltz, thus began collaborating with Camp Midicha's medical director, Dr. Bern Degnan. And, with preceptorship assistance from Professor Virginia Uhley, OUWB endocrinology course director, the medical school's volunteer summer preceptorship program was established.

As part of the preceptorship each June, OUWB students spend two weeks rotating within adult and pediatric endocrinology offices, familiarizing themselves with Type 1 diabetes management, various insulins, and diabetes technology (such as insulin pumps and continuous blood sugar monitors) in preparation for the camp.

“As volunteers of Camp Midicha medical staff, OUWB students oversee diabetes management for 8-10 campers under the supervision of an



endocrinologist, assisting in administering insulin at meals, taking shifts in the infirmary, and staffing other camp activities,” explains Schmeltz, now chairman for Camp Midicha and a member of the National ADA Youth Strategies Committee.

But the benefits of camp reach far beyond standard hands-on training, as Schmeltz witnesses OUWB students blossoming into confident practitioners.

“I’ve seen medical students have their first patient interactions and deliver their first injections,” Schmeltz says. “To witness the two-week transformation from timid students to confident medical staff is extremely rewarding.”

One of those students, Marty Randall, is a fourth-year medical student who’s volunteered at the camp for three summers.

“Camp Midicha is probably the most formative experience of my medical school career,” says Randall. “After my first year at camp, I was hooked. Now, I’m applying for a residency in pediatrics.”

Medical students are required to complete a faculty-approved academic/research project related to diabetes or the camp and present at an OUWB Research Symposium. Randall’s research project revolved around camper swim time, comparing campers who disconnected their (non-waterproof) insulin pumps to campers who stayed connected with a waterproof pump, or campers who used insulin shots. Findings showed that, on average, campers who disconnected had a greater increase in their blood glucose levels, highlighting increasing choices in daily management.

Randall most enjoys seeing campers reach new goals in self-care, with

encouragement from peers who share their challenges.

“Four kids in my cabin had never given themselves insulin shots, and by the end of the week, they were,” Randall proudly says. “While other campers became proficient in counting carbohydrates.”

Camp Midicha seems to be a place nobody outgrows.

“There’s something special about this camp that just grabs you and doesn’t let go,” Randall says. “As I continue my medical training, I hope to keep coming back.” 🌙

Find out more about the community initiatives at Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine at [oakland.edu/medicine](http://oakland.edu/medicine).



# REDEFINING

*By Michael Downes*

Giving people a better understanding of diversity is a high-priority need for educators. Chaunda Scott, an associate professor in the School of Education and Human Services (SEHS), is spearheading the charge to help new wave teachers familiarize themselves with the complicated topic.

As a relatively new area of study, “the demand is high, but the course work is low,” explains Scott. To fill that void, she is working to prepare people with skills to manage diversity.

“It’s the way of the world, it’s coming at us, it’s here to stay,” says Scott. “Our neighbors and family members are made up of all types of people and in order to focus on that we need to educate people on how to manage that.”

# DIVERSITY

A watercolor-style illustration of a diverse crowd of people. The figures are rendered in various colors including blue, red, yellow, purple, and black, set against a light, textured background. The word 'DIVERSITY' is overlaid in large, bold, dark grey letters at the top left.

Scott's determined to change people's perspective of the word 'diversity.' It tends to categorize people and limit their expectations.

SEHS is offering students two opportunities to learn more about diversity. The school offers a graduate certificate in human diversity, inclusion and social justice as well as an Annual Diverse Voices Conference, providing a platform for students' voices to be heard. It shows how students are breaking those expectations and how they've propelled themselves beyond limitations.

"We are all diverse," Scott explains. "People think diversity is race and gender, but we are all diverse and bring something different and valuable to the table."

The word 'diversity' is often associated with the word 'different,' but Scott believes that we should look past those superficial discrepancies and focus on the deeper correlations.

"We need to appreciate and value the differences as well as similarities in all people. In many ways we are similar, but we don't allow it to get to that point because we let the differences overshadow it." ➤

Learn about the diversity training offered in the School of Education and Human Services at [oakland.edu/sehs](http://oakland.edu/sehs).







