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Cracking the fire code

Safety rules apparently tough to meet in dorms

By GAYLE ISSA
& REBECCA WYATT
THE OAKLAND POST

Not everything regarding fire safety in the residence halls changed despite last month's *Oakland Post* story on apparent fire code violations.

A visible improvement was noted during another *Post* walk-through last week. The incinerator doors on all floors of East and West Vandenberg were closed as well as the laundry room door in East Vandenberg. All incinerator doors on the floors above the lobby in South Hamlin were also closed.

But some problems remain unresolved. Two fire doors on the first floor in East Vandenberg that are clearly marked "Keep closed at all times" are still propped open.

In addition, the incinerator doors on the second and third floors of South Hamlin and second floor of North Hamlin were also left open. Residence hall staff said there are no incinerators inside those rooms.

As *The Post* reported in its Oct. 23 article, Michael Smith, assistant chief and fire marshal of Auburn Hills Fire Department, said that the state fire code requires incinerator doors to be closed if there is electrical wiring or mechanical equipment in the rooms. The incinerator doors in the residence halls shut

off rooms with electrical wiring.

The walk-through also showed the laundry room door in South Hamlin still propped open.

Mary Beth Snyder, Vice President for Student Affairs, said that doors were probably shut, but students propped them open again.

"If they know it's wrong, and they're citizens of that community, we need their partnership on this. I would again ask students to close doors," she said. "We all have the same goal which is to make sure students are as safe as they possibly can be."

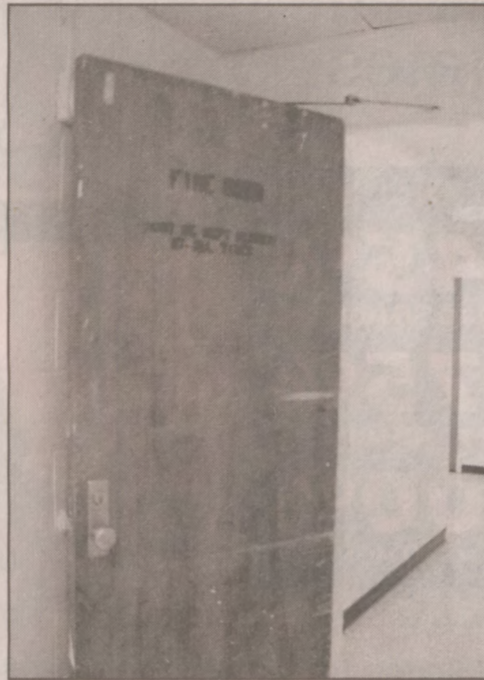
An apparent violation that was not corrected is the broken exit sign at the north entrance of West Vandenberg. The sign is still missing lettering a month after its condition was reported. When brought to Snyder's attention Monday she said, "We will take care of it."

Another issue apparently untouched is that no warning signs are posted next to the elevators cautioning students not to use them in the event of a fire.

The Office of Environmental Health and Safety could not be reached for comment. Eleanor Reynolds, director of University Housing, declined to comment.

Freshman Mike Farmer, a West

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Rebecca Wyatt/The Oakland Post
While the residence hall staff has corrected some of the suspected fire code violations reported by *The Oakland Post* last month, some problems, like this propped open fire door on the first floor in East Vandenberg Hall, still remain.

Health Institute's finances ailing

By ANN ZANIEWSKI
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Financial woes continue to plague Meadow Brook Health Enhancement Institute, and within the next few weeks university administrators will likely meet to determine what future, if any, the institute has with the university.

"My story is not a particularly good one," Dean of the School of Health Sciences Ronald Olson told the Board of Trustees at its Nov. 6 meeting.

According to Olson, MBHEI lost another \$3,987 in July, August and September of this year. That, combined with the institute's \$148,167 loss at the end of fiscal year 2001/2002 and deficit rolled over from previous years, puts MBHEI at more than \$380,000 in the hole.

"It doesn't look very promising, if that's (health assessments) the only thing they're going to do," said Trustee Ann Nicholson.

"Health assessments are wonderful things, and maybe the Health Enhancement Institute has served its purpose. Maybe it's time to fold it up."

MBHEI offers nutritional counseling and exercise memberships but, at \$850 each, health assessments make up the majority of its revenue.

Olson attributes the mounting financial loss to a decline in the

demand for assessments. The institute performed 384 assessments in fiscal year 2001/2002, but Olson said MBHEI needs roughly 600 annual purchases to stay financially healthy.

For the first time an assessment salesperson was hired to help increase revenue. Olson was

hoping she would be able to pull in at least six more each month, but he told the Board the marketing campaign was unsuccessful and resulted in no additional purchases.

The problem, he argues, is that several other area hospitals have "taken up the bandwagon" and now also offer health assessments.

He added that MBHEI's assessments, which include a blood test, flexibility test, hearing test, vision screening, pulmonary function study, skin fold test and stress test, are competitively priced. Crittenton Hospital in Rochester does not offer a similar package deal, but Lisa Stickler, the hospital's office coordinator for occupational medicine, said comparable tests are available. If purchased separately, the combined total of each test included in MBHEI's assessment costs \$354.25 at Crittenton — almost \$500 less than what the institute charges.

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"... maybe the Health Enhancement Institute has served its purpose. Maybe it's time to fold it up."

