

President's Report to the Community

2015

Message from the President



Providing affordable access to education that empowers student success is at the core of the Oakton Community College mission. Oakton is committed to equipping students for work and life by providing college academic credit programs, community education, workforce education, corporate training, and talent acquisition services. Our success is measured by the success of our students and partners in terms of goals met, credentials earned, and the great jobs that follow.

Oakton experienced many exciting changes during the past year that position us to serve the community for years to come. The LEED certified Margaret Burke Lee Science and Health Careers Center opened for classes in January 2015, introducing a new breed of science spaces that showcase the latest sustainable technologies.

Ongoing classroom enhancements include lecture capture stations on both campuses, allowing faculty to record high quality video, audio and podcast resources for student use outside the classroom. Additionally, expanded new student orientation, student-to-student mentoring, financial literacy training, and many other student programs provide tools for students to achieve their certificate, degree or transfer objectives.

New college leadership was also selected in spring 2015, poised—along with students and employees—to write the next chapter of Oakton’s story. I am honored to have been chosen to continue building upon Oakton’s fine tradition and excellent reputation as its fourth president. Indeed, these are exciting times!

Through stories highlighting teaching and learning and the connections made between students, faculty and staff, and the community, the *2015 President’s Report* highlights Oakton’s values of providing access to higher education while providing the resources for students to succeed. I am pleased that our college community is committed to fostering such connections to promote student success.

Oakton is the community’s college—the place where residents come to transform their lives. And, when our students find greater success, our district thrives.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joianne L. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "S".

Joianne L. Smith, Ph.D.
President

Oakton Students Place Seventh at NASA Robotics Challenge



Oakton's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) team competed at the annual NASA Robotic Mining Competition at Florida's John F. Kennedy Space Center last spring and took seventh place out of 39 college and university teams.

The contest required teams of students to design and build a remote controlled excavator capable of collecting a minimum of 10 kilograms of simulated lunar dirt. The robot had to be navigated remotely through an obstacle course rife with rocks and craters. Teams had 10 minutes to collect and deposit as much dirt as possible.

The team, nicknamed the "Oaktobots," gathered 49 kilograms of simulated lunar dirt with their entry, "Oaktimus Prime." This tally outscored the two other Illinois teams, University of Illinois at Chicago and University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. It also exceeded teams representing prestigious engineering programs including Arizona State University, University of Florida, and University of Michigan.

"We're the first community college to ever qualify for the mining competition by collecting more than 10 kilograms of simulated lunar dirt. Our team is made up of first and second year college students who must compete against university teams led by graduate students. To achieve a top-10 finish is amazing," says Angelo Gero, electronics and computer technology lecturer (*above, far right*).

Oakton team members were enrolled in an engineering independent study course taught by Gero, who serves as the group's advisor. The Oaktobots were Samuel Chong of Morton Grove, Raphael Codrean of Lincolnwood, Azher Gandhi of Skokie, Karolina Klimont of Des Plaines, Mahavish Mahmood of Norridge, Inamullah Sharif of Skokie, Anthony Terry of Buffalo Grove, Hsiang-Yi Tseng of Northfield, and Nagasuryarama Vegesna of Niles.

"We really captured NASA's attention with our great run," says Gero, a Des Plaines resident. "Our performance blew away any expectation that I had heading into the competition. Our success was largely due to having a cohesive team that understood the technical limitations of the robot and being able to work around those restraints."

The time trial was only part of the competition. Teams were also judged on their oral presentation, a written technical overview of the robot, evidence of community outreach in promoting STEM disciplines, and team spirit.

Designed to engage and retain students in STEM, the NASA challenge require teams to consider a number of design and operation factors for remote controlled excavator entries, including dust tolerance and projection, communications, vehicle mass, energy/power requirements, and autonomy.

The trip to the Kennedy Space Center—the third for Oakton students—was the culmination of more than six months of work. While NASA imposed no spending cap, the team created a robot on a budget of less than \$5,000. While Oaktimus is primarily made of aluminum, the group stretched its dollars by incorporating found materials from Oakton's campus, such as electronic switches and sealed lead acid batteries. Underwriters Laboratories, a safety consulting and certification company headquartered in Northbrook, sponsored Oakton's entry.



From top: Robert Cabana (center), director of NASA's John F. Kennedy Space Center, poses with the Oakton student team, winners of Honorable Mention for the Best System Engineering Paper Award at the NASA Robotics Mining Competition; Student Azher Gandhi (from Skokie) introduces Oaktimus Prime to community business partners at the Manufacturing Expo reception.

Call me **Joi** **Leading by Listening**



After an extensive nationwide search to fill the retirement vacancy left by nationally respected president Margaret “Peg” Burke Lee, the Oakton Board of Trustees and presidential search committee selected one of Oakton’s own to become the college’s fourth president. Mentored by President Lee over the past 13 years, Joianne L. Smith believes in continuity but not complacency.

“One of the things I learned from Peg is that if you are not pursuing positive change, you are not leading,” Smith explains.

In one of her first acts of leadership, Smith instituted two monthly conversation events: “Pasta with the President” and “Coffee and Conversation with the President.” *Pasta* is a monthly casual luncheon that encourages students to meet face-to-face with the president. She invites students to call her “Joi” and to ask questions and share experiences, joys, and frustrations about college life at Oakton. *Coffee and Conversation* is an open forum for faculty, staff, and administrators where all employees are invited to discuss their ideas or concerns. Smith has also met one-on-one with trustees, reached out to union leaders, and has begun meeting with superintendents of district high schools, business leaders, and local legislators.

“To be most effective, I need to listen and be able to understand the environment from various perspectives,” she says.

The Wildly Important Goal

“Community colleges were developed 50 years ago with the goal of creating access to higher education for every U.S. citizen. Today, access alone is not enough. We must find a way to provide both access and success so that every college story has a happy ending—a degree conferred, a better job, a dream met,” she told attendees at her recent inauguration.

As president, Smith knows that she faces many great challenges. However, there are none more important than the one she has identified as the college’s “wildly important goal.”

“In today’s knowledge economy, our community, our state, and our country need college graduates more than ever before. Enrolling more students and helping them persist from enrollment to graduation is a vital mission entrusted to us,” she says. “Persistence is the greatest challenge community colleges face throughout the U.S., especially because less than

and the Challenge of a Wildly Important Goal

half of enrolled students stay to earn a degree or certificate.”