# MAKING HISTORY

By Kelli M. Titus

How did Nancy Zimmelman Lenoil, CAS '83, carve herself a space in history as the first female State Archivist of California? With a devotion for history itself.

Born and raised in Michigan, Lenoil's love for history was first sparked by her father; a passion that drove her to pursue a bachelor's degree in history with a minor in American studies at Oakland University. Upon her arrival to the University, Lenoil was captivated by the nature of OU's history department, including the supreme mentorship of its faculty.

"I gained a tremendous amount of analytical, research and practical skills from my classes," explains Lenoil. "The professors we're so approachable, and their mentorship set me on a path toward this career."

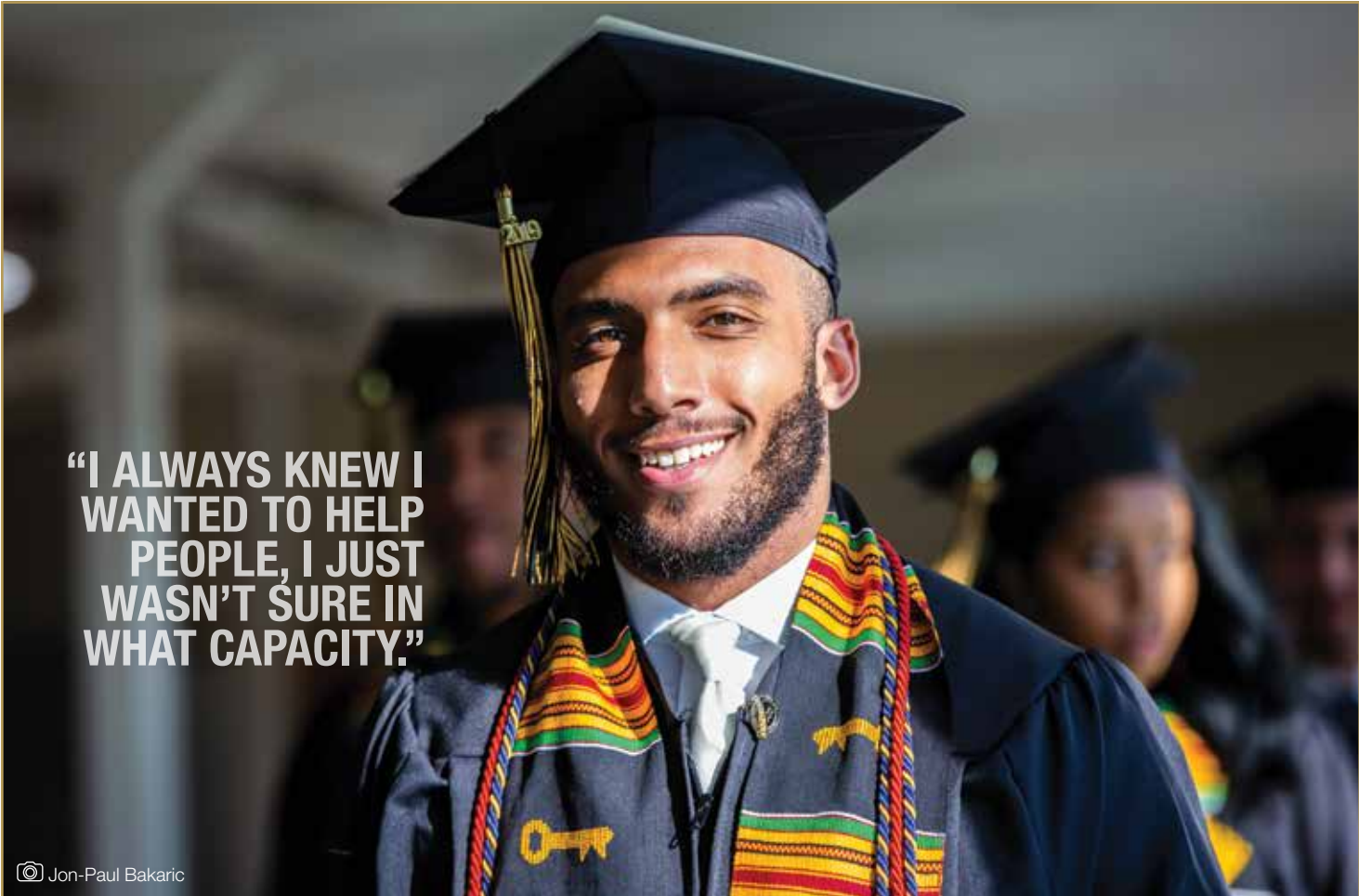
After OU, Lenoil expanded her skillset with a master's in history and a graduate certificate in archival administration from Wayne State University. In 1987, she began her journey to the California State Archives in Sacramento for a post-graduate fellowship in archives management with a focus on identifying and processing the state's legislative records. Shortly after the conclusion of the fellowship, Lenoil earned a permanent position with the California government as an archivist and the administrator of the Western Archives Institute, a two-week introductory program to archives management. She was appointed as State Archivist in 2006, becoming the first woman in California history to hold the position. In 2012, she was elected as a Distinguished Fellow of the Society of American Archivists.

