

STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY | 2025



Commitment to the Common Good

Renewing the Values & Mission of Higher Education

Welcome to the 2025 State of the University.

This year’s annual address is a combination of a video, *“Oakland University: Where You Belong,”* which presents a thematic look at the uniqueness of our university, and *“Commitment to the Common Good: Renewing the Values & Mission of Higher Education,”* a report that details the accomplishments of the past year and initiatives defining the path ahead. Our hope is that this new format will help to sustain a campus conversation about the university’s values, priorities and vision.

Thank you to the Oakland University Board of Trustees for their leadership, wisdom and oversight. Our trustees give generously of their time and expertise. We are grateful for their contributions and commitment.

Thank you to the cabinet, deans and department chairs for their leadership, and special appreciation to our talented faculty for their dedication to teaching and supporting student success, research, community engagement and elevating the impact of Oakland University. And, we are so appreciative of our alumni and many communities throughout the region for their support of our mission.

Of course, thank you to the Oakland staff who give unselfishly, work tirelessly and form the backbone of our university. And most of all, thank you to our students, whose choice to be here at Oakland challenges us to foster a learning environment that provides a world-class education and inspires their lifelong educational journey.

Finally, we set forth into another academic year with purpose and optimism, but with a heavy heart. On September 17, the brilliant light of our university, Glenn McIntosh, passed away. Glenn was a key member of the cabinet, a trusted advisor and a friend to many. He served as Senior Vice President, Student Affairs and Chief Diversity Officer. His boundless energy, infectious smile, and support for anyone who crossed his path leaves an indelible mark on the university. We are honored to have walked alongside him.

Ora Hirsch Pescovitz, M.D.
President, Oakland University

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Glenn McIntosh: In His Own Words

August 18, 1963 - September 17, 2025

Stand Up. Stand Out. And Stand Above.

You have two options: You can move forward or you can move backwards. The choice is yours.

I love you, and there's nothing you can do about it.

Step boldly into your life's assignment.

What's the thing you want to manifest? Commit and don't hold back.

Integrate what you know into how you live.

When you dress for work, bring your "A' game."

Citing Christopher Robin, a character in "Winnie the Pooh:" Always remember you are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.

Live each day with passion, purpose and perseverance.

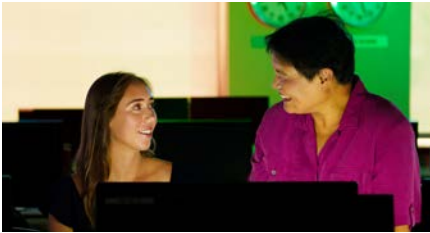
We stand on our values. Period!

Live what you say you believe.

Get some rest. There's more work tomorrow.

A man of faith never walks alone.

That pendulum (for positive, compassion change) is going to swing back in our favor, and when it does, we'll be ready.



YOU BELONG



A University Where You Belong

Every academic year presents challenges. This year is no different, except today, there is an unprecedented urgency to make our case.

Universities and colleges are confronting financial, organizational and fundamental challenges. Now is the time to prove our value, provide evidence of the significant return on a college investment and demonstrate our commitment to the common good.

To do that, we must stand together. And stand firm.

Institutions of higher learning are grappling with finding the best approach to educate students with the emergence of artificial intelligence, profound changes in the nature of work and employment, rapid waves of global cultural influences and the detrimental environmental and social impact from climate change.

In addition, universities are navigating a precarious path at a time of heightening anti-higher education rhetoric, increasingly skeptical views about the value of a college education, and partisanship that is politicizing the mission, independence and operations of colleges and universities.

Elevating the public discussion about the inherent societal value of higher education, research and the pursuit of knowledge will not be easy in the current cynical and political climate. But we must resist the urge to be complacent and accept the status quo.

The central tenet of this year's "State of the University" is a re-commitment to the values of higher education, teaching and research to refine minds, open hearts and improve prospects for every student and everyone who interacts with our learning community. Clearly, the benefits of higher education translate into better job opportunities, increased earning potential, personal fulfillment, upward mobility and a more civil and democratic society.

The principle at stake is compellingly clear: Higher education must promote free expression, academic freedom and the open exchange of ideas while serving as a place for the unimpeded pursuit of the truth and knowledge, and as an exemplary community of civility and learning.

It's up to each of us to make the case.

At Oakland University, we renew our commitment to fostering a welcoming campus where every voice is heard, and **EVERYONE BELONGS**.

A Renewed Purpose

Operating within a context of rapid change and uncertainty, we seek innovative solutions that position our students for a lifetime of success, enrich our faculty and staff, and revitalize our communities. In renewing our sense of purpose, we seek to further:

- An alliance with our faculty in the spirit of shared governance.
- Support our students as they build learning and intellectual habits, master fundamental academic concepts, and gain real-world experiences that shape their lives and set them on a course for a lifetime of achievement.



