

# Despite economy, OU had good year

**A**t this time last year, many of us at Oakland University anticipated that 2009 would be a difficult year.

Looking back, we see that the same economic forces that created so much pain across the state and the nation paved the way for many difficult decisions here on campus.

The good news is that despite our challenges, we've managed to protect the integrity and quality of our academic programs. Heartening reassurance of this came with news that the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association has granted us unqualified accreditation for the next 10 years.

I can't think of anything that speaks more to the dedication of our world-class faculty, who inspire our students through instruction, mentoring and research.

They play key roles as scholars, teachers and members of the community, and they go to great lengths to provide students with the superb educational experience they receive at Oakland.

We've also kept our programs accessible to a wide array of students by carefully managing costs and significantly expanding financial aid resources.

We believe this fall's 4.1 percent increase in enrollment and the arrival of our largest first-year class ever resulted from these and many other student-focused initiatives.

We appreciate support from the broader community as well. Our

first-ever capital campaign ended this year with nearly \$112 million in contributions, which exceeded our original goal by \$2 million and did so a year earlier than anticipated. Grateful for the community's confidence and willingness to invest in the work we're doing, we will continue to honor our partnership by working to help foster regional growth and prosperity.

The good news of 2009 doesn't end there.

We have expanded academic offerings to include nearly 250 undergraduate and graduate programs, and we continue to garner national recognition for their quality. Just one example of this is our Dance Program winning prestigious full membership and accreditation from the National Association of

Schools of Dance.

We also continue to offer countless academic enhancement and extracurricular activities, including a successful and exciting NCAA Division I athletics program.

In a broader sense, and with an eye on helping address regional needs, we've made great strides toward the opening of the Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine. We've also approved design plans for our 160,000-square-foot Human Health Building, which is targeted for completion in 2012.

Our School of Nursing has introduced the Doctorate in Nursing Practice program and partnered with St. John Health System to open the Riverview Institute of Oakland University, which is offer-

ing more students an opportunity to start a career in nursing.

We've also launched the NanoTech R&D Institute, where both faculty and students will explore science and technology with a boundless array of medical and other applications. Similarly, our Center for Biomedical Research has expanded faculty research opportunities that will broaden an already intense focus on programs in the health sciences.

Outside the health sciences, we've celebrated the grand opening of the Macomb-OU INCubator's Sterling Heights facility, where business professionals and scholars are supporting the growth of start-up companies, fostering development of new technology and facilitating the creation of new jobs right here in southeastern Michigan.

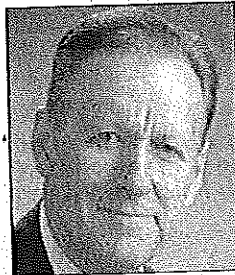
Likewise, the new Center for Integrated Business Research and Education (CIBRE) at Oakland University's School of Business Administration is aggregating resources and ideas from business leaders, researchers, professionals and students to help revitalize the region's economy.

As we did in 2008, we anticipate the coming year will present a whole new set of challenges and, unfortunately, still more difficult decisions.

I want to assure you, however, that we'll keep our eye on what's best for students and the health and well being of the region.

We look forward to continued support from the community and to the benefits of our ongoing collaboration.

Dr. Gary Russi is the president of Oakland University.



DR. GARY RUSSI