"The purpose of archives is to preserve records, and they have a profound ability to make a long-term impact," says Lenoil. "It's always been exciting to be a part of that process, to ensure that the records of the past and present are accessible for research in the future."

Lenoil's historical strides leave her humbled and empowered, as she retires this year from the State Archives after 31 prominent years of service. While this chapter of her career is concluding, she fondly recalls the opening pages that were written amongst the backdrop of OU's campus.

"I have had lots of opportunities to reflect and think about how I got here and what I've accomplished during my career," Lenoil says. "It all comes back to how Oakland University planted the seed for getting me to the point I am now. I would not be State Archivist of California had it not been for my OU experience." 🍷

Explore the degree opportunities offered through the College of Arts and Sciences at [oakland.edu/cas](http://oakland.edu/cas).



**“I ALWAYS KNEW I  
WANTED TO HELP  
PEOPLE, I JUST  
WASN’T SURE IN  
WHAT CAPACITY.”**

© Jon-Paul Bakaric

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## *Acts of* KINDNESS

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*By Derek Blalock*

Travis Harrington, CAS '19, is the type of person who is always lending a hand.

On an icy morning in mid-January, Becky Weber, the coordinator of external relations for Oakland Athletics, was struggling to get inside the Athletics Center O'Rena. Harrington, a forward on the Oakland University Men's Soccer team, ran to her aid and guided Weber all the way into her office.

For Oakland Men's Soccer coach Eric Pogue, this small act of kindness perfectly exemplifies who Harrington is. "I was sitting in my office before training when Becky came in and told me the story," he explains. "That was a moment that really meant a lot to me, and I'll remember that story way more than anything else because even though we want to win games and championships, more importantly we're here to mentor young men to go out and impact the world."



There was little surprise, then, when Harrington made the decision to forego an additional year of eligibility to pursue a two-year mission with the Peace Corps in Togo – a country in West Africa between Ghana, Benin and Nigeria.

"I always knew I wanted to help people, I just wasn't sure in what capacity," says Harrington. "I took a leap of faith and was blessed to receive the opportunity." ➤

**Article continues at [oakland.edu/oumagazine](http://oakland.edu/oumagazine).**

# FAMILY *Firsts*

First generation college students seek growth in  
OU's School of Business Administration *By Liz Lent*

**"I GOT EVERYTHING  
I COULD HAVE EVER  
HOPED FOR AND  
MORE AT OU."**

CLARE GRZEGORZEWSKI

Every student who attends the Oakland University School of Business Administration (SBA) sees it as a path to a better future. For students who are the first generation in their family to graduate from college, the opportunities shine even brighter.

For Joseph Babi, SBA '12, Oakland offered an ideal blend of convenience and quality that allowed him to pursue his education while maintaining obligations to help at his family's store.

"My siblings and I were always encouraged by our parents to get our degrees," says Babi, who witnessed his three older siblings earn Oakland business degrees as well.

After graduating with a degree in accounting, Babi created an iOS app, Game Up Alarm Clock, that landed on top app charts nationally and internationally, leading

to the launch of his own business, the Joseph Paul Digital Agency.

