

Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Open House

November 19, 2019

Thank you to Provost Jim Lentini and Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management Dawn Aubry for your leadership, tireless work and vision on a topic that is among Oakland University's most important priorities, and it could be argued, the most important.

After all, where we would be without students?

For many of us, we're back together again.

Last May, we gathered here in the Gold Rooms to discuss the progress of the Strategic Enrollment Management plan. And six months later, we are approaching the conclusion of the first phase of an ongoing process to consolidate resources and focus our energies to achieve target enrollment levels.

Our goals are clear.

The strategy is focused.

Our progress is measurable...and impressive.

In a few minutes, Provost Lentini and Associate Vice President Aubry will discuss details and updates about SEM, but I want to take a moment to talk about the ingredient that is key to success, and something I think all of us want to see more of throughout the university....

I want to commend all of you for creating a model of teamwork and collaboration.

For your hard work and dedication, you have the deep gratitude of all of us who believe there are great things ahead for Oakland University. And in order for those great things to become a reality, we need – you guessed it – students.

The best evidence and credence to our claim as the University of Choice is for students, faculty, staff and alumni to tell our story.

The people in this room... and those of you who serve on the SEM committees are addressing issues that will determine the future success of Oakland University.

These challenges, however, are not unique to Oakland.

The challenge to attract and retain students comes at a time when there is a downward trend in high school graduates, rising higher education costs and an alarming number of people view higher education skeptically.

The SEM plan is the culmination of a campus-wide effort to integrate input from faculty, staff and administrators. And let's be clear: The voices of faculty are crucial. Our excellent faculty know better than anyone the needs, expectations and hopes of today's students. We appreciate your input, and look forward to learning more from you.

All of us here are passionate advocates and believe higher education is needed now more than ever at a time of globalization and rapid social and cultural change.

Yet let's be mindful that the SEM plan is not a quick fix for a current issue, nor does it exclusively focus on several years down the road.

Ideally, the SEM plan is a flexible model that reflects our values and aspirations while providing objective information that is crucial for productive and timely planning and decision making.

Last, I saw in Dawn's presentation where there are two possible scenarios: 1.) Moderately Aggressive enrollment targets; and, 2.) Aggressive enrollment targets.

I understand there are many factors outside of our influence, but let's not turn away from a challenge. Imagine what we could accomplish if we reached our highest goal.

Remember: We are, after all, in an intense competition with other colleges and universities.

Each of us must ask ourselves: What can I do to make Oakland University the university where students of all types want to attend.

Your responses will likely shape the course of our university.

Thank you again for your hard work and dedication to Oakland University.