



Tuesday, February 10, 2004

OUSC president delivers State of Student Body address

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

Oakland University students, faculty and staff gathered in the Oakland Center Banquet Room for an update on recent campus developments as outlined by Student Congress President Jonathan Parks in his State of the Student Body address, which he delivered Feb. 10 during the **Oakland University Student Congress** (OUSC) legislative body meeting.

After providing a concise overview of OUSC executive board committee functions, Parks devoted the majority of his address to financial issues such as OUSC operating expenses, the Student Activity Funding Board and tuition increases.

"Every effort has been made to cut operational costs within Student Congress and yield the most benefit for the students of Oakland University," said Parks, a senior communications major. "Funds from our operating budget were appropriated through various opportunities such as scholarships, the Keeper of the Dream banquet, WOCOU (Week of Champions at Oakland University) and Alcohol Awareness Week, to name a few. Costs have been and will continue to be cut, and with our new methods of technology, we will more effectively run our meetings and office space."

Among the cost-reduction efforts Parks cited were the recent refurbishment of the OUSC computer lab and plans for a student organization resource center to be located in the Center for Student Activities. Further reforms of Student Activity Funding Board operations also will help lower costs and help streamline the process student organizations follow to obtain funds, Parks said. This semester, more than \$91,000 dollars have been allocated toward student organizations and club sports.

"Clear, effective guidelines for the Student Activity Funding Board have been consistently worked on, with input coming from a wide net of the Oakland community," Parks said. "It is our determined goal to place the Student Activity Funding Board in a stronger position that leads to the best possible outcome for the students and their organizations."

Parks also spoke of the recent cuts to state appropriations toward higher education and encouraged students to make their concerns known to state lawmakers.

"Public universities have been faced with the dual dilemma of cutting costs and raising tuition and fees at a rate greater than anyone would have liked," Parks said. "We still have time to thoughtfully express our views and opinions. We will be looking into starting a letter writing campaign soon. We want to ask state lawmakers to not cut education because we're the foundation the state is built upon."

Before taking questions from meeting attendees, Parks made the following announcements:

- The Oakland University Police Department recently hired four additional officers.
- Parking lot 16, located near Fitzgerald House, is now open for overnight parking.
- OUSC provided funds for tutors in the Academic Success Network, a program designed to assist incoming African-American freshmen.
- A new council representing the University Student Apartments will be formed.

Students who attended the meeting were impressed by the OUSC's dedication to resolving financial issues. They also responded positively to Parks' answer to a question on the financial state of Meadow Brook Hall, in which he expressed OUSC's desire to keep the hall open and integrate more student activities in its functions.

"I like what I heard about Student Congress' financial affairs and lowering costs," said senior communications major

Clarice Zuccaro. "I'm a member of Phi Sigma Sigma and am interested in how we can lower the costs of our operations. I also think it's important that the university keep Meadow Brook Hall open because it's one of things OU is known for – it's part of our history. I'm impressed that Student Congress is showing so much concern to keep it open and make it more student-centered."

Junior nursing major Ashley Seal said she'd like to see more student involvement at the meetings.

"Parks is a real advocate for the student body," Seal said. "All of the issues he raised are of major concern to students. Student Congress also made sure that everyone who attended felt they could voice their concerns in a non-intimidating way. We need more student participation [at the meetings] to show a variety of opinions and to influence policy."

Parks also will deliver his address at the next **OU Board of Trustees** working session on Wednesday, March 3, at 2 p.m. in Elliott Hall Auditorium.

OU Student Congress holds meetings each Monday at 4 p.m. in the Oakland Center. Visit the **Oakland University Student Congress** Web site for more information on its executive board, committees, meetings, by-laws and more, or contact them at (248) 370-4290 or ousc@oakland.edu.

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