"Without my accounting background from Oakland, I would not have had the knowledge or discipline to manage costs and plan future strategies to ensure the success of my app or agency," Babi says.

Clare Grzegorzewski, SBA '19, found that OU offered a safe, welcoming environment on her journey toward an education.

"As a first-generation student, I didn't even know where to begin. I was very intimidated by the application process and questioned myself on being cut out for this type of environment," recalls Grzegorzewski. "When I visited OU, though, I just felt something click. For the first time, the whole thing wasn't so scary."

Now, as a management information systems major, distinguished scholarship recipient and peer tutor Grzegorzewski notes, "I got everything I could have ever hoped for and more at OU. I can say with absolute certainty that attending Oakland has made me the best version of myself."

Explore possibilities found in the School of Business Administration at [oakland.edu/business](http://oakland.edu/business).

Robert Hall



# A PATHWAY TOWARD DISCOVERY

*By Joan Carleton*

Students attend college to embark on a journey to discover themselves as they work toward their future. Those on Oakland University's fast-track path have uncovered a unique, convenient program that allows for greater flexibility and college-life balance.

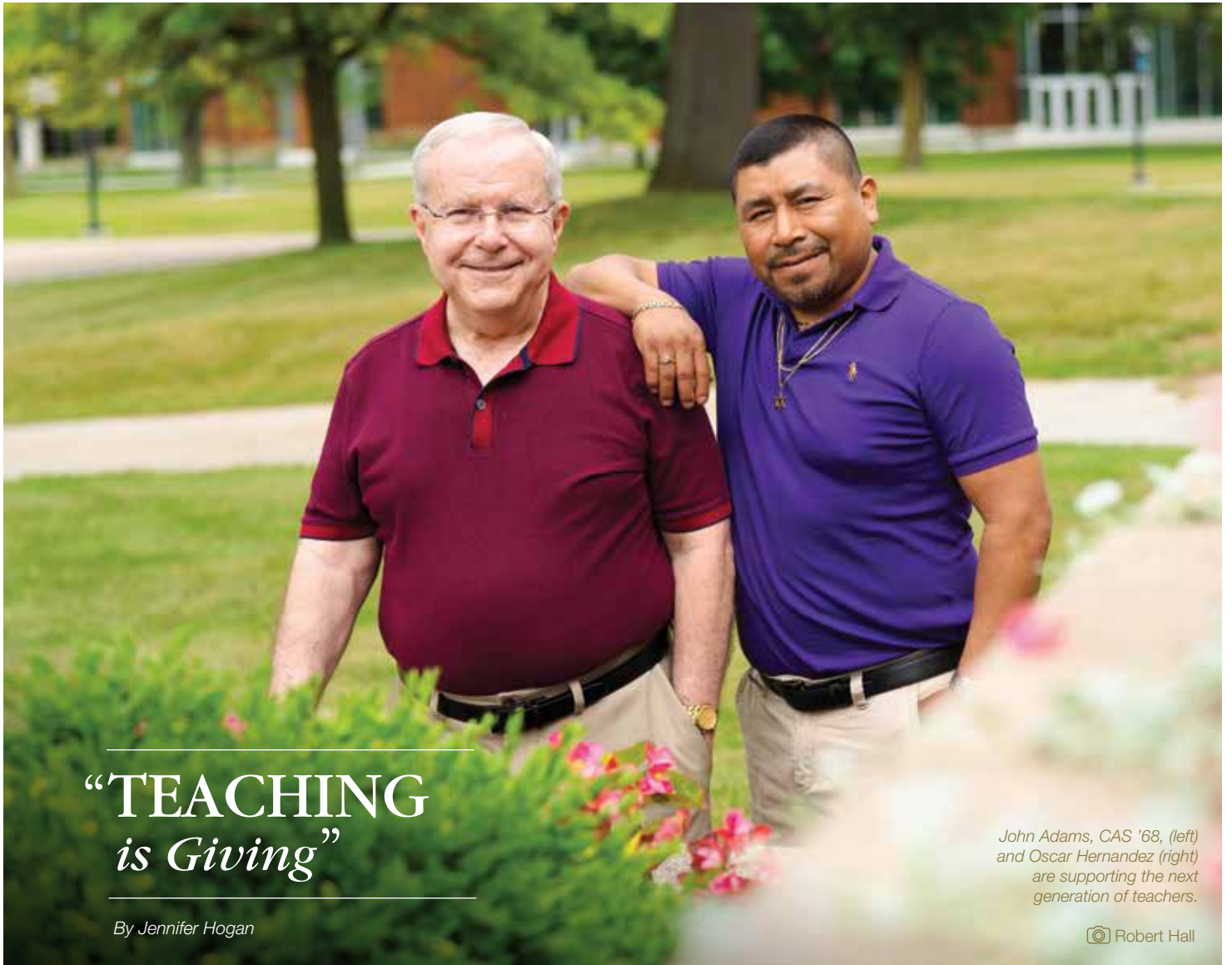
One such student, Stephanie Marji, SBA '19, was working in human resources at Henry Ford Health System and needed a degree to advance in her career. OU's human resources management degree, offered in a fast-track format, proved to be the ideal fit, with its accelerated schedule and online course components.