However, research indicates that persistence levels can be improved, especially when students feel welcomed, encouraged, and mentored. To attack the problem of persistence, Smith is spearheading a new “All for One” initiative intended to move the college forward on persistence and other key student success metrics.

In her speech at the annual college breakfast that kicks off fall semester, Smith asked all employees to work as one to increase fall-to-fall new student persistence by eight percent. One way to accomplish this goal is to go above and beyond daily jobs to get to know students more personally.

“Everyone from entry-level maintenance workers to tenured professors has a role to play in student success. Studies of college success repeatedly show that students perform better, have greater success, and stay enrolled longer when they feel at home and connected to their colleges,” she explains.

To accomplish this singular goal, Smith provided the names of individual new students who were identified as being in a high risk category such as first-generation college students and those enrolling with lower-than-average grades. She provided every faculty and staff member at the breakfast with the name and contact information of one student on the list. She requested that the students be contacted several times during the semester to see if they were making the adjustment to college life, to offer assistance, and to simply be a caring member of the community who could direct them for further help, if needed.

Throughout her tenure at Oakton, Smith has worked tirelessly to increase student engagement and promote an inclusive environment for teaching and learning. In addition to the announcement of the college’s wildly important goal, her long-term goals include working on the strategic and master plans as well as getting the college ready for reaccreditation.

Listening is a skill that Smith has developed well through both her academic and professional work. After graduating summa cum laude from Wittenberg University, she earned a master’s degree and a Ph.D. in counseling psychology from Virginia Commonwealth University. Smith is also a licensed clinical psychologist in Illinois.

Her career has taken her from counseling to academic leadership, starting as dean of Brainerd Commons at Middlebury College (1999-2001), then as assistant director of University Residence Life at Northwestern University (2001-2002) before moving to Oakton as dean of students in 2002. While in this position, Smith collaborated with faculty to revise the academic integrity and student conduct processes in addition to defining distinct roles for academic advising and counseling services.

In 2005, she was promoted to vice president for Student Affairs. For the next 10 years, she led the reorganization of the division to create integrated student support services. She established the Office of Access, Equity, and Diversity and hired the institution’s first chief diversity officer. She led the creation of the Office of Student Success, hiring its first director, and was instrumental in Oakton’s participation in *Achieving the Dream*, a national reform network to help community college students succeed with improved skills and better employability to help promote economic growth.

Smith has been active as a leader in professional groups including Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education (NASPA), the leading association for the advancement, health, and sustainability of the student affairs profession.

She resides in Glenview with her husband, David, and their children, Noah and Rachel. She is actively involved in her family’s faith community as a member of Temple Beth-El in Northbrook and as a mentor in the Chicago InterfaithFamily Network. She serves on the Skokie Hospital Community Advisory Committee and will join the Presence Holy Family Medical Center Community Leadership Board in January 2016.



Lee Center—Built for Today and the Future



Lee Center Earns LEED Gold

“To do more with less” is the mantra of all great engineers, architects, and designers today. In a world with the threat of climate change and an energy constrained future, it is also an obligation to future generations. The Margaret Burke Lee Science and Health Careers Center is a brilliant example of this ethos. Having received LEED Gold certification; it ranks among the most efficient public buildings in the country.

According to the U.S. Green Building Council, buildings are among the heaviest consumers of natural resources. In the U.S., they account for 38 percent of all carbon dioxide emissions and 73 percent of electricity consumption. LEED Gold buildings save money and resources, and they have a positive impact on the health of occupants while promoting renewable, clean energy.

To receive LEED certification, building projects satisfy prerequisites and earn points to achieve different levels of certification. Prerequisites include energy efficiency, energy generation, water conservation, use of recycled materials, minimization and reuse of construction waste, and use of low gaseous emissions materials. Forty percent of the building materials used in the Lee Center construction are recycled and sourced from within 500 miles of the building site.

The purpose of the Lee Center is

In 2015, Oakton Community College celebrated the opening of the Margaret Burke Lee Science and Health Careers Center (Lee Center). Named after the retiring president, this 93,000-square-foot architectural masterpiece in glass and steel reflects the natural and artistic beauty of the Des Plaines campus. Designed by Legat Architects and built by Turner Construction Company, it is a showcase of cutting edge educational design and an engineering marvel of functionality and environmental sustainability (see *Lee Center Earns LEED Gold*).

As visitors walk up to Oakton’s campus from the north, the new Lee Center welcomes them in shades of burnt orange and moss green that reflect the forest. A dramatic staircase that tapers toward a covered outdoor plaza provides an inviting gathering space and vistas of the lake and campus.

Looking up from the top of the stairs, the three story center widens from the bottom up with only 10 percent of the building touching the ground. Set on footings, the building is designed to allow a worst case flood by the nearby Des Plaines River to flow harmlessly beneath it until waters recede. The cantilevered third floor provides shade and shelter for the floors below, while integrated solar panels and louvered blinds shade the windows of the third floor. The blinds are mechanically controlled to open for the sun’s warmth or close to provide cooling shade. Nearly 10 percent of the building’s electricity is provided by a solar panel array, lowering costs for lighting, electronics, and air conditioning. Wall-to-wall windows reflect the spectacular views of the Oakton lake and the surrounding forests.

Entering the building, one finds an attractive seating area and study spaces surrounded by windows looking out at the lake, while the inner walls have a warm, rustic glow from reclaimed and recycled barn wood that have been sanded and varnished. Open doorways to division offices located just off the entryway provide easy access for students and visitors to find a helpful face to have their questions answered.

Designed for Student Success

Extensive planning went into the features of the educational spaces. Faculty and student brainstorming sessions informed the design of classrooms, labs, offices, and study spaces. Educational design consultants from the Harley Ellis Devereaux firm used this feedback and information on best practices to design a new breed of interactive learning spaces.

“It’s truly a great learning environment because everything is centered around the classroom,”

says Kaitlyn Andler, a first-year student in the Physical Therapy Assistant Program. She and her classmate, Emily Birney, have enrolled in the program after earning bachelor's degrees from other colleges.

"I like the way the lab is next to the classroom, which is also near the professor's office. Then there are study spaces just outside the door along the hallway. It makes it very convenient to keep group discussions going even after the class has ended," says Birney.

