

**New academic center devoted to undergraduate research opportunities**

Part of a university's role is to provide students with an opportunity to conduct research on a broad scale. To support student research, Oakland University has established the Center for Undergraduate Research and Leadership (CURL).

The center launched this January and is aimed at supporting and developing undergraduate research, along with promoting leadership, excellence, creativity, innovation and social and public enterprise among the Oakland undergraduate community.

Based in The Honors College, CURL advances the idea that strong undergraduate research helps to power universities and the public and private sectors. The Center considers research to involve all types of empirical, theo-

retical and applied investigation, including those involving creative practice or community endeavors.



"Oakland has some of the strongest undergraduate researchers imaginable," said Dr. Graeme Harper, director of The Honors College. "Our students are already doing world-class work, they are already presenting at international peer-reviewed conferences, and they are already publishing."

Plans for CURL were announced last November, following a two year investigation of current undergraduate research initiatives across the U.S. and worldwide. The center will make use of international research development strategies and build the valuable skills and experiences that will set students apart after graduation.

The Honors College is already working on new plans and initiatives. After the launch of the center, the college hosted a "Challenges Forum" that encouraged students to begin to develop ideas, which they might present at a Global Citizens event this spring, organized and led by Oakland students.

For more information about programs and events in The Honors College, view the website at [oakland.edu/hc](http://oakland.edu/hc).

**Alternative Spring Break volunteers are able to travel, change lives**

Students who aren't planning a vacation to a tropical destination for this year's spring break can find altruistic options through Oakland University's Alternative Spring Break program.

People who volunteer for ASB not only have a chance to see a variety of people and places, but they have an opportunity to change lives.

Alternative Spring Break is a non-profit, student initiative-led organization that



works on various community service projects around the country. The program offers both monthly volunteer projects and week-long spring break trips. This year, ASB has four trips planned for spring break. Openings are still available for the National Relief Network in Bayboro, North Carolina, which will run from Feb. 17-22.

Spring breakers will also be volunteering at the Capitol Area Food Bank in Washington D.C., the International Rescue Committee in Atlanta, Georgia, and the Appalachia Service Project, in Perry, Kentucky. More information about each of these organizations can be found on the ASB GrizzOrgs page.

"Instead of choosing to take a sunny vacation on spring break, students can

immerse themselves in helping those in need, harnessing teamwork and leadership skills, and networking with other OU students," said ASB president, Erica Alonzo. "Personally, ASB has been the most rewarding aspect of my college experience, and I only hope that the organization will continue to attract OU students to volunteering."

For more information about monthly volunteering or ASB trips, visit [oakland.edu/volunteer](http://oakland.edu/volunteer).



# News YOU can use from



## WXOU radio once again named "College Station of the Year"

Second time's the charm for Oakland University's student radio station WXOU-FM. Student participants brought in numerous awards from the annual Michigan Association of Broadcasters Foundation (MABF), including the College Station of the Year Award for the second year running.



"WXOU is now considered a top contender in communication programs across the state and radio programs as well," said Sean Varicalli, WXOU general manager. "This is a validation award for us. Last year people might have seen the award as a fluke because it came out of nowhere. Well this year we did it again, and people know that we're the real deal. It's an amazing feeling."



The MABF awards gauge the skill and talent of students in broadcasting across the state, and are judged by industry professionals and national radio experts. Oakland students were recognized in nearly every category.

The Station of the Year honor recognizes the increasing quality of students and programs at WXOU, which was established in 1966. The awards will be officially recognized on Wednesday, March 13, at the Michigan Association of Broadcasters at the Great Lakes Broadcasting Conference in Lansing Michigan.

For more on WXOU-FM (88.3), visit the website at [wxou.org](http://wxou.org).

## Oakland University welcomes crowds to Engineering and Computer Science Day

Oakland University officials say they are seeing signs that young adults are interested in preparing to thrive in a more robust economic future.

They point to Oakland University's School of Engineering and Computer Science's annual Engineering and Computer Science Day which was held Saturday.

Staff welcomed more than 400 high school students, pre-college students and their families who were able to check out the college's programs and projects.

"The response was overwhelmingly positive," said Lorenzo Smith, the school's associate dean. "The experience helped (guests) understand just how

easy it is to get connected to research at the university. One father joked that he is tempted to become an engineer himself."

Guests toured faculty research laboratories, viewed student project displays and demonstrations, and observed how skills can be applied to real-world problem solving and innovation.

Christopher Kobus, a professor of mechanical engineering and director of outreach and recruitment for the school, said that outreach efforts in the region's K-12 community — including onsite visits to schools, participation in



career fairs, and contributions to science, technology, engineering and mathematics workshops — has helped prospective students see how they can begin to pursue a wide array of rewarding career possibilities.

"In all of these efforts, we have been selling SECS on our biggest strengths, which include student-faculty interaction from day one and hands-on experiences throughout the curriculum," Kobus explained.