OAKLAND UNIVERSITY
IS A POWERFUL FORCE FOR JOBS, INVESTMENT
AND INNOVATION IN **METRO DETROIT**

\$1.93 Billion
In net new economic activity
generated in Michigan in fiscal 2024
(doubling since 2018)
Nearly 27 times what OU receives in state appropriations

\$316 Million
in State Tax Revenue —
four times what OU
receives in state
appropriations

15,768 Students
enrolled in 2024, fueling future
workforce development

\$326 Million
invested in operations, facilities
and local construction

6,417 Jobs
Supported across
Michigan's economy

80,618 working alumni earned a combined
\$5.9 billion in 2023.
Of this, **\$1.1 billion** in additional incremental
income is directly tied to their OU education.

95 percent of employed
OU graduates work in Michigan.
Oakland is the leading "brain gain"
university in the state, and a talent
pipeline in the region.

Read more
about OU's
impact

Source: Anderson Economic Group report, released May 8, 2025.

**OU is more than a university.
IT'S AN ECONOMIC POWERHOUSE.**
Learn more at oakland.edu

- Deepen connections with our communities throughout the region and reinforce the power of education to elevate economic prospects and improve the quality of life for all residents.

Economic Catalyst

A Vital Impact on Region & Talent Pipeline

This past year, we commissioned an economic impact report by the Anderson Economic Group.

The report released in April revealed that the university’s economic footprint translates into a \$1.9-billion impact (measured in fiscal year 2024). That economic impact generates tax revenue of \$316.4 million, which is more than four times the annual state allocation to the university. Furthermore, the university invested \$326 million in operations and created nearly 6,500 jobs.

In addition, Oakland is having a major impact on the state’s workforce.

There are nearly 100,000 Oakland graduates in Michigan, and collectively, their earnings in 2024 amounted to \$5.9 billion. In addition, the OU alumni median earnings stand 9 percent higher than peer college alumni, and 27 percent more than Michigan college alumni.

In connecting student success and degrees with improved economic prospects, Oakland is the leading “brain gain” university in the state, and a major talent pipeline in the region. In fact, nearly 92 percent of our students are from Michigan, and of those who graduate and are employed, more than 95 percent work in the state.

Translating higher education into improved quality of life and greater prospects is the mission of the OU Career and Life Design Center. In February, the center kicked off “The OU Pledge,” a commitment to provide experience-based learning opportunities to every student. The productive partnership among the Design Center, Academic Affairs and faculty has identified internship opportunities and in-demand meaningful hands-on learning experiences for our students.

Leading the way this year in providing “real world experience,” the School of Education and Human Services placed more than 95 percent of Human Resources students in paid internships.



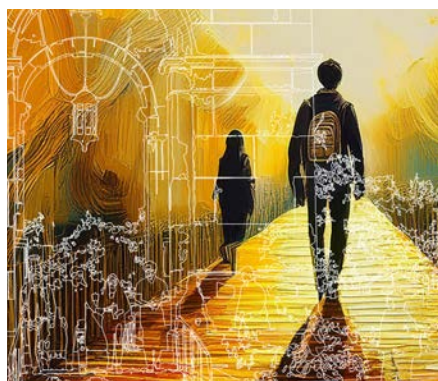
Sustaining Democracy

Promoting Civility. Strengthening the Citizenry.

Since February, the Department of Education and the Office of the U.S. Attorney General, have set forth recommendations to eliminate Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) policies in higher education.

Oakland University is committed to comply with federal and state laws. Regularly, our policies are reviewed to ensure there are no discriminatory or preferential treatment based on protected identities in employment, admissions, programs and activities, including scholarships and awards.





In response to the flurry of proposed policy changes from the Department of Education and the many challenges in court, the Strategic Response Team (SRT) was established in February to keep up with federal and state developments that impact higher education along with monitoring programs, scholarships, admissions policies, operations and student life so Oakland remains an inclusive campus. The SRT, which includes cabinet members, staff and faculty, meets regularly to review federal guidelines, manage changes to be in compliance and make sure decisions are aligned with university values.

In April, Oakland joined¹ university and college presidents across the United States in appealing for a sustained and constructive dialogue about the relationship between the federal government and America's colleges, universities and scholarly societies. Promoting constructive, open dialogue is the key to resolving difference and moving together to accomplish the common good.

Oakland's regional leadership in promoting civility in public discourse, and campus policies that promote and protect free speech are two examples of how we are working to facilitate constructive dialogue and making sure voices are being heard. Through the OU Center for Civic Engagement, the university serves as a "convener of conversations" and a nonpartisan venue for open discussions on a range of topical issues facing our communities and world. This past year, conversations were facilitated on Middle Eastern diplomacy, U.S. foreign policy and election-related issues.