In fact, the very design of the building was developed with the goal of keeping disciplines together with similar classroom needs—such as labs and prep stations. With this design parameter and the desire to keep professors' offices near classrooms and labs, it was clear that one floor (the third) would have to be much larger in square footage than the others. This design feature worked not only for convenience and community building, but also to lower cooling costs for the building (because the third floor shades the lower floors) and to reduce heating costs (because heat rises).

"I like that every classroom has multiple video screens and electronic whiteboards so that no matter where you are sitting, you can see what the instructor is doing," Birney explains.

Their physical therapist professor, Luanne Olson, adds, "From my perspective, I have a great space where I can see every student and keep them all working together. There is no 'back of the class' where students can disappear."

To make learning more interactive in the science labs, tables are arranged around the professor's podium. Oval lab tables take the place of traditional linear benches so that lab partners can face each other while they work and professors can move easily around the room to observe students' progress and make suggestions. This layout also allows professors to seamlessly transition from lecture to lab and back again with students never leaving their chairs.

The Lee Center also boasts a nursing simulation room where an entire hospital floor has been recreated so that students gain experience with professional grade equipment before they ever leave the classroom.

"The labs provide a collaborative and interdisciplinary work environment, more like how science and health care are conducted in the real world," says Michael Carr, assistant vice president for Academic Affairs. "We believe the final design specifications solved the challenge of creating spaces that help students learn and teachers teach."

The Lee Center is the most substantial project of the \$68.5 million, five-year Facilities Master Plan, which has also included a new enrollment center at the Des Plaines campus, the renovation of classroom spaces with new technologies, and a new distance learning center.

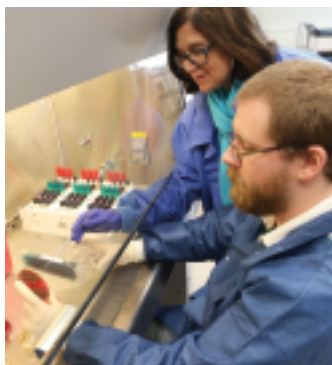
Donors Needed

Building the Lee Center was only the first challenge. Oakton is hoping to find donors who want to become a visible part of this great community academic resource. There remain a number of ways to honor family and friends through naming opportunities, which range in value from \$5,000 to \$200,000 and provide highly visible, timeless tributes.

The Oakton Community College Educational Foundation launched its *Building Leaders and Legacies* campaign at the dedication of the building last spring. The first donors, Hal and Karen Sider from Deerfield, are sponsoring the two main student lounges on the first and second floors. Carl and Debbie Costanza from Park Ridge are sponsoring the nursing lecture room on the second floor. To join these generous leaders, visit www.oakton.edu/giving for more information about naming opportunities.



From above: Nursing Professor Mary Kakenmaster discusses a nursing practicum with her students; Professor and Chair of Medical Laboratory Technology and Phlebotomy Lynne Steele works with student in the new phlebotomy lab at the Lee Center.



education, and as part of this mission, the building helps educate users about conservation. For example, signs within the building highlight sustainable innovations. In the main lobby, a sign notes that the walls are covered in reclaimed wood sheathing from a Midwestern barn. Another explains that the polished concrete floors help store and slowly release the winter sun's warmth to reduce energy use. Placement of windows and skylights help mitigate the use of electric lighting. When light is needed, it is provided by LED bulbs, which use 30 percent less electricity than fluorescent bulbs, contain no mercury, and because they last 10 times longer, require less maintenance and create less waste.

Computer controlled window shades sense the sun's angle, temperature, and wind speed to help cool the building and allow heat and light in during colder weather. Solar panels are also positioned to shade windows and move with the season to maximize energy production. Even the elevator—constructed from 95 percent recycled material—uses a new technology that is twice as efficient as standard traction elevators and requires no maintenance oils. To help encourage recycling, filtered water stations are located throughout the building so users can refill water bottles.

The Illinois Green Economy Network has provided an online dashboard (buildingdashboard.net/igen/#/igen/oakton) where Oakton community members can monitor the energy savings provided by the solar panels.

Faculty Excellence Awards Honor an Alumnus and a Former Business VP

The winners of the Ray Hartstein Award for Teaching Excellence share qualities with all Oakton professors—they love working with students and teaching their subjects, have real world experience that influences what they do in the classroom, show true dedication to student success, and are committed to improving their methods. Perhaps what made George Lungu and Leslie Dubin rise to the top in last year’s voting is their unbridled passion for what they do.

“I get really excited on my way to class each morning because I never know how my students are going to react to the day’s discussion topics,” says Lungu, the full-time faculty award winner.

One of the classes he teaches is History of the Islamic Middle East in Modern Times, a global studies course. He is also the co-sponsor of the Oakton Honors program.



From left: George Lungu, Thomas Tippet, chair of the Educational Foundation Grants Committee, and Leslie Dubin.

I create a safe environment for discussion so that students can learn multiple points of view from each other. *George Lungu* I use team collaborations because working with others and understanding your teammates’ strengths and weaknesses is more like how real business works. *Leslie Dubin*

“Ever since 9/11, there has been very strong student interest in this class. Unfortunately for the people who live there, the Middle East has never failed to provide hot topics, extreme points of view, and challenging discussion points for daily class. Often, these are fresh from the nightly news. You couldn’t make it boring if you tried,” Lungu says humbly.

“We have great diversity at Oakton, and my course attracts many students with family history from the Middle East. It could be an absolute minefield, but instead, it is always an asset. You can try to explain different points of view theoretically; however, it is much more instructive when an advocate for that point of view is in your class. I am often able to pair students who have opposing viewpoints and personal experience. However, I create a safe environment for discussion so that students can learn multiple points of view from each other. Because the topics we cover can have such heated debates, I lay down very clear rules for engagement at the beginning of each semester,” he explains.

As Aristotle said, “It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.” By helping students learn, understand, and debate various points of view, Lungu hopes to help students reach for Aristotle’s “mark.” His interest in political science and international relations comes, in part, from his own personal journey. He was born and raised in Romania during the harsh dictatorship of Nicolae Ceausescu. At that time, Romania was a closed communist society much like North Korea is today. Lungu was 25 years old when he and his wife immigrated to the U.S. His wife was a concert violinist who

had to take work performing background entertainment at weddings and parties while he found work as a manual laborer in a warehouse.

