

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY™

From the office of the
President



Colleagues,

To accompany all the excitement of a new academic year, I am pleased to once again send you updates on the wonderful work of our students, faculty, staff and other valued campus community members.

I believe the highlights below pay testament to the fact that every determined effort in pursuit of a noble cause is invaluable.

The cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead did a terrific job of explaining why when she said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Ora Hirsch Pescovitz, M.D.
President

A MODEL OF GOOD HEALTH

For the past four summers, Oakland University undergraduate students participating in the Research Experience for Undergraduates program supervised by Department of Mathematics and Statistics professors Anna Spagnuolo and Meir Shillor have helped develop, analyze and digitally simulate mathematical models for the spread of Chagas disease.



Their work, funded by the National Science Foundation, addresses this parasitic affliction affecting 8-10 million people in rural parts of Central and South America. Currently, there is no cure for the disease once it becomes chronic.

The mathematical models this team is creating may lead to improved strategies used in insecticide spraying, which is used to control the "kissing bug" population that spreads the disease. This important work may eventually protect and improve the quality of countless human lives and has been highlighted in numerous academic journals.

ENCODING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY



Associate Professor of Psychology Martha Escobar and colleagues from the University of Alabama and Tuskegee University recently were awarded an approximately \$1.2 million National Science Foundation Grant to support their project to help African American girls from rural school districts successfully complete the AP

Computer Science Principles course.

In the process, the girls will also explore career options in the computer science field, which presently maintains a severely low representation rate for this targeted demographic.

Within days of learning of this grant award, Dr. Escobar also received word of a grant approval through the National Science Foundation's Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate program to support her project to promote the development of junior faculty at historically black colleges and universities. These are among six grants Dr. Escobar has received in the last three years!

By creating tremendous opportunity for individuals, Dr. Escobar and her colleagues are also helping to advance industry and education in our country.

Compliments on this fantastic work.

LEADING LIBRARY SCIENCE

American Libraries, the magazine of the American Library Association, recently selected the work of OU School of Education and Human Services alumna and Kresge Library Associate Professor Amanda Nichols Hess, Ph.D., as one of eight dissertations nationally to hold the greatest potential to advance library best practices.

In "From Information Experts to Expert Educators? Academic Librarians' Experiences with Perspective Transformation and Their Teaching Identities," Dr. Nichols Hess explores the ways in which academic librarians see teaching as a part of their professional identity and create opportunities for professional growth – not only for themselves but also for fellow librarians.

Dr. Nichols Hess was commended for addressing practical implications for prominent library issues through quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method research approaches. Her innovative academic work and her dissertation have been adapted and published as a book – *Transforming Academic Library Instruction: Shifting Practices to Reflect Changed Perspectives*.



Is there a point of pride you feel is worth sharing with the campus community?

If so, please [submit your idea](#) for consideration.

If you are interested in exploring past editions of this newsletter, we invite you to visit the [Points of Pride archive page](#).

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