In addition, the Klein Center for Culture and Globalization hosted a signature event commemorating the 45th anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act, featuring thought leaders on Taiwan, China, and U.S. relations while highlighting Michigan's global connections in Asia.

Furthermore, to heighten awareness among students of the need for and practice of civility, Oakland is piloting a course of civility at the Honors College. The class will be open to all students next Fall semester.

Reimagining OU

Strategic Vision 2030 & Campus Plan 2035 (CP35)

In Winter 2024, faculty, staff and students came together to reimagine the university. What began as a critical assessment of our strengths and weaknesses turned into brainstorming sessions that led to "Strategic Vision 2030."

In April, we presented "Strategic Vision 2030" to the campus. The vision draws on major themes, including building a sense of belonging, advancing academic excellence, supporting research infrastructure, improving operational efficiency, growing community partnerships, developing Oakland into a model sustainable university, promoting our graduates as a "major talent pipeline" for the region's economic development, and cultivating our cultural assets as attraction for the region and state.

¹The appeal, "[A Call for Constructive Engagement](#)," is organized by the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U), a Washington D.C.-based membership organization dedicated to advancing the democratic purposes of higher education. The statement affirms that America's colleges and universities prepare an educated citizenry to sustain our democracy and are engines of opportunity and mobility.



“Strategic Vision 2030” and the Campus Plan 2035 (developed in 2025) build on Oakland’s identity, history and strengths while developing innovative approaches that provide flexibility in response to the unknown challenges that will undoubtedly emerge in the days ahead.

For details, please visit [“Strategic Vision 2030.”](#) and [“Campus Plan 2035.”](#)

Building A Better Culture

Faculty & Staff Salary Increases

The Oakland University American Association of University Professors (AAUP) ratified the five-year contract on September 25, 2024. Key features include opportunities for tenure-stream faculty unable to maintain research or service productivity to move to alternative workload arrangements for up to three years unless an extension is granted; enhanced process for faculty to notify Oakland of outside employment; modification of the eligibility criteria and timelines for sabbatical applications; and, an annual review of sabbatical applications.

In addition, the administration and faculty agreed to review options to modify the structure of the academic calendar to consider ways to equalize instructional days throughout the year and include critical semester breaks. AAUP will also participate in medical insurance plan review discussions each fall and winter semester.

The five-year contract includes Year 1: 4% merit pool increase, and one-time lump sum payment of \$1,500 for full-time faculty and \$500 for special lecturers; Year 2 & 3: 3% merit pool increase, and \$500,000 allocated for market adjustments; and Year 4 & 5: 3% merit pool increase.

The OU leadership team searches continually for fiscally responsible ways to align salaries and benefits in a competitive package. This year, the staff received a 2.5% salary increase.

A Welcoming, Thriving & Healthy Campus

To measure employee attitudes, perceptions and commitment to further developing the university, we conducted in April a climate (employee) survey, “OU & You,” with the guidance of Modern Think, consultants on improving workplace quality. The survey provides a benchmark to reflect current employee attitudes and comparisons with peer institutions. The results give an empirical measurement by which to gauge our progress as we introduce policies and programs to enhance our work culture.

In the fall, the results will be shared with the campus community. Subsequently, we will identify areas of improvement-and-growth opportunities and develop strategies to make sure we are building a welcoming, healthy campus workplace and remain responsive to the challenges and needs of our employees.

This past year, the following improvements were made to support the physical and mental health needs of our campus community:

- An expansion of Healthy Campus Initiative, including the Uwill tele-counseling platform, which has expanded access to mental health support, and has dramatically reduced waiting time for student mental health services.





- Enhancements to RecWell's 250 programs tailored to the interests and needs of students and employees. Topical programs include alcohol education for residential students and club sports offerings, which saw a 12% participant increase this year. Overall, more than 215,000 visitors came to the Recreation and Well-Being Center, an 8.6% increase from last year.

Student Success

Innovative Outreach to Increase Enrollment

Overall, the university aims to expand enrollment through innovative outreach, recruitment and student success strategies that support a diverse student population.

Enrollment Management made bold strides to stabilize and strategically grow Oakland University's student body. Through data-informed decisions aligned with our Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan 2.0 goals, the university met overall enrollment projections and recorded increases in credit hour generation and first-time enrollment. In addition, this fall's enrollment includes the largest incoming first-year class since 2019.

This fall, overall enrollment increased by 1.3 percent with a 1.5 percent and 0.7 percent increase in undergraduate and graduate headcounts, respectively. That translates to a 1.6 percent overall credit hour increase. In addition, OUWB headcount increased by 2 percent with a 1.7 percent increase in credit hours.

Other highlights included securing a \$482,000 MiLEAP grant to launch an innovative first-generation student success initiative, and a renewed effort to increase minority enrollment and retention.