"I was not only able to fit classes in with my work schedule, but I was also able to graduate faster than many of my peers," says Marji.

Offered exclusively at the OU Anton/Frankel Center in Mount Clemens, the fast-track courses allow students to map out their entire program trajectory, anticipating their path toward graduation right from the start.

"I have transitioned knowledge gained in the classroom to use on the job a countless number of times with projects and initiatives," says Marji. "OU prepared me for success in my field." ➤

**Article continues at [oakland.edu/oumagazine](http://oakland.edu/oumagazine).**



## “TEACHING is Giving”

By Jennifer Hogan

*John Adams, CAS '68, (left) and Oscar Hernandez (right) are supporting the next generation of teachers.*

© Robert Hall

John Adams, CAS '68, has fond memories of his time at Oakland University. Transferring from a community college as a junior, Adams recalls the profound impact OU faculty made in his life.

“The quality of the professors was amazing,” says Adams. “Everyone truly cared about my experience.”

One such professor, Marilyn Williamson, was Adams' Shakespeare teacher and adviser. Adams says that Williamson and he created a plan for his next two years. Both her kindness and superb teaching confirmed Adams' decision to pursue his 34 year career teaching English at Edsel Ford High School and Fordson High School in Dearborn, Michigan.

“When students ask me if they should go into teaching, I always tell them to do it,” says Adams. “If you are a teacher, you have to teach. It's a calling.”

To help future teachers with their education, Adams and his husband, Oscar Hernandez, made a bequest to establish the John L. Adams and Oscar R. Hernandez Scholarship. The scholarship will benefit English majors in the Secondary Teacher

Education Program (STEP), where students can earn a bachelor of arts degree and complete additional requirements leading to recommendation for teacher certification.

Kevin Laam, Ph.D., associate professor and chair of the English department, says the scholarship will make an important difference in the lives of students preparing to become high school teachers.

“Our students are balancing jobs, family responsibilities and the rigors of STEP,” says Laam. “The John L. Adams and Oscar R. Hernandez Scholarship acknowledges the hard work our students put into the program and how they will serve the community following graduation.”

For Adams, the gift embodies his philosophy about teaching. “Teaching is giving,” says Adams. “It is important to pay it forward to the next generation of teachers.” ➤

Learn more about the impact a gift can make at [oakland.edu/giving](http://oakland.edu/giving).



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  - Photos with Santa
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# SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

By Jennifer Hogan |  Jerry Zolynsky

Engaging with students in an ever-changing world means keeping up with the pace of progress. That is why Oakland University, with generous support from The Kresge Foundation's Education Program, is leading the way with the annual Great Lakes Regional Student Success Conference. The conference convenes thought leaders and innovators around the issues of cultivating skills and knowledge for the purpose of helping students succeed in the world of higher education.

The Kresge Foundation, based in metro-Detroit and committed to expanding opportunities in American cities, is the main sponsor of the conference. A \$225,000 grant is helping to fund the initiative for years 2019 through 2021. As a result of this support, the conference has evolved from a statewide gathering to a regional event, attracting more than 500 participants in 2019 from 73 institutions throughout the Great Lakes region.