After five years in the U.S., Lungu enrolled at Oakton and was inspired and mentored by one of his professors, Bill Taylor. In his second semester, he earned a scholarship. After graduating with an associate's degree at Oakton, he transferred into one of the most challenging programs in the country at the University of Chicago, where he earned a bachelor's degree. He continued for a master's degree at the University of Illinois. Lungu began his teaching career as an adjunct lecturer at various Chicago area colleges. Eventually, his old mentor, Professor Taylor, recommended him for a full time position at Oakton. "You really can start here and go anywhere," Lungu says. "I am living proof."

That was 1995. Today, in addition to his courses on the Middle East, Professor Lungu supervises the Honors program and teaches occasional classes in the Emeritus program.

To be nominated for the Hartstein Award, students submit the names of favorite teachers who have done the most for their educations at Oakton. Each submission must be accompanied by a brief statement describing the teacher's effectiveness and highlighting their outstanding qualities.

The top nominees are then contacted and asked to compile a case for their own selection that includes an explanation of teaching methods, philosophy, and memorable moments in the classroom. Finally, a team from the Educational Foundation Grants Committee and the Student Government Association recommends the winner of the top two teaching awards.

It seems business lecturer Leslie Dubin would rise to the top in any situation simply by the sheer buoyancy of her energetic personality. She commands her classroom with a dynamic smile and unbridled enthusiasm for her business subjects, especially small business management and entrepreneurship. Dubin, a resident of Highland Park, joined Oakton part time in 2009. She received a master's degree in business administration from Northeastern Illinois University and a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She brings more than 20 years of professional business experience to the classroom, including serving as a vice president and operations manager for a national textile firm with more than 200 employees.

"Ms. Dubin makes every day interesting because she finds so many different ways to teach something and to get students involved. In fact, she even asked me to teach last week," says second-year student Phillip Morriele. "We had an assignment to show how a small business can grow into a large business. She liked my project on Chiquita Bananas, and she asked me to present it to the class. You really learn something well, when you have to teach it!"

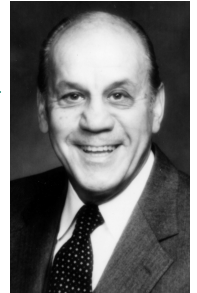
Dubin is one of Oakton's most inventive teachers, often using the "flipped" classroom method where students watch a PowerPoint or taped lecture for homework and do the real work during class time when teams take on specific business cases and try to come up with a success strategy that they can explain and defend. She can listen in on group discussions, see how her students are doing, answer their questions, and push them to higher performance and more sophisticated strategies. The students find her examples to be very instructive because many of them come from her own personal experience in the business world.

"I use team collaborations because working with others and understanding your teammates' strengths and weaknesses mirror business situations. I also use peer review in my classes for two reasons: students can be harder on each other than I would be, and having to critique someone else's business strategy forces students to examine their own more closely. I am constantly asking for feedback and trying to make my classes better. I can always learn a new way of teaching something so that students learn it faster and remember it longer," Dubin explains.

Both Lungu and Dubin agree that they are better teachers today than they were when they started, and they are always examining ways they can improve.

Raymond Hartstein, 1918-2014

Raymond Hartstein, the founding chairman of Oakton Community College, passed away last year at the age of 96. He is remembered as a visionary leader with great passion for education, our community, and our college.



He was a mentor to former Oakton president Margaret Burke Lee and current trustee Jody Wadhwa.

"If it hadn't been for Ray, I'm not sure that the college would have happened," says Lee.

Because of his tireless drive and ambitions for Oakton and his 35 years of service as one of its trustees, the college's second campus was built in Skokie in 1995 and named the Ray Hartstein Campus. He was on hand with his family to cut the ribbon.

Oakton's top teaching award and several scholarships, including the Ray Hartstein-Brunswick Excellence Scholarship and the Ray Hartstein Academic Merit Scholarship, are named in his honor.

Born in the Pittsburgh area to Eastern European immigrant parents, Hartstein came to the Midwest to work in industrial relations for General Motors in Kokomo, Indiana, after graduating from the University of Pennsylvania. He later earned a master's degree in industrial relations from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Because of his strong reputation in the field, in 1957 the U.S. State Department tapped Hartstein to set up management training programs in Israel. Later, he became an executive with the Brunswick Corporation and moved his family to Skokie.

Hartstein was a business executive, a management teacher, a community leader, and lifelong learner, but his efforts for community colleges, especially Oakton, was his avocation.

"He was a thinker and doer," says Lee. "His dream was to make quality public education available to everyone in our area, but especially those lacking the means and resources to attend other colleges."

Fulbright Grant Helps Oakton Connect with Indigenous Communities





“It has been an amazing experience getting to learn about the native peoples of the Andes Mountains and the Amazon rainforest in Peru and Bolivia. They make their lives in such harsh environments, and yet they live in harmony with each other and nature,” says Katherine Schuster, Ph.D., professor of education and coordinator of the global studies program at Oakton Community College. “As indigenous communities disappear and assimilate throughout the world, it is a vital opportunity to interact with these communities and learn from their perspectives.”

Schuster and her co-leader, Eva de la Riva, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology, were awarded a \$90,000 Fulbright-Hays Grant last year from the U.S. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs to lead a group of educators on a five week seminar to study indigenous people in Bolivia and Peru. Oakton was the only U.S. community college to receive one of these highly respected academic grants in 2014.

“These are very strong indigenous cultures that have survived for thousands of years, and we have a lot to learn from them,” says de la Riva. “For example, one of the things I found most striking was how people of the Aymara culture are encouraged at the earliest stages of their education to speak for themselves and express their own ideas. The community structure, called *ayllu*, encourages all members to be heard. Since this ‘speaking one’s mind’ begins in childhood, by the time the students reach the university level, it is remarkable how well the students have developed their critical thinking skills. They are impressively independent and confident students.”

The anticipated outcome of the program was that the participating educators would use this life-changing experience to develop exciting new classroom content and curriculum. In this way, the enriching experiences of the few can reach hundreds of high school and college students each year.

The group that traveled to Bolivia and Peru included five Oakton professors, six teachers from in-district high schools (Maine East and West, Niles North, and Evanston Township), a College of DuPage professor, and a junior college faculty member from Madison, Wisconsin. A year before the trip, the team began meeting to share discussions and to study the history, science, languages, and cultures of the area.

