

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

OAKLAND
UNIVERSITY

JANUARY 2017

Oakland University's 'Genius-to-Genius' program helps students socialize, build relationships

Genius-to-Genius, an innovative program developed at Oakland University, is helping students build relationships, enhance their socialization skills and transition to college life by pairing them with peer consultants who are trained to help them through the process.

"The program is open to any Oakland University student who needs extra support on campus," said Evelyn Wright, program coordinator for G2G. "So far, it's been very successful."

According to Wright, students who participate in the program are matched with consultants hired through the Handshake platform, which is utilized by the university's Career Services Office to help students and alumni search for internships, on- and off-campus employment, and networking opportunities.

"Many of our consultants have experience working with students, including those with special needs," she said.

In the G2G program, consultants and students typically meet once per week on campus for one-on-one sessions.

"I think the students really benefit from the one-on-one meetings," Wright said.

Students in the program are also

encouraged to meet as a group and participate in a variety of activities designed to help them build friendships and develop their interpersonal skills, including sporting events and movie nights.

"It's a great way for students to get to know each other," Wright said.



Developed by Chaturi Edrisinha, Ph.D., an associate professor in the Human Development and Child Studies Department and the director of research at the Oakland University Center for Autism, the Genius-to-Genius program is the result of a collaboration between the OUCA, the School of Engineering and Computer Science, and the Office of the Dean of Students.

"Dr. Edrisinha saw a big need for a program like this," Wright said. "She saw students who were falling through the cracks, spending their time in their dorm rooms, isolated."

According to Edrisinha, the OUCA conducted a survey last year to evaluate the need for services for

students on the autism spectrum at Oakland University.

The results of the survey indicated that most students do not need academic support; however, they often lack the social skills to take advantage of the opportunities available on campus.

"Most were honor students and had excellent GPAs, but often lacked the soft skills to make good team members on group projects," Edrisinha said. "They also failed to make friends in their classes and had difficulty bonding with classmates or socializing."

When Edrisinha and her colleague – Jan Graetz, Ph.D., an associate professor of Education, Human Development and Child Studies shared the results of the study with Louay Chamra, dean of the School of Engineering and Computer Science; and Nancy Schmitz, assistant vice president for student affairs and dean of students – they immediately recognized the need for the G2G program.

"They made our vision possible," Edrisinha said. "If not for their generous support, G2G would not exist."

While there are currently 15 students enrolled in the program, Wright said she hopes it will continue to grow as students learn about it and word spreads.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Model UN team wins first place at international conference

For the third time in four years, Oakland University's Model United Nations team took first place overall at the Lake Erie International Model UN Conference. More than 200 students from 12 schools competed at the conference, which took place in Huron, Ohio.

During the event, participants were judged based on how well they represented the interests of different countries on United Nations committees and organizations. Students debated numerous issues, including the crisis in Syria, the Syrian refugee crisis, promotion of clean energy and smart agriculture, limits on military spending and the first Gulf War.

To prepare for the conference, students spent weeks learning about the issues – developing research and presentation skills – to effectively advocate for their country's interests. Model UN is open to students of all majors and can be taken as the course PS 362.

Now in its ninth year, the Model UN team continues to add to its award haul. The team holds regular meetings and practice sessions, and those efforts have paid off, according to Paul Kubicek, faculty adviser and professor of political science.

"In my experience, the only way to learn how to perform well in Model UN is to actually do it in practice sessions, so you know what to expect at the actual conference," Dr. Kubicek said. "Our more experienced students also have helped train those new to Model UN, and we have a very cohesive and supportive team. We

had many newcomers for this conference, some of whom won awards and all contributed to our team's success."

The team's next competition will be at the North American Model UN Conference in Toronto in February. Members will also staff a Southeast Michigan Model UN high school conference in February, host the second OU High School Model UN Conference in March and compete at the New York University Model UN Conference in April.



For more information on OU's Model UN team, contact Dr. Kubicek at kubicek@oakland.edu.

National Science Foundation grant helps students pursue education leading to engineering careers

A \$599,980 "Scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)" grant from the National Science Foundation is helping Oakland University students pursue their career and educational goals in the fields of Industrial and Systems Engineering (ISE) and Mechanical Engineering.

OU received the grant four years ago to fund its Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) scholarship program, and the first group of PLM scholarship students are now graduating and beginning their engineering careers.

"The PLM scholarship program is

more than just financial help," said Russell Bauer, an ISE major currently working at Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA).

OU received the grant four years ago to fund its Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) scholarship program, and the first group of PLM scholarship students are now graduating and beginning their engineering careers.

"The PLM scholarship program is more than just financial help," said Russell Bauer, an ISE major currently working at Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA).

"It allows students to network and communicate with established professors within their fields. These professors can then assist students with projects, contacts, and most importantly, finding job experience."

The PLM scholarship program provides scholarships to 32 academically-talented, financially-challenged students in ISE or Mechanical Engineering programs at Oakland University.