Achievement, Career Readiness & Student Experience

Our faculty work closely with students to help them achieve their academic and professional goals. Engaging in a range of academic and co-curricular programs, events and celebrations, students are immersed in the unique Oakland student experience.

Student Success highlights include:

- 44% of Honors College graduates earned a GPA of 3.9 or higher, including 19% who achieved a perfect 4.0.
- OU Student-athletes achieved a 95% graduation success rate thereby surpassing the NCAA's 90% benchmark to earn the Academic Performance distinction.
- The Center for Multicultural Initiatives OUTAS program achieved a 91% one-year retention rate, which reflects strong mentorship and academic support.
- The Career and Life Design Center recorded career outcome rates of 86%, and more than 95% of graduates (who are employed) working in Michigan.



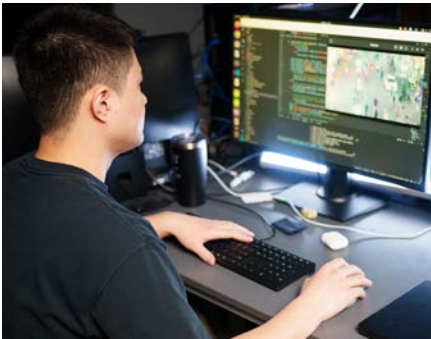


- A Workforce Development Grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) supported new semiconductor training programs, enhancing employment opportunities for OU students in the state's advance manufacturing sector.
- The Office of Global Engagement expanded Oakland's international reach through 26 new global partnerships, which further developed a network of student and faculty exchange.

Improving Graduation Rates

Overall, our goal is to increase the percentage of students who earn degrees and go on to successful careers while being engaged citizens in their communities.

Oakland's one-year First-Time in Any College (FTIAC) retention rate has remained relatively flat for more than a decade (nearly reaching 80%). We are committed to improving the retention rate to surpass 80% within three years. A data-driven plan with targeted initiatives, enhanced student support and resource alignment are keys to success.



Athletics: A Championship Culture

Oakland's athletics are the "front porch" to our campus, and often provide a highly effective way for external communities to hear about us.

We are so proud of the way Oakland athletes represent our university, and of course, we aren't reluctant to brag about our athletic success.

This year, four teams won Horizon League Championships: Men's Soccer (regular season), Men's Swimming and Diving, Women's Swimming and Diving, and Women's Golf.

Offering university venues and resources to the public is another way Oakland connects with our communities.



More than 100,000 people attended OU sports competitions and other public events, e.g., high school graduation ceremonies. And for the fourth consecutive year, the OU Golf and Learning Center increased the number of rounds. In 2024-2025, there was a 7.4 percent increase. Several impressive enhancements to the two championship courses — Sharf and Katke-Cousins — further elevated Oakland's reputation in the regional golf community.



Stewards of Place

Community Engagement & Thought Leadership

This year, we took a major step in coordinating campus-wide community engagement activities with the appointment of Professor David Dulio as the Interim Chief Community Engagement Officer. Professor Dulio also oversees the OU Center for Civic Engagement, and has been in the forefront of promoting civility in public discourse and delving into issues that define contemporary American life.





Community Engagement is among the core university priorities, and one of the five pathways in the university's ["Strategic Vision 2030."](#) It is essential for faculty, students and staff to find rewarding work in their contributions to building stronger communities. This year, we embarked on a systematic approach to tracking community engagement efforts. The system, GivePulse, integrates engagement information as part of creating a data-driven approach that provides insight into effective community engagement efforts.

Currently, there are more than 800 campus members logging more than 1,200 activities and nearly 5,000 hours of community service. Notably, Honors College students completed more than 40,000 hours of community services, partnering with Leader Dogs for the Blind, American Red Cross, and Fleece and Thank You. In addition, the development of an interactive map of 300 community engagement activities shows the regional breadth of the university's activities.

Throughout the year, our university deepened its community engagement efforts through the OU-Pontiac Initiative, which celebrated its 10th anniversary. Currently, the partnership includes more than 2,000 community members working in early education, workforce development, healthcare access, civic engagement and the arts.

Furthermore, this year Oakland continued its leadership in public health education. The Healthology Symposium, "Health Diversity," brought together faculty, staff, and students along with the regional healthcare community. Topical discussions included fostering ways to improve inclusive health education and cross-disciplinary collaboration.

An inaugural summer camp, "Explorations in Health Careers," provided a hands-on experience for high school students exploring careers.

Discovery

Impactful Research & Notable Awards

Oakland is committed to conducting timely, impactful research. As we seek to increase research spending and elevate the university's Carnegie status, the Research Office expanded training programs and increased incentives for faculty engaged in research.

In fiscal year 2025, the funding amount for new research awards totaled \$14.6M, which brings the total for the last four fiscal years to \$66.2M. [The Research Office](#) supported 223 proposal submissions (177 for research projects) and oversaw 107 new external awards. In the current fiscal year, we are committed to securing \$21M in total funding, including \$17M dedicated to research with a goal of 190 submissions.