The trip was organized to provide an intensive and deeply immersive experience. The 35-day schedule included opportunities to study native languages and cultural practices, to learn about native and medicinal plants and agricultural techniques, to meet with educators and university officials in indigenous areas, to meet with government and NGO officials to examine how government policy affects indigenous communities, to investigate micro-lending programs, and to meet with community organizers and learn about indigenous women in social movements. The group had the opportunity to listen to many oral histories of the area and also visited archeological sites, including Machu Picchu.

Among the highlights of the trip was the personal contact educators shared with the indigenous community during their three day home stay with Aymara host families in Tocoli, on the shores of Lake Titicaca, and the overnight stay in a Peruvian rainforest rustic lodge before hiking through the forest to visit the community of the Huacaria, a Machiguenga ethnic group.

Since returning, members of the group have attended conferences to discuss their findings, given presentations to fellow educators, and created new curricula, such as a new honors course introduced at Oakton. Developed by Paul Gulezian, assistant professor of biology, and Lindsey Hewitt, lecturer in anthropology and humanities, the course combines their disciplines to examine how cultural and agricultural practices can affect biological systems and ecology.

“Globalization is rapidly changing the world we live in. By studying its effect on indigenous communities, we also gain perspective on how our own communities are affected,” says Schuster. “What we learned also helps close the knowledge gap in our curricula. In the typical western civilization versus eastern civilization model, there is little understanding of the experiences of indigenous people.”

This is Oakton’s second Fulbright-Hays Grant. In 2008, the college led a group of educators to study the history and outcomes of Gandhi’s nonviolent protest movement in India.



Advanced Manufacturing Partnerships Help Bridge Employment Skills Gap

According to John Rubeo, of Woodward Aerospace and Energy, one of Oakton's Manufacturing Partners, "Manufacturers are looking for bright, highly trained, creative individuals who can solve problems, fix machinery, and build and design new machines. Young people who enter these professions have direct career paths from the manufacturing floor to becoming engineers. Rather than going directly to university engineering schools, you can earn a good salary while you learn. Many companies will pay for your school. That's how I became an engineer."

Manufacturers make whatever the world wants and needs by transforming dreams into real products that can be sold to consumers. Whether you dream of flying cars, immersive 3-D televisions, or kitchen appliances that turn raw foods into four-course meals at the press of a button, the future only arrives when inventions are engineered and manufactured.

While this might sound like a creative, challenging career, the idea of working in manufacturing is often frowned upon by earlier generations who remember what factories were like before automation. Smoke-belching factories with soul-crushing assembly lines are a thing of the past. Manufacturing workers today are more likely to program a computer than to get their hands greasy. Today's manufacturing environments offer clean, safe workplaces that challenge the mind as well as the body.

Oakton Community College partners with dozens of manufacturing companies and organizations in Illinois and beyond to increase awareness about educational pathways that can lead to exciting, high-paying careers in advanced manufacturing and engineering technology. "Our backs are against the wall trying to find well-trained employees. There is a big gap between those highly skilled workers reaching retirement age and the young workers taking their place. We need to fill the gap as quickly and effectively as possible," said Rubeo, Woodward's manager of prototype manufacturing.

Oakton's manufacturing partnerships are celebrated each year at the Manufacturing Expo, which offers local high school students the opportunity to discover these professions by meeting with company representatives and career counselors and by taking field trips to tour the facilities of Oakton's manufacturing partners—one company in the morning and another one in the afternoon. Some of Oakton's partners—including Woodward and Signode Packaging Solutions—will even cover a student's tuition at Oakton.

Oakton serves nearly 500 students a year between the CAD (Computer Assisted Design) and Manufacturing programs, offering two degrees in advanced manufacturing and six certificate programs. The two degrees are Manufacturing Associate in Applied Science and Mechatronics Associate in Applied Science. These degrees can take students directly from having no experience to getting started in a great career. The certificate programs are geared toward students wishing to upgrade their skills; these include Mechanical Design A.A.S. and CAD certificates.

Boguslaw Zapal, assistant professor of Manufacturing, says, "The average age of our students in advanced manufacturing is around 40. They tend to be people with lots of experience who are looking to advance their careers with a new set of skills and expertise."

While the average student is mid-career, young people who want to go from high school to great pay in the shortest amount of time may want to consider this two-year career path instead of four years of college that may only lead to an entry-level job.

Advanced manufacturing careers tend to be relatively high paying with good benefits offering salaries from \$40,000 to more than \$60,000. The skill set is specialized and also in high demand; therefore manufacturers must offer competitive wages to keep employees from leaving for greener pastures.

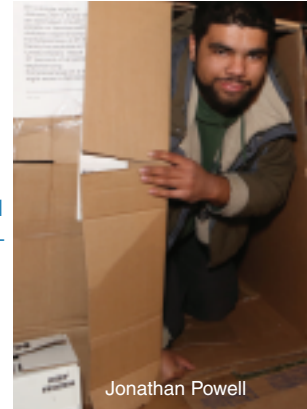


From top: Students benefit from manufacturing labs equipped with industry standards such as Haas Automation CNC machines; Students visit Winzeler Inc., as part of Oakton's Manufacturing Expo.



Shantytown Turns a Spotlight on Homelessness

Every night in Illinois an estimated 14,000 people experience homelessness. According to Marvin Borschlegl, Oakton lecturer and coordinator of Human Services and Substance Abuse Counseling, "Homelessness can happen to anyone at any time. Job loss, bankruptcy, mental illness, drug addiction, health care crisis, and family strife are some of the most common causes. Only one in four Americans



Jonathan Powell

has a six month cushion of savings to hold them over if they lose a job or can't work, and 27 percent have no savings at all! Most college age students are in the latter category, so it's clear that many are only one emergency away from needing charity to survive."

"Shantytown" is an annual event held at Oakton to help students gain a better understanding of the facts, learn more about the plight of the homeless in America, and gain empathy through personal experience.

Several student clubs come together to build cardboard shelters, spend a night outside on the streets, and raise funds to support the Oakton Habitat for Humanity chapter. The location of Shantytown changes each year from the Skokie to the Des Plaines campus.

The night is filled with music sing-alongs, a campfire, hot chocolate, and cider. However, students also experience what it's like to sleep outside on the hard ground on a cold night in an urban environment with streetlights, cars, sirens, airplanes, and the fear of strangers disturbing their rest.