Ann Nicholson
Trustee

Dancing the night away



Dan McDuffee/The Oakland Post

Dana Crissman performs an interpretive dance at the Honors College Collage Concert last Wednesday. She was one of several Honors College students who participated in the talent show.

Clerical, technical workers get new pact

By JENNIFER J. DECKER
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

OU's clerical and technical workers should see changes in their paychecks this month since a new three-year contract was ratified.

OU Professional Support Association of the MEA (Michigan Educational Association) president Susan Russell called it a "very good contract."

The agreement will give the clerical and technical workers a four percent raise in the first year of the contract, but will also add a mandatory performance evaluation.

By a 170-49-2 vote, the 265-member union received a three percent wage increase for the final two years of the agreement. Wages are retroactive July 1, 2002. The new contract expires June 30, 2005.

According to Russell, the contract was ratified Oct. 24.

"A vast majority (of members)

voted to approve the contract," she said.

In health care, Russell said employees can choose insurance between Health Alliance Plan, Blue Care Network or Community Blue.

"Health care was a big issue. We were able to blend with the faculty. We were hoping for increased health care," she said.

Under the new contract employees will have both a \$5 office co-pay, a \$5 generic prescription co-pay and a \$10 name brand prescription co-pay. Employees can also select a medical insurance opt-out if they already have medical insurance and be paid \$1,000.

In addition, a medical spending health care reimbursement account is available where employees can contribute and have a portion matched by OU. The employee can then submit a claim, such as for eyeglasses, for reimbursement.

During negotiations, Russell

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Russi, Congress talk budget

By GAYLE ISSA
MANAGING EDITOR

OU President Gary Russi's wide-ranging remarks at the last OU Student Congress meeting shed light on several pertinent campus issues.

Not surprisingly, the impending budget cuts raised the most concern. Russi said an executive order from Michigan's governor-elect Jennifer Granholm will likely result in a five-percent statewide budget cut.

According to Rochelle Black, Director of Government Relations, the state is looking at a \$1 billion deficit, which means \$2.5 million less for OU.

Russi said, "vice presidents and deans are working ... to meet the budget cuts."

Russi also updated the OUSC on potential revenue sources OU is tapping. A capital campaign was launched this summer and is in a two-year non-public phase during which major donors will be

approached and typically 50 percent of revenue is raised. In two years, alumni and corporations will be appealed.

In spite of inevitable budget cuts, Russi confirmed OU's commitment to hiring new faculty next academic year.

Staying on topic with budget issues, Legislator Andrew Baker, junior, asked about the Board of Trustees-approved loan to Meadow Brook Hall. Russi reassured the students that its funding came from reserves and not the general fund.

Baker also asked whether the OC renovations and Meadow Brook Hall would compete for funding attention, but Russi said, "it won't be a bother at all."

As of Nov. 11, Russi did not know what the budget cuts would mean for Kresge Library in response to Legislator Andrea Carter's (junior) inquiry.

Russi also noted that OU was pursuing a collaboration with Cooley Law School in terms of law degree options.

Legislator Jeffrey Galecki, senior,

expressed concern about older buildings in need of renovation. Russi said that those will be addressed and referred the OUSC to the public deferred maintenance list that determines where the BOT will allocate money.

Sports related issues were touched upon briefly such as whether OU can hope to boost hockey from a club to a varsity sport and whether Golden Grizzly sports apparel will be available at locations other than the store in the Athletic Center.

Despite the daunting state budget challenge, Russi kept the 2010 vision at the forefront of the discussion. He spoke about increased student resident capacity, this semester's new buildings, new degree programs such as the Ph.D. in mechanical engineering — valuable in the "auto industry backyard" and the campus master plan that includes new performing arts and engineering buildings.



Dan McDuffee/The Oakland Post
Student Body Vice President Michelle Jamian and Student Body President Brian Tomina listen intently to OU President Gary Russi speak at last Monday's OU Student Congress meeting.

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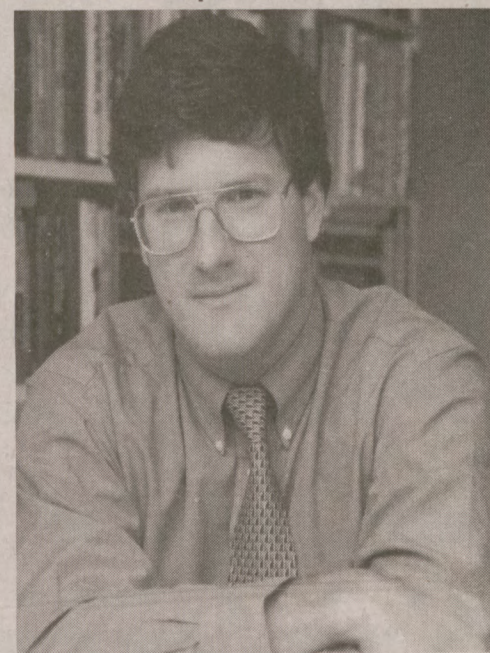
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Presented with the support of OU Students, Office of Student Affairs, Office of Academic Affairs and Provost, Student Program Board, and University Student Congress.

For additional information, call the Center for Student Activities Office at (248) 370-2400, or visit Oakland University's web site at www.oakland.edu. Meadow Brook Theatre is located on the campus of Oakland University, one mile east of I-75, off Exit 79 (University Drive).