Notable awards include a new Industry/University Cooperative Research Center award, a Launching Early Career Academic Pathways in the Mathematical and Physical Science award.

Significant awards to faculty included a \$3.5M grant from the National Security Agency to Dr. Huirong Fu for research training in cybersecurity, and a \$1M grant to Dr. Martha Escobar for STEM workforce development among low-income, academically talented graduate and undergraduate students. The Research Office also provided funding for faculty-led international research experiences, including research conducted in Scotland, Ghana and Costa Rica.



SECS reached a milestone in research, academic program development and industry collaboration in its explorations into vehicle electrification, cybersecurity and AI-driven technologies. The school received more than \$7.5M in external research funding from the National Science Foundation, Department of Energy, Department of Homeland Security and the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

We are proud to report that the university's Cybersecurity Center is a national leader in cybersecurity education with partnerships with more than 100 universities.



Sustainable University

Three-part plan focuses on campus, academy, business model

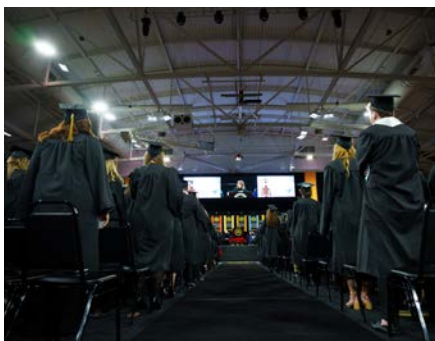
With an eye on the long-term and year-to-year continuity, Oakland's financial outlook is strong and healthy. A combination of operational excellence, on-budget capital projects and timely budget forecasting have created sustainable finances.

Among the impressive results is an endowment investment portfolio that outperforms higher education benchmarks, and a 25% increase in the university endowment.



In October, Moody's gave Oakland a rating of A1-Stable. The stable outlook reflects Moody's expectations of generally steady enrollment going forward with continued budget discipline to counter any variability. It also incorporates preservation of the university's strong liquidity profile while recording no increase in debt. Key features in the Moody's rating include:

- A credit profile that reflects its moderately large scale and scope of operations, strong wealth and liquidity levels and well-managed operations.
- Fiscal discipline with prudent alignment of revenue and expenses (despite an extended period of enrollment decline and a challenging revenue growth environment).
- A stable and strong cash flow arising out of solid budget discipline will provide sound debt service coverage.



Oakland has approximately \$303M in outstanding debt obligations via the sale of bonds. The Moody's rating drives the interest of investors who are willing to pay for our debt. The lower the rating, the higher interest an investor expects (driven by risk).

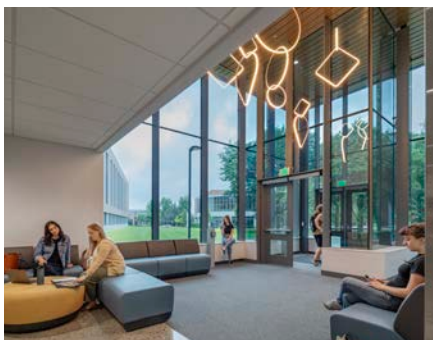
In FY2024, OU reissued \$18.8M of outstanding bonds. As a result of the strong A1-Stable Moody's rating, Oakland is saving over \$2M in debt service over the life of the bonds (\$170K/year).



FY 2025-2026 Budget

In the fiscal year 2025 budget, 99% of the total \$279 million comes from state allocation and tuition. Unlike other universities, Oakland does not draw a significant amount from fees, grants, contracts, auxiliary services, athletics and trademark licensing.

Acting with fiscal responsibility and prudence, this year's budget reflects a \$25.75/credit hour increases; a move that was necessary considering state and federal budget uncertainties and maintaining a sustainable budget forecast. In early



October, the legislature and governor approved a state budget that included a 2.1 percent allocation increase from last fiscal year.

Physical Enhancements to Campus

At the onset of Fall Semester (2024), Oakland opened the renovated and expanded South Foundation Hall, a stunning architectural gem and among Oakland's original classroom buildings. The five-year \$44.2 million (\$30M in state capital outlay, and \$14.2M through bonds) expansion includes an addition of 30,000 square feet to the original 50,640 square feet of space, 10 new classrooms (for a total of 47 classrooms), technology upgrades and collaborative study spaces.

During the past year, the multi-phase renovation of Dodge Hall drew on input from stakeholders to shape priorities and emphasize innovative teaching spaces. Meanwhile, Academic Affairs, Advancement and Facilities collaborated in the development of the Native American Heritage Site and a new outdoor classroom.