Each year there is also a post-Shantytown event where students make presentations to the community and discuss their insights after a night of real life experience. "The post experience discussion transforms the raw experience into an academic service learning project. Through post experience analysis, students gain a better understanding of the emotions and feelings of this highly charged experience, and can develop strategies for the continued fight against the epidemic of homelessness," Borschlegl explains.

1,000 Miles for Humanity

A journey of 1,000 miles usually begins with one step, but recent Oakton graduate John Bendewald's trek began with a hybrid mountain-road bike and an apology.

Before transferring to Iowa's Cornell College in fall 2015, Bendewald wanted to embark on a bicycle journey of self-discovery. Training for this, however, would require that he miss the spring Habitat build. As a member of Oakton's Habitat for Humanity Club—and a veteran of previous year's build in Starkville, Mississippi—Bendewald felt bad that he couldn't do both. He approached faculty sponsor Marvin Borschlegl to apologize for his change of plans, but Borschlegl helped the student see a bigger opportunity.

Bendewald's conflict in scheduling evolved into "1,000 Miles for Humanity," his fundraiser in support of Habitat for Humanity. For three weeks late last spring, he biked an average of 50 miles a day from his hometown of Wheeling to Duluth, Minnesota, and back. Along the way, he stopped at local Habitat affiliates, where he entertained audiences with magic shows. In exchange for drawing crowds to their ReStore facilities and build sites, the affiliates fed him and gave him a place to stay. Overall, his efforts raised \$6,000 and awareness for Habitat by attracting newspaper, radio, and TV reporters.

A bicycle-riding magician on a mission from Chicago made great summer copy.

Bendewald also found that his journey was a great academic experience. Some of the activities in support of his fundraiser—such as generating public relations, building a website, writing a blog, interviewing people, documenting his trip with this camera—helped him earn honors credit for his spring semester courses Psychology of Personal Growth, Social Problems, Fundamentals of Acting, and Digital Photography.

Thousands of students come to Oakton each year to start their academic journey and find their purpose. John Bendewald graduated from Oakton with honors and left for Cornell College with new confidence in his ability to go the extra mile and make magic happen.



Financial Report

Oakton remains fiscally sound. The college's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) is available at www.oakton.edu/cafr for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015, and for the other four fiscal years included in this report.

The CAFR provides more detailed information about the college's financial condition including its assets, liabilities, and net position for all funds. The information provided herein derives from the CAFR and is consistent with generally accepted accounting principles with one exception: the Oakton Community College Educational Foundation, a 501(c)(3) component unit of the college, reports its finances separately. To view the foundation's statements, see Oakton's CAFR or contact the Educational Foundation at 847.635.1893 to receive a copy.

Condensed Statement of Net Position and History

as of June 30

(In thousands)	FY 11	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Current Assets					
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$7,131	\$9,344	\$4,396	\$11,169	\$9,494
Short-term Investments	108,507	71,051	91,279	83,407	95,081
Property Tax Receivable, net	42,958	23,444	22,987	23,307	23,908
Student Tuition and Fees, net	6,704	6,364	6,322	6,353	6,507
Other Accounts Receivable	3,222	3,381	3,228	2,043	2,375
Inventory	1,227	1,220	1,272	1,085	661
Other Prepaid Expenses	381	427	2,153	967	953
Noncurrent Assets					
Long-term Investments	24,789	64,722	32,993	31,660	16,618
Property Tax Receivable	21,791	—	—	—	—
Student Loans	105	37	53	(6)	12
Capital Assets	84,245	89,502	115,499	142,360	150,625
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(30,823)	(33,371)	(34,132)	(36,475)	(40,280)
Total Assets	270,237	236,121	246,050	265,870	265,954
Deferred Outflows of Resources					
SURS Pension Contribution	—	—	—	—	44,739
Total Assets and Deferred Outflows of Resources	270,237	236,121	246,050	265,870	310,693
Current Liabilities					
Accounts Payable	1,909	4,882	8,185	6,728	4,533
Accrued Salaries	916	678	930	1,597	1,647
Accrued Interest Payable	92	92	87	86	122
Other Accrued Liabilities	1,846	1,918	980	808	969
Unearned Revenues	53,685	10,722	10,590	10,498	10,472
Current Portion of Long-Term Obligations	1,600	1,705	2,030	2,110	2,195
Noncurrent Liabilities					
Accrued Compensated Absences	1,481	1,414	1,365	1,426	1,426
Other Accrued Liabilities	6,260	5,970	5,824	5,773	5,579
Unearned Property Tax Revenues	21,355	—	—	—	—
Long-Term Debt Obligations	28,500	28,506	26,248	38,440	37,037
Total Liabilities	117,644	55,887	56,239	67,466	63,980
Deferred Inflows of Resources					
Unearned Property Tax Revenues	—	22,309	23,089	23,720	24,250
Total Liabilities and Deferred Inflows of Resources	117,644	\$78,196	\$79,328	\$91,186	88,230
Net Position					
Net Investment in Capital Assets	53,422	53,186	60,780	71,264	71,113
Restricted	22,294	20,554	23,366	20,539	24,603
Unrestricted	76,877	84,185	82,576	82,881	82,053
Total Net Position	\$152,593	\$157,925	\$166,722	\$174,684	\$177,769

Assets

Current assets are resources that are reasonably expected to be available within one year. Unlike other forms of assets, cash and cash equivalents such as checking account balances can be used immediately for current operational needs, including payroll and payments to vendors. Short-term investments represent Oakton’s holdings in allowable financial instruments due within one year including the Illinois Metropolitan Investment Fund and The Illinois Funds. Receivables represent those monies due to the college but that are not yet available for use including property taxes not yet collected from the current levy, amounts owed by students for tuition and fees, and accrued interest.

Noncurrent assets are Oakton’s long term financial and plant resources. Long term investments represent the college’s holdings in allowable financial instruments due in more than one year, such as T-Notes and GNMA’s. The net investment in capital assets includes Oakton’s equity in land, buildings, real estate improvements (such as roads and security lighting), and capital equipment expenses such as computer network servers and vehicles. Property tax receivable includes the second half of the estimated levy for the coming year. Depreciation is the recovery of plant and equipment costs over their expected useful lives.

Deferred Outflows of Resources

Deferred outflows of resources represent a consumption of net position that applies to a future period and so will not be recognized as an expense until then.