In 2019, experts and practitioners at the conference focused on persistence and practice through various lenses, ranging from engagement and technology to resiliency and student success initiatives.

"Maintaining the quality of the conference is critical," says Krista Malley, Ph.D., director of student success and coordinator for the conference. "Our partnership with The Kresge Foundation allows us to attract nationally renowned speakers and offer innovative

programming to a growing audience. As a result, it is one of the leading student success events in the country."

Support from Kresge also funds institutional learning communities which provides an opportunity for higher education professionals to meet and explore key issues in student success. Additionally, webinars with student success topics such as metacognition and student engagement have encouraged more high-impact practices both in and outside of the classroom.

"With the recent addition of an advisory board, the Great Lakes Regional Student Success Conference has shaped programming that reflects emerging questions and common challenges that professionals face day in and day out," says Caroline Altman Smith, deputy director of the Kresge Foundation Education Program. "By creating opportunities for dialogue, the conference and ongoing learning communities help lay the groundwork for coalitions of institutions to partner in their efforts to improve degree completion for students throughout the region."

The conference and institutional learning communities parallel the Kresge Foundation Education Program's focus on aligning and strengthening urban higher education ecosystems, building the capacity of institutions focused on low-income and underrepresented

students and strengthening pathways to and through college. OU is proud to partner with Kresge in helping to fulfill this important mission.

"The Great Lakes Regional Student Success Conference has become one of the most important gatherings of college access and success for professionals committed to increasing graduation rates for under-represented students, first-generation students and transfer students," says Bill Moses, managing director of Kresge's Education Program.

"Through careful stewardship and design, Oakland University's Office of Student Success has transformed what was once a small meeting among Michigan institutions into a robust program attracting professionals from throughout the Great Lakes region, and across the nation," he continues. "It attracts some of the country's best-known student success experts and is replete with opportunities for meaningful dialogue about practices that help more students cross the degree-completion finish line."

Special thanks to conference sponsors Civitas Learning, InfoReady, CARROT, Gardner Institute, MIACADA and ATS Printing. 🌟

For more information about the Great Lakes Regional Student Success Conference, visit [oakland.edu/studentsuccess/conference](http://oakland.edu/studentsuccess/conference).

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## GREAT *Achievements*

© Robert Hall

By Kelli M. Titus

Malcom Dunbar, SHS '12, is committed to community, leading the environmental health and safety efforts for numerous operations worldwide.

“Over the years, I have been humbled through recognition from multiple national organizations for my accomplishments,” says Dunbar. “But none of these compare to when interacting with our employees, and hearing about their families and the communities which depend upon them. Simply knowing that what I do daily helps them to be safe and healthy is my greatest achievement.”

As vice president of environmental health and safety for Edward C. Levy Company in Detroit, Michigan, Dunbar develops, trains, leads and manages the company's environmental and safety programs globally. In an effort to expand his knowledge and outreach, Dunbar pursued a degree in Oakland University's Master of Science in Safety Management (MSSM) program, opening up new opportunities to serve others.

“My career was already successful and yet I felt the need to continuously improve my skills in environmental health and safety,”

Dunbar says. “I have always been a firm believer in constantly looking at the horizon to see what is coming next. Getting the MSSM was the next best step and one which I am grateful to have achieved.”

Explore more opportunities in the School of Health Sciences at [oakland.edu/shs](http://oakland.edu/shs).

# JOIN US FOR THE 2019-20 PERFORMANCE SEASON

View event listing at [oakland.edu/smtd/performances-and-events](http://oakland.edu/smtd/performances-and-events).

