



Thursday, October 9, 2003

Students stage campaign for grizzly statue

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

Though bears haven't roamed southeast Michigan for many years, there may soon be one on Oakland University's campus. Not a live animal, but a 16-foot bronze statue as a symbol of OU athletics and an emblem for OU student life.

Three students in OU's **Office of New Student Programs**, Paul Carlin, Chris Lutz and Jamie Stepanian-Bennett, have organized a student-centered campaign to raise funds to commission such a statue for the campus.

"The three of us came up with the idea this past summer when we saw the Sparty statue on the Michigan State University campus," said Lutz, a sophomore biology major. "Many college campuses across the nation have statues, and we'd like to instill a symbol of student pride. We'd like our mascot represented here on our campus. And knowing that this statue will be part of the campus for generations, we think the students will be proud to be involved."

Currently, the students are collecting bids from sculptors, writing a business plan and statue proposal to present to the president's cabinet, and recruiting student volunteers for fund-raising activities.

"We've sent an inquiry to Dick Idol, a nationally renowned wildlife artist based in Raleigh, North Carolina. He just completed a million-dollar monument for North Carolina State, so he's had experience with these sorts of proposals," Lutz said. "Idol sent us a small replica of a bear sculpture he previously completed, and it's an approximation of how ours would appear."

"We've also been contacted by other artists, including some as close as Clarkston and as far away as Kansas City. Right now, we're collecting bids and considering possible options."

The students also are in the process of founding a student organization to promote their efforts and accept donations. They hope that enough money will be raised to place a statue on campus by the end of next year.

The four proposed locations for the statue are:

- the traffic circle at the university's main entrance;
- in front of the entrance to the Oakland Center expansion;
- in front of the Recreation and Athletics Center;
- an area between the lake and O'Dowd Hall.

"We plan to conduct a poll of the student body to help influence where the university decides to place the statue," Lutz said. "We'd like it to not just be a symbol of our athletic program but also the entire campus."

To provide information on the campaign and kick off its fund-raising efforts, the students will stage "For the Roar 2004" on Thursday, Oct. 16, from 3 to 7 p.m. in the Hamlin Courtyard. Attendees can sample free food and enjoy music by OU's African Steel Drum Band. Other bands that will perform include Blend, Asboloot and With Rescue Breathing. Donations for the statue will be accepted. Students also can sign up for upcoming fund-raising events.

"We're the grass roots people, but we really want to get more students involved in this project," Lutz said. "We need people to help head up our fund-raising events. Some of our ideas are to hold can drives, a bowl-a-thon, and maybe a car wash or golf outing in the spring. We'd also like to sell miniature replicas of the statue, sell bricks displaying names of donors that can be used at the base of the sculpture, and possibly a commemorative plaque displaying student names. There may be students who can't afford a brick, but for a smaller amount they could have their name on the plaque."

“We want students to feel that they can be a part of the fund-raising efforts, too.”

For more information on the “For the Roar 2004” event or how to become involved in the statue campaign, contact the **Center for Student Activities** at (248) 370-2400 or csa@oakland.edu.

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