Liabilities

Current liabilities are short term obligations. Accrued salaries, accounts payable, and other accrued liabilities represent amounts due to employees or vendors for services, supplies, or equipment provided to Oakton. Unearned revenues are primarily summer and fall semester tuition and fees—which are not recorded as income until after the end of the fiscal year. The current portion of the long term debt and related accrued interest payable relate to the debt financing the Lee Center, remodeling of campus buildings, and infrastructure improvements—part of *Building Together*, the college’s five year Facilities Master Plan.

Noncurrent liabilities represent long term obligations, usually due over a number of years. These include estimated amounts of accrued compensated absences, net other post employment, health care benefits (OPEB), and principal payments on the long term debt that are due beyond the next fiscal year.

Deferred Inflows of Resources

Deferred inflows of resources represent unearned property tax revenue which is recognized as income in the period it is intended to finance.

Net Position

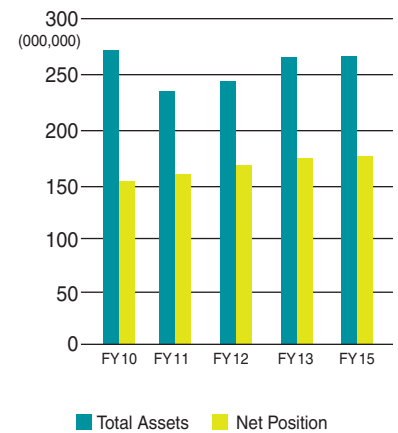
Net position is either the accumulated resources invested in plant and equipment, or resources available with or without restriction; the latter generally are available for payment of future expenses.

Property Taxes

Property taxes accounted for 44.2 percent of Oakton’s funding sources for fiscal year 2015. For the 2014 tax year, the college’s property tax rate for a typical homeowner was .258 of the property’s assessed value—making up about 2.32 percent of the homeowner’s total property tax bill. For the 2015 tax year, this rate is projected to increase to .262 of the property’s assessed value. However, District 535 tax rates remain low relative to the average rates for in-district high schools and the county. For example, the 2014 tax rate for Maine Township High School District 207 was 2.739—while Cook County’s rate was 1.08. In addition, Oakton’s rate is lowest among the 11 community colleges within the Chicago collar counties.

Growth of Assets

Fiscal Years 2011-2015

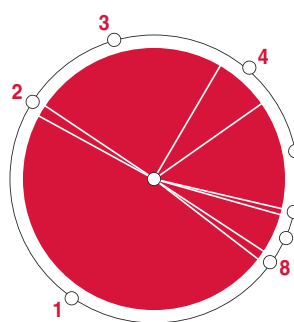


2014 Property Tax Rates

for a typical homeowner in Oakton’s district

Taxing Body	Rate*	%Total
County	1.080	9.74%
City	2.197	19.80%
Township	0.210	1.89%
Grade School	4.610	41.55%
High School	2.739	24.69%
Oakton	0.258	2.32%
Total Rate	11.094	100.00%

*In dollars per \$100 of equalized assessed valuation



Revenues by Source

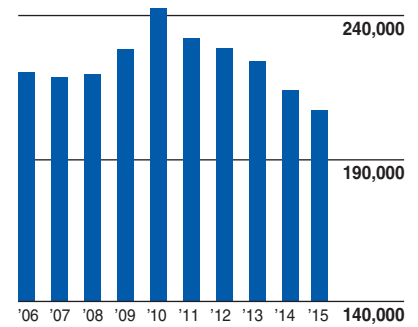
1. Property Tax	44.15%
2. Local	.73%
3. State	24.66%
4. Federal	8.43%
5. Students	15.32%
6. Chargebacks	0.05%
7. Auxiliary Enterprises	5.87%
8. Other	0.79%

Revenues for the years ended June 30

(In thousands)	FY 11	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Operating Revenue					
Student Tuition and Fees	\$16,048	\$15,614	\$16,097	\$15,835	\$17,007
Chargeback Revenue	104	95	75	69	60
Auxiliary Enterprises	7,597	6,994	6,655	6,370	6,515
Other Sources	1,577	1,742	1,320	1,231	871
Total Operating Revenues	25,326	24,445	24,147	23,505	24,453
Total Operating Expenses	91,371	95,238	96,406	98,849	106,549
Operating Loss	(66,045)	(70,793)	(72,259)	(75,344)	(82,096)
Non-operating Revenue					
Property Taxes	41,208	43,456	46,590	48,002	49,004
Local Grants and Contracts	741	758	1,004	1,274	805
State Grants and Contracts	18,357	21,094	24,257	24,750	27,364
Federal Grants and Contracts	11,120	10,458	9,647	9,576	9,357
Investment Income Earned	1,237	1,483	406	492	(104)
Interest on Capital Asset Related Debt	(92)	(1,124)	(848)	(789)	(1,247)
Non-operating Revenues, Net	72,571	76,125	81,056	83,305	85,180
Increase in Net Position	\$6,526	\$5,332	\$8,797	\$7,961	\$3,084

Credit Hour Enrollment History Fiscal Years 2006-2015

Oakton has had success maintaining and even increasing credit hour enrollment during the past 10 years. Growth during the period reflects the college’s efforts to meet the community’s educational requirements by providing quality instruction, superior facilities, and course offerings that accommodate student needs. In addition, growth included the effects of the economic downturn. During the downturn, many new students enrolled at Oakton to improve their current skills while others returned to the college to start a new career path. Subsequent to the increase in credit hour enrollment that resulted from the downturn, Oakton and other community colleges experienced a reduction in credit hour enrollment.



Revenues by Source

Local residential and business property owners continue to be the primary source of revenue for the college, followed by state grants and contracts, student tuition and fees, and federal grants and contracts. However, the property tax cap law will limit increases from this revenue stream in the future and will require Oakton to actively seek other avenues of funding to support educational and community services to students and district residents.

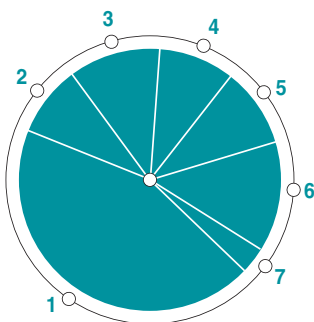
Operating Revenue for the 12 months ending June 30, 2015, increased by \$948,000—from the prior year’s \$23.5 million to \$24.4 million—for the reasons detailed below. Operating revenues stem from Oakton’s provision of instructional and related services to students. Non-operating revenues derive from sources unrelated to Oakton’s core mission.

