



Thursday, November 15, 2001

## Students discuss campus race relations

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

Oakland University students offered many ideas to facilitate race relations in the campus community on Thursday, Nov. 15, during a roundtable discussion titled "Racism on OU's Campus Through the Eyes of OU Student Leaders."

The discussion, which drew about 50 students, faculty and staff to Gold Room A of the **Oakland Center**, was part of a series of events titled "Campus Week of Dialogue on Racism," sponsored in part by the **Center for Student Activities**.

Roundtable participants were asked to work in groups and consider the following question: "How successful is OU at breaking down racial and cultural stereotypes, as well as promoting interracial and intercultural understanding?" They were asked to propose three feasible plans that OU could use to promote diversity on its campus.

The main sentiment expressed by the groups was that, though there are no major racial problems on OU's campus, there is a need for more dialogue on race relations and promotion of events like the roundtable discussion to increase awareness and participation. Several students suggested that the faculty take a more active role in informing the student population, especially commuter students, of such forums.

One student proposed that a mural depicting OU's diverse student population be painted on a prominent university building. Others said that OU students should concern themselves more with race relations and learn to embrace others not like ourselves.

Karen Lloyd, assistant dean of students, followed up on the students' comments with a suggestion of her own.

"When you leave here today, make it your business to go up to someone not like you and learn about them," Lloyd said. "Ask questions of them and learn what it's like to be them. You'll have a much better understanding of other cultures."

Lloyd continued by relating how she approached her neighbors in her predominantly Jewish neighborhood to engage them in discussions so she could learn more about their culture. The result, she said, was a better understanding of race relations for both parties.

Nikki Choluj, an OU freshman who participated in the discussion, said the roundtable was an effective way to heighten racial awareness at OU.

"There's not enough focus on the diversity of our campus. People mostly go about their own ways," Choluj said. "But we're working on it through forums like these, and that's what matters. I enjoyed how everyone opened up and spoke freely of their experiences."

For more information on future events and activities concerning race relations, contact the **Center for Student Activities**, 49 Oakland Center, at (248) 370-2400 or [orca@oakland.edu](mailto:orca@oakland.edu).

### SUMMARY

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