And we are so appreciative of the partnership between facilities and the Oakland University Police Department (OUPD) that has made Oakland one of the safest campuses in the country. This year, the collaboration enhanced safety across campus with the installation of housing camera systems and an enhanced security plan for West Center.

Making sure the athletic facilities are the best possible, a comprehensive assessment of the aquatic center and pool was completed to determine and prioritize deferred maintenance of the 25-year facility. In addition, the outdoor tennis courts were resurfaced and six new pickleball courts were created as part of a \$120,000 project.



Working to be a Sustainable Campus

We are firmly committed to taking the necessary steps to make Oakland a sustainable university in three areas: physical aspects of campus, academics, and business practices.

We appreciate the vital and tireless work of the Student Congress and CASE-OU (Campus Alliance for Sustainability and the Environment). Over the years, their commitment and actions have been instrumental in raising awareness of the pressing need for sustainable practices.

Under the leadership of the university facilities department, Oakland is developing a comprehensive plan that focuses on carbon management, green energy, environmental and water conservation, and energy efficiency. In addition, the approach evaluates current sustainability practices and identifies areas to introduce new policies that lead to more efficient operational, administrative and business practices.

Recycling and waste minimization have proven to be two effective ways to improve campus sustainability. Oakland's facilities provide recycling containers for students, faculty and staff. In addition, the university's "reuse policies" have had an impact on reducing unnecessary waste.





In the past few years, food waste in the food court and throughout the university has been minimized through improved ordering and preparation processes. In addition, we are committed to reusable containers and a review of all food and dining providers on campus to ensure the highest standards of sustainability is pursued.

Applying sustainability practices in the operations of campus facilities has been a part of Oakland's approach. We have achieved LEED Platinum status for the Human Health Building, LEED Gold status for the Engineering Center, LEED Gold status for Hillcrest and Oak View halls. For a list of energy projects over the past two decades that have improved campus sustainability.

We are prepared to face the “energy challenges” ahead. At the core of the sustainability plan is to pursue sustainable energy usage as a means to improve energy efficiency. Crucial to that plan is decreasing the “energy use” footprint of usable space before the next decade.

Developing an undergraduate and graduate sustainability focus of study is critical to becoming a leader in “sustainability education.” Also, Oakland's Research Office is exploring strategies to foster a culture of sustainability scholarship and research.

This year, in furthering its commitment to sustainability and food justice, the Campus Student Organic Farm (CSOF) unveiled its newest hoophouse—affectionately known as the “Salad Palace”—which supplies fresh produce to the Grizz Greens initiative and supports the Golden Grizzlies Pantry.



Cultural Treasures

This year, the university made major updates to Meadow Brook Hall, one of the region's preeminent cultural and architectural gems. Funds raised from members, new pledges and a “Saving America's Treasures” grant from the Institute of Museum and Libraries supported the new construction, including a visitor's center.

The De Carlo Visitor Center, named for our generous donors, was designed by HopkinsBurns Design Studio. The Ann Arbor-based architecture firm specializes in historic preservation. A philanthropic campaign and generous lead gift supported the first new major construction since the mansion was built 95 years ago.

The “Winter Wonder Lights” event has attracted larger crowds each year. It is among the many reasons visits and facility rentals have increased 38% since 2019, and revenue increased from \$3.5M in 2021 to \$5.1M in 2024.

Meanwhile, on campus this year, the Department of Theatre and Meadow Brook Theatre created a landmark collaboration, presenting their first joint production, “Footloose!” The production played to full houses and received critical acclaim.

In addition, College of Arts and Sciences faculty and departments expanded high-impact community partnerships with organizations such as Easterseals-MORC, the Michigan Department of Education, and the Department of Health and Human Services. Notably, Dr. Maria Beam secured \$1.2 million in MSW grants, supporting 46 Social Work graduate students for the 2024–25 academic year.





University Advancement

Moving OU Into the Future

University Advancement closed FY24–25 with approximately \$11.2 million raised, which fell short of the fundraising target. While this result is disappointing, there are important contextual factors that impacted performance and equally important reasons for confidence moving forward.

The past several years of constrained budgets, coupled with external recruitment of our Directors of Philanthropy (DOPs), reduced both stability and bandwidth at critical moments. At the same time, Advancement continued to lay essential groundwork, making strategic decisions to preserve front-line staff and position the division for future growth despite these challenges.

In October, we received a generous \$10M gift from Donna and Walt Young. Thanks to the Young's philanthropy, the Honors College will be named the Donna and Walt Young Honors College. We also held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new practice facility for the Oakland University basketball program.

Looking ahead, University Advancement is committed to expanding the university donor base and finalizing strategies for the next comprehensive fundraising campaign. University Advancement reports that FY26 is off to a promising start, building on strong partnerships on campus and in the community.