- Student tuition and fees revenue increased to \$17 million from the prior year’s \$15.8 million. While the college did increase tuition by 8.3 percent, any gains were somewhat offset by declining enrollment. Credit hours declined from the prior year’s hours of 213,443 to the current year’s hours of 206,608.
- Auxiliary revenue increased by \$145,000 due to increases in Alliance for Lifelong Learning tuition and fees, and increased lab fees for the Early Childhood Education Centers. These categories include self-supporting activities that charge a fee not necessarily equal to the cost of the activity and other specialized operations.

Tuition and Fees (per credit hour)				
Fiscal Years 2009-2014	Student Activities Fee	Construction Fee	Tuition (In District)	Total
2010	\$2.60	—	\$86.00	\$88.60
2011	\$2.60	—	\$91.00	\$93.60
2012	\$2.60	\$2.00	\$91.00	\$95.60
2013	\$2.60	\$2.00	\$93.75	\$98.35
2014	\$3.00	\$2.00	\$95.34	\$100.34
2015	\$3.00	\$2.00	\$103.25	\$108.25

Non-operating Revenue for the 12 months ending June 30, 2015, increased by \$2.3 million—from the prior year’s \$84.1 million to \$86.4 million—for the reasons detailed below.

- State grants and contract revenue increased from \$24.8 million in fiscal year 2014 to \$27.4 million in fiscal year 2015, mainly because of the State Universities Retirement System of Illinois (SURS). SURS, a cost sharing, multiple employer pension plan, is supported by contributions the State of Illinois makes on behalf of other institutions. Please note that reported SURS amounts do not necessarily represent actual payments made by the State, but the State’s current pension obligation. In fiscal year 2015, the State’s contribution obligation was \$19.6 million compared with \$17.1 million the previous year—an increase of \$2,500,000 (14.6 percent).
- Property tax revenue increased from the prior year’s \$48 million to \$49 million, because of a combination of the inflation-based property tax increase and stronger collection of personal property replacement taxes consistent with overall economic improvement.
- Federal grants and contracts revenue decreased from the prior year’s \$9.58 million to \$9.36 million. Investment income earned decreased by \$389,000 to \$103,000 from the prior year’s \$492,000, attributable to smaller returns on invested balances.
- Interest on capital assets represents the interest expense for Oakton’s long-term debt—normally presented as a deduction to non-operating revenues. The expense increased from \$789,000 to \$1,247,000 in conjunction with the issuance of \$13.97 million in 2014 Limited Bonds.



Expenses by Type of Service

1. Instruction	43.65%
2. Academic Support	10.61%
3. Student Services	12.72%
4. Operations and Maintenance of Plant	9.87%
5. General Institutional Support	9.83%
6. Auxiliary Enterprises	9.63%
7. Depreciation	3.68%

Faculty (FTE) for credit and continuing education programs

Fiscal Years 2010-15	No. of Faculty
2010	515
2011	509
2012	497
2013	467
2014	494
2015	459

Operating Expenses: Type of Service

Instruction includes those activities that deal directly with or aid in the teaching process. Instruction expenses include not only personnel costs and supplies but also the personnel and materials required to plan, implement, and manage the instructional programs. Academic support comprises those programs that directly support the instruction process, such as tutoring, library operations, and instructional media services. Student services include registrar services, student financial assistance, advising, and other activities that provide non-academic support to students. Operation and maintenance costs relate to maintenance, housekeeping, public safety, and other costs necessary for the proper and safe operation of Oakton's physical plant. General institutional support encompasses general regulation, direction, and administration, as well as those costs applicable to the college on an institution-wide basis, such as commencement and accreditation activities. As noted above, auxiliary enterprises are activities that charge a fee for service, such as the bookstore, food services, the Early Childhood Education Centers, and other business-type activities. Depreciation represents the financial acknowledgement of the costs of fixed assets prorated over their estimated useful service lives.

Operating Expenses for the 12 months ending June 30, 2015, grew by \$7.7 million—from the prior year's \$98.8 million to \$106.5 million—for a number of reasons.

- Instruction expenses increased by \$2.8 million mainly due to the purchase of (non-capitalized) equipment and base supplies for the Margaret Burke Lee Science and Health Careers Center. Additionally, SURS expense related to instructional salaries increased \$1 million.
- Academic support and student services expenses increased by \$660,000, attributable to investments in staffing, scaling of new student orientation and first year support programs, data analytics regarding student success, instructional media, and tools for a growing population of students with disabilities.
- Operations and maintenance of plant costs increased by \$1.2 million due to both scheduled and unscheduled replacement of (non-capitalized) equipment and repairs, particularly the purchase of equipment and base supplies for the Lee Center. SURS expense related to operation and maintenance salaries increased \$250,000. Depreciation increased \$1.1 million as capital projects, most significantly the Lee Center and the new Des Plaines Enrollment Center, were completed and became operational.
- General institutional support increased by \$1.7 million due primarily to the increase in costs for debt issuance and debt service associated with the 2014 Limited Bonds (\$538,000). Employee benefit costs, including SURS increased \$1.2 million.
- Auxiliary expenses increased by \$200,000 mainly from an increase of SURS expense in the amount of \$340,000 offset by decreased costs associated with Alliance for Lifelong Learning.

Use of Resources by Type of Service for the years ended June 30

(In thousands)	FY 11	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Instruction	\$38,644	\$43,578	\$45,094	\$43,718	\$46,510
Academic Support	9,447	9,871	9,858	11,045	11,300
Student Services	13,697	13,936	13,097	13,150	13,556
Operations and Maintenance	7,603	8,418	8,619	9,358	10,516
General Institutional Support	7,534	7,844	7,751	8,740	10,477
Auxiliary Enterprises	10,848	9,044	9,439	10,050	10,264
Depreciation	3,598	2,547	2,548	2,788	3,926
Total Expenses	\$91,371	\$95,238	\$96,406	\$98,849	\$106,549



Oakton students and visitors to the college enjoy frequent art exhibitions at the Koehnline Museum of Art on the Des Plaines campus (above, a student enjoys the Women's and Gender Studies Art Exhibition). The museum is open to the general public:

Monday – Friday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. and Saturday, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Please check the website (www.oakton.edu/museum) to learn about the current exhibition on display.

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