



Wednesday, November 10, 2004

Russi delivers State of the Public Universities address

Oakland University President Gary Russi delivered the 2004 State of the Public Universities address at Cobo Hall during the Detroit Economic Club Luncheon on Nov. 8. His speech, "**The Michigan 15 as a Force for Economic Renewal**," was heard by an enthusiastic crowd of more than 700 Detroit Economic Club members, legislators, public university officials and friends of the educational system throughout the state.

Russi outlined the role Michigan's 15 public universities play in contributing to the economic fabric of the state, including how universities prepare a work force that meets the state's economic development needs, how the universities capitalize on research and development opportunities, how they provide opportunity and access for all Michigan students, and how efficiently the universities operate, especially in this climate of multiple budget cuts and a struggling economy.

"An economic impact study commissioned in 2002 by the **Presidents Council of State Universities of Michigan** and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation determined that every one dollar of state investment in our universities generates \$26 of economic impact," Russi said. "In other words, the state's \$1.5 billion in investment in our public universities produces \$39 billion in economic impact, or a remarkable 12.6 percent of Michigan's entire gross state product.

"The reason universities have earned the public's confidence, the reason hundreds of thousands of alumni of Michigan's public universities are proud of their alma maters, the reason families sacrifice to send their sons and daughters to our campuses is because these unique and special institutions are there at the very instant when people, at their most promising and vulnerable moments, come seeking their futures, come ready to become something more, something better."

Russi was named president of the Presidents Council in July 2004 for a two-year term. The Presidents Council is based in Lansing and is a nonprofit higher education association serving Michigan's 15 state universities. Each year, Michigan's public universities serve about 280,000 students, focusing on the delivery of excellent undergraduate and graduate education and equal educational opportunity.

The Detroit Economic Club (DEC) was formed in 1934 as a platform for the discussion and debate of important business, government and social issues. It is known nationwide as a top speaking venue for prominent business and government leaders, who address DEC members and their guests at the club's 25-35 meetings per season (September through May).

SUMMARY

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