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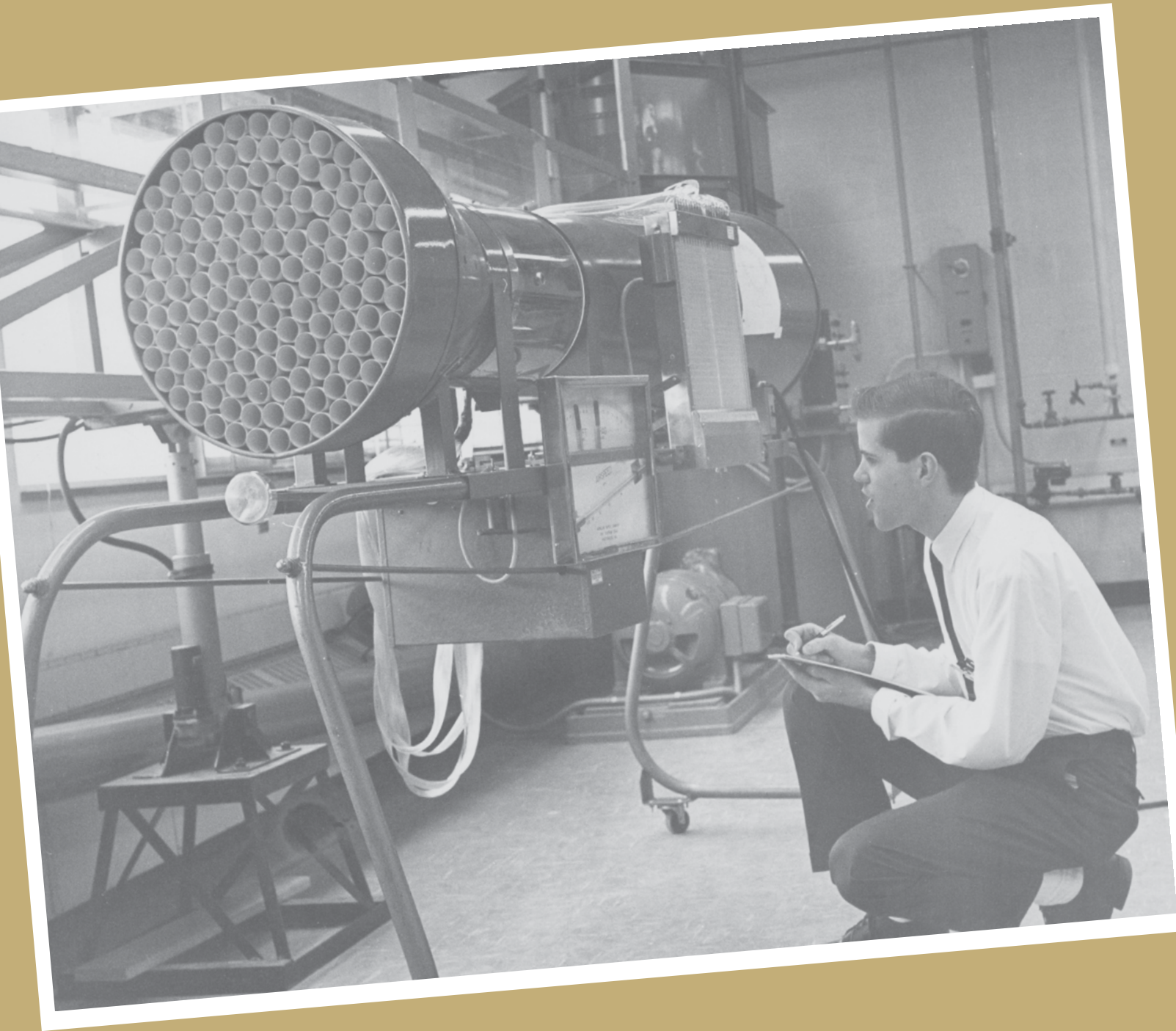
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## OU MOMENT

The Kettering Magnetics Laboratory opened in 1964. Created in 1934 by the director of the General Motors Research Lab, Charles Kettering, the lab came to OU from Dayton Ohio. The goal was to conduct experiments in gyro-magnetism, which requires cancelling the effects of the earth's magnetic field. Gifford Scott, physicist who has been associated with the magnetics program at GM since the 1930s, was put in charge of the lab. ➤

# Downtown Rochester

## Winter Event Calendar



|                                  |                         |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Holiday Expo .....               | November 11             |
| Festival of Trees .....          | November 22 - 24        |
| Lagniappe .....                  | November 25             |
| The Big, Bright Light Show ..... | November 25 - January 1 |
| 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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