According to the NSF, another goal of the PLM scholarship program is to enable students to graduate in four years with a Bachelor of Science degree, and upon graduation, be capable of entering the high technology workforce or continuing their education at the graduate level.

For Bauer, the PLM scholarship program has already provided him with the connections needed to find his "dream job."

For more information on Oakland University's engineering programs, visit www.oakland.edu/secs.

STATE AND NATIONAL HEADLINES

Chancellor urges House to make higher education a priority

Chancellor Glen Johnson told lawmakers Friday that "higher education has got a game plan" to increase both college access and college graduates, and he asked them to help achieve those goals.

During a budget hearing in the House chamber, Johnson defended higher education's role in workforce development.

A 16 percent cut in state appropriations last year has created difficulties for Oklahoma's 25 public colleges and universities and the 414,000 students they serve, Johnson said.

The top priority is making sure those students earn a meaningful degree so they can get a good job and contribute to Oklahoma's economy, he said.

The Oklahoman
January 7, 2017

Pay Gap Between College Grads and Everyone Else at a Record

Americans with no more than a high school diploma have fallen so far behind college graduates in their economic lives that the earnings gap between college grads and everyone else has reached its widest point on record.

The growing disparity has become a source of frustration for millions of Americans worried that they — and their children — are losing economic ground.

College graduates, on average, earned 56 percent more than high school grads in 2015, according to data compiled by the Economic Policy Institute. That was up from 51 percent in 1999 and is the largest

such gap in EPI's figures dating to 1973.

Since the Great Recession ended in 2009, college-educated workers have captured most of the new jobs and enjoyed pay gains. Non-college grads, by contrast, have faced dwindling job opportunities and an overall 3 percent decline in income, EPI's data shows.

"The post-Great Recession economy has divided the country along a fault line demarcated by college education," Anthony Carnevale, director of Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce, said in a report last year.

College grads have long enjoyed economic advantages over Americans with less education. But as the disparity widens, it is doing so in ways that go beyond income, from homeownership to marriage to retirement. Education has become a dividing line that affects how Americans vote, the likelihood that they will own a home and their geographic mobility.

The dominance of college graduates in the economy is, if anything, accelerating. Last year, for the first time, a larger proportion of workers were college grads (36%) than high school-only grads (34%), Carnevale's research found. The number of employed college grads has risen 21 percent since the recession began in December 2007, while the number of employed people with only a high school degree has dropped nearly 8%.

The Associated Press
January 12, 2017

College is a much better investment than stocks, BAML analyst says

Despite the exams, stress and tuition

fees, college certainly pays off, according to one managing director at Bank of America Merrill Lynch (BAML).

"(A) four year college degree is a better investment for you personally than investing in the stock market," Sarj Nahal, managing director and head of thematic investing at BAML told CNBC, discussing the bank's latest "Let's Get Smart" report.

According to Nahal, education imbalance is the "biggest civil rights issue of our era." Placing the issue in perspective, Nahal said that "eight days' worth of military spending would be the equivalent of educating everybody around the world up to secondary level."

NewsDog
November 21, 2016

Gov. Brown's budget encourages students to reach higher

Gov. Jerry Brown's proposed 2017-18 budget will help continue the state's support of career pathway and technical education programs in higher education.

The budget proposed total funding of \$31.9 billion for higher education, despite the state's \$2 billion deficit.

"In the midst of fiscal constraints, the administration supports continued investment in higher education with the expectation that colleges and universities will work together and implement new and creative practices that consider the cost of instruction, better support student success and completion, and expand access to higher education for more California students," the proposed



Wilson Hall, Room 123
371 Wilson Boulevard
Rochester, Michigan 48309-4486

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Rochester, MI
Permit No. 17

**OAKLAND UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT AND
COMMUNITY RELATIONS**
(248) 370-9892 | oakland.edu/govrel

Rochelle A. Black
Vice President
black@oakland.edu

Nicole Wells Stallworth
Assistant Vice President
wellstallworth@oakland.edu

Bonnie Bochniak
State Relations Director
bonniemaluchnik@oakland.edu

Claudia DiMercurio
Executive Assistant
dimercur@oakland.edu

Jacqueline Racchi
Executive Secretary
racchi@oakland.edu

State and National Headlines *CONTINUED*

budget states.

The \$31.9 billion will help higher education become more attainable for California students by creating an easy transition from community colleges, helping raise the graduation rate and shortening the time it takes to earn degrees.

Visalia Times-Delta
January 13, 2017

College Education Linked To Higher Pay, Job Security, Healthier Behaviors And More Civic Involvement: New College Board Report

NEW YORK, Jan. 9, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Individuals with higher education levels earn more, pay more taxes, and are more likely than others to be employed and to have job benefits such as retirement and health insurance. Adults with more education are also more likely to move up the socioeconomic ladder and less likely to rely on public assistance, according to Education Pays 2016, the latest report from the College Board's Trends in Higher Education series

The Oklahoman
December 2, 2016