Visit [oakland.edu/secsday](http://oakland.edu/secsday).

# State and National Headlines

## **CA: Gov. Brown's budget plan boosts funding for public higher education**

California Gov. Jerry Brown (D) announced Thursday that the California State University (CSU) and the University of California (UC) will each receive a \$125 million funding increase for core instructional programming in his state budget proposal. This would amount to a 7 percent increase for UC and 5 percent increase for CSU. The plan also calls for a \$197 million funding infusion for the state's community colleges. Brown's budget plan will be considered by state lawmakers later this year.

*The Oakland Tribune*  
January 10, 2013

## **NE: Governor, public colleges agree to affordability compact**

Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman (R) and public university leaders unveiled a compact this week aimed at making public higher education in the state more affordable. Under the terms of the agreement, Heineman's two-year budget blueprint boosts funding for the University of Nebraska from the current level of \$498 million to \$541 million by fiscal year 2015. The budget for the Nebraska State College System will increase from \$45.5 million to \$49.6 million by fiscal year 2015. If state lawmakers agree to these funding levels, the colleges will freeze tuition for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years.

*Omaha Journal-World*  
January 8, 2013

## **WA: Public university presidents seek tuition deal**

This week Washington's six public university presidents offered a plan to freeze tuition for the next two years in exchange for a \$225 million increase in state funding. Public universities in the state are currently funded at 1989-91 levels, but the funding boost would bring them back to 2009 levels.

*The Associated Press*  
January 9, 2013

## **State Higher Ed Group: Budget Cuts No Longer Top Issue Inside Higher Ed**

For the first time in six years, state support for higher education did not top the American Association of State Colleges and Universities' annual list of top 10 higher education state policy issues. This year the top spot went to "Boosting Institutional Performance," which includes efforts to increase graduation rates, performance-funding policies, and alignment with state goals.

The shift, while subjective, is a reflection of both the increased emphasis on tying funding to outcomes and the understanding among higher education officials that state funding is not likely to return to pre-recession levels. "The adjustment in rankings is based on the broadening acceptance that state reinvestment in public higher education will be slow in coming -- and institutions must readjust both their operations and revenue mix accordingly," the report states.

*Inside Higher Ed*  
January 9, 2013

## **Tapping Into the Well**

Grant Shaft, a member of the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education and its immediate past chair, gets funny looks from other states' board members when he talks about his system's plans.

"At meetings of the [Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges], there's no question we're the envy of everybody," he said. "We go to breakout sessions and hear about the dismal economic crisis in each other state, and it comes North Dakota's turn and we have such a different story."

That's because North Dakota, unlike almost every other state, is poised to make an unprecedented spending increase in its higher education system. The state's governor has proposed a 14 percent increase -- about \$90 million -- in the 11-campus system's operating budget for the next biennium, as well as an additional \$177 million in one-time capital expenditures. Politicians and education leaders hope an infusion of cash will help transform the system -- which has struggled with inconsistent direction and leadership -- into one of the country's best.

*Inside Higher Ed*  
January 9, 2013

## **MA: Governor unveils education investment plan**

This week Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick (D) outlined a plan to invest in K-12 and higher education, with \$550 million allocated for the first year of the plan and increases to nearly \$1 billion annually over the next four years. The governor hopes to use \$274 million for higher edu-



Office of Government and  
Community Relations

123 Wilson Hall  
2200 North Squirrel Road

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE

**PAID**

ROCHESTER, MI  
PERMIT NO. 17

## February 2013 *NEWSLETTER*

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY  
OFFICE OF  
GOVERNMENT and COMMUNITY  
RELATIONS

**(248) 370-3682**  
**[oakland.edu/govrel](http://oakland.edu/govrel)**

**Rochelle A. Black**  
Vice President  
**[black@oakland.edu](mailto:black@oakland.edu)**

**Michelle Lange**  
State Relations Director  
**[lange2@oakland.edu](mailto:lange2@oakland.edu)**

**Claudia DiMercurio**  
Executive Assistant  
**[dimercur@oakland.edu](mailto:dimercur@oakland.edu)**

**Jacqueline Racchi**  
Executive Secretary  
**[racchi@oakland.edu](mailto:racchi@oakland.edu)**

### State and National Headlines *CONTINUED*

cation in order to make college more affordable, including extra financial assistance for low-income students and expansion of job training programs at community colleges. The plan will be included in the state budget blueprint to be submitted to state lawmakers next week.

*Associated Press*  
January 15, 2013

#### **College is Worth It**

The policy brief provides qualitative and quantitative data related to public perception of higher education, including a focus on minority populations. Respond-

ents stated that higher education is still important and worth the time and money involved, but remain concerned over college affordability and student debt levels. The highest priority for reform among respondents was increasing the number of individuals who earn a college degree or postsecondary credential.

*Hart Research Associates/  
HCM Strategists/The Winston  
Group*  
January 2013