Strategic Vision: Making Strides

Fall 2025 & Winter 2026

The following initiatives have been developed to enhance Oakland's focus on our primary priorities, which include student success and fostering a welcoming learning environment, research, community engagement, sound fiscal management and playing a catalytic role in the ongoing economic, cultural and educational development of the region.

Several initiatives are underway and more will commence under the five pathways – Our People, Student Success, Discovery, Stewards of Place and Sustainable University. Progress on the implementation of the initiatives can be found at [“Strategic Vision 2030.”](#)



Our People

- **“You Belong at OU”:** Building a sense of belonging among students, faculty and staff, including a high-profile commitment to being an open campus that values each person and promotes individual health along with the public health of the campus and region.
- **“OU & You,” a campus-wide employee survey:** In the fall, we will share findings of the survey with the campus community. In addition, we will assess our weaknesses, and further build on our strengths as we foster a culture of learning and growth.



- **Courageous Conversations & Campus for Civility:** Oakland takes great pride in fostering a civil and respectful campus environment. In the academic year, we will pursue opportunities to be a “convener of conversations” and a venue for the expression of First Amendment. We will utilize “The Civility Book” to pilot courses for athletics and Honor students.
- **Healthy Campus:** An ongoing educational effort to heighten awareness of physical and mental health. A range of events are supported through RecWell, and a month-long emphasis (October) will promote how to stay mentally healthy.



Student Success

- **Building on the OU Pledge:** With the successful launch of “OU Pledge” in November, we are strategically positioned to further integrate experiential learning throughout Oakland’s academic programs. This year, we will further integrate the pledge and aim to elevate the university’s reputation as a school that offers “real world experience.”
- **New Master of Physician Assistant Science Program:** The highly anticipated addition to our degree offerings will begin with the inaugural class in Winter 2026. (Currently the program has provisional accreditation.)
- **Operationalizing the Retention Plan:** In FY 2025, we will implement initiatives in five areas to strengthen student retention and student success. These areas include:
 - Revising gateway courses to improve student success rates, and streamline course sequences to reduce time to degree.
 - Expanding proactive outreach and removing barriers to re-enrollment through coordinated communication, personalized support and improved progress tracking.
 - Reimagining the student alert system and implementing midterm grade reporting to more effectively identify and assist students with academic or personal learning challenges.
 - Developing data-informed models to identify students who may benefit from academic support earlier in their academic careers.
 - Introducing policy improvements and initiatives to help students resolve academic setbacks.



Overall, these strategies present a holistic and student-centered approach to retention, a responsive and flexible plan that connects policy, pedagogy, and personalized support aimed to do all we can to make sure students succeed.



Discovery

- **Community Engaged Research Center:** The leadership group identified 12 existing areas of community-engaged research activity and is building core teams of faculty (to work in those areas).



- **Research with an Impact:** With the goal of fostering a “culture of research,” the Office of Research is launching a mid-career faculty academy.² Through workshops, mentorship and professional development, we expect a strong academic pipeline leading directly to increased research activity.
- **Path to R1:** The Research Office has launched a seed grant competition to fund preliminary data collection and other research efforts intended to position faculty for success with federal and other large-scale funding agencies.



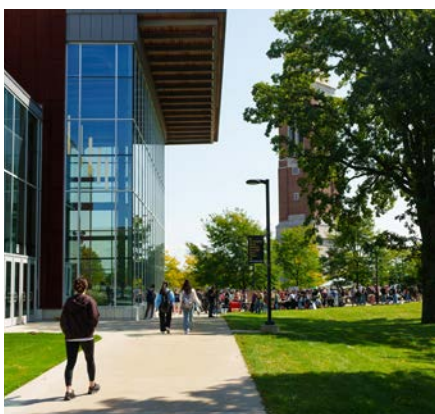
Stewards of Place

- **Community Changemaker Challenge:** This fall, the president launched the OU Community Changemaker Challenge — new grants designed to support bold projects that engage students and help solve real-world problems in the communities we serve. Through the Office of the President, OU will award two, two-year grants of up to \$200,000 each.
- **Community Engagement Model:** Interim Chief Community Engagement Officer Dave Dulio has collaborated with units across campus on an approach to increasing community engagement that facilitates activities from faculty, students and staff, while elevating the work of the university.
- **Cultural Ambassadors:** Through a national competition, OU will commission a signature work of campus art that strengthens our standing as a cultural destination. The project will give artistic form to defining elements of an OU education, including the pursuit of knowledge, civil discourse, community engagement and commitment to a just world.



Sustainable University

- **Strategic Additions to Leadership Team:** In October, Chris Foley Pilsner will assume the position of Chief Marketing & Communications Officer, and in the spring, a search will commence for a full-time Chief Community Engagement Officer.
- **Developing Three-Part Sustainability Plan:** The comprehensive approach includes pursuing sustainability practices in three areas – physical campus, the academy and the university business model.
- **Global Health Advocacy:** In October, Oakland University was appointed as the new United Nations Academic Impact Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Hub Vice-Chair for Partnership and Outreach for SDG6 (Clean Water and Sanitation). Professor Scott Tiegs and Assistant Professor Nicole Wagner from the Department of Biological Sciences serve as the university’s liaisons on the initiative.

