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Pigott promotes international education

By **Jeff Samoray**, *OU Web Writer*

Margaret Pigott, associate professor of rhetoric and director of the newly established International Education Office, wants to promote the rewards of studying and teaching abroad, and at the same time, increase Oakland University's presence worldwide.

"My role is to facilitate the establishment of extension or degree programs abroad for OU students and faculty," said Pigott, who was asked to be director in January. "We want to make it easier to bring together faculty who have the vision of OU as a global institution. I hope to have Oakland University become known as a 'division one' institution in international education."

Currently, OU has a long-established consortium of study abroad programs in Vienna, Austria; Dublin, Ireland; Macerata, Italy; Morelia, Mexico; and Denedin, New Zealand. Oakland also recently signed a scholar exchange agreement with the Foreign Affairs College in Beijing, China. Pigott, who has taught rhetoric, Shakespeare, communication and women's studies courses at OU, also co-directs the **British Studies at Oxford** program, which has been associated with Oakland since 1975.

"The benefits to studying and teaching abroad are tremendous," Pigott said. "You get a different perspective on America and the world when you see it from another country."

"Some might say studying abroad is fun but not academically important. But in reality, study abroad courses tend to be site specific. For example, we offer a business administration course in our British Studies at Oxford program in which students study how British organizations are run, then travel as a group to the businesses themselves to meet with various employees. This gives students a real sense of how British business practices relate to American companies and the global economy, which could not be completely gained in the American classroom."

Possible study abroad sites that are being discussed include the Ukraine, Brazil and Scotland. Another idea under discussion is establishing a semester abroad requirement for Honors College students. Such a requirement might entail internships that allow students to work with a top scholar in their field of study. A comprehensive Web site giving details on all of OU's study abroad opportunities also is in the works.

"We'd like studying abroad to be a requirement at some level, raise money for student scholarships for studying abroad, and set up student internships," Pigott said. "There are ways to make studying abroad very feasible for students. We have a lot of support from Oakland faculty, departments and students that have engaged in study abroad programs and want to use their enthusiasm to expand OU's global presence."

Visit the **British Studies at Oxford** Web site for information on study abroad opportunities at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. For information on other study abroad opportunities for Oakland University students and faculty, contact Pigott at (248) 370-4131 or pigott@oakland.edu.

SUMMARY

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