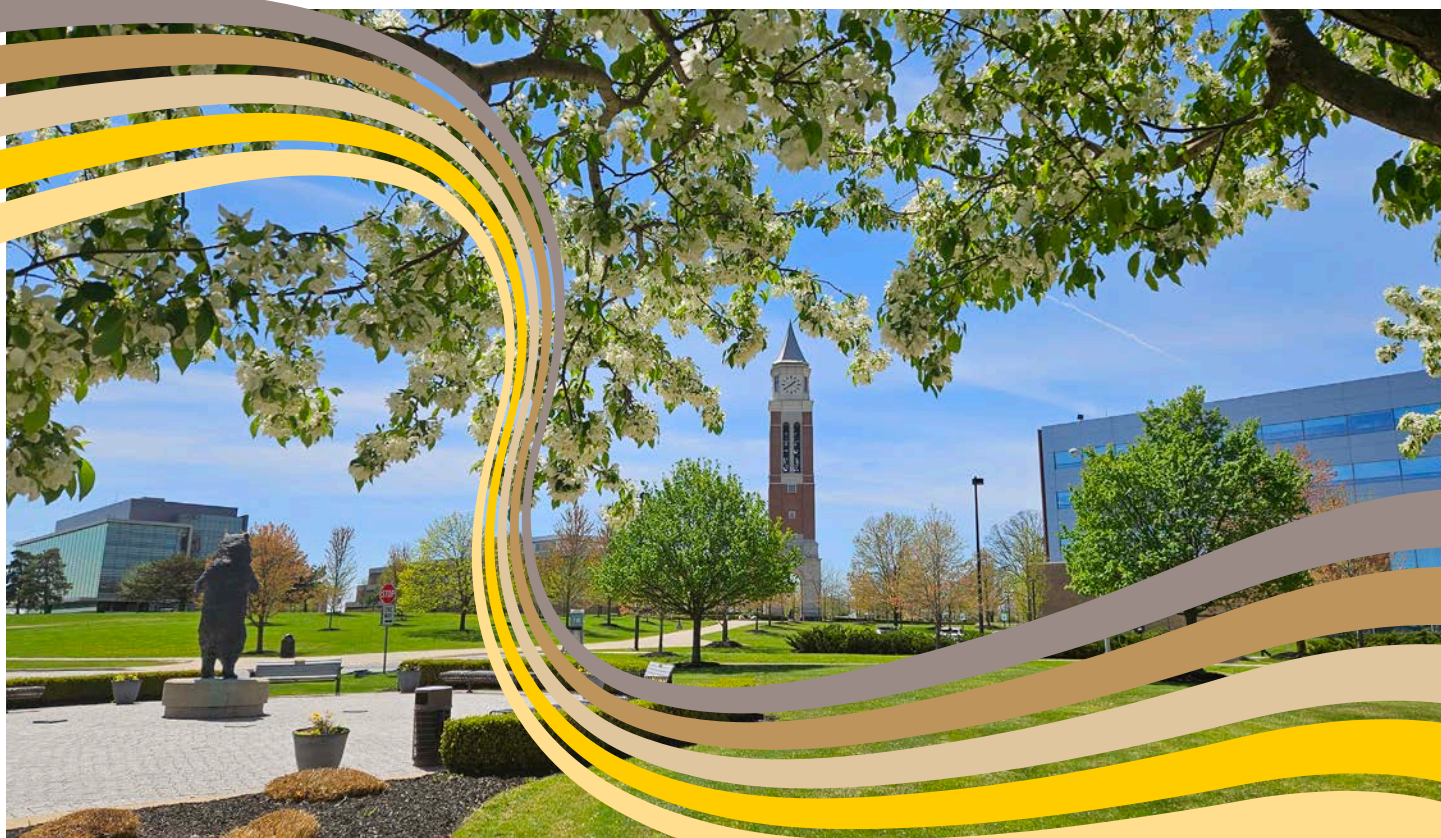


²Mid-Career Research Academy is an initiative included in “Strategic Vision, 2030.”

An Inspiring Learning Community

At Oakland University, we share a proud tradition of excellence. Each of us plays an important role as together – and united – we meet the challenges along the path of accomplishing our mission “to cultivate the full potential of our students, faculty and staff.” Let us pledge to appreciate the contributions of every member of campus and respect the many differences that make Oakland an inspiring place to study, teach and work.

Thank you for being a part of Oakland University, a campus community where EVERYONE BELONGS.



Looking forward to our ongoing campus conversation and your feedback.

Thank you.