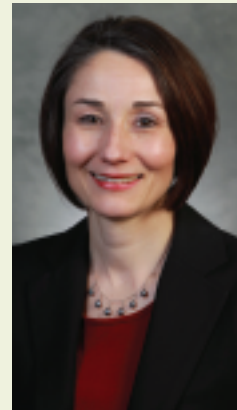


Centered on  
Student  
Success

2016 President's Report to the Community





## A Message from the President

Providing affordable access to education that empowers student success is at the core of the Oakton Community College mission. In my first year as president, I challenged the college community to expand our focus beyond access and to make persistence and completion a priority. The college responded, with fall-to-fall persistence rates increasing by three percent.

Mandatory new student orientation was implemented at the college for the first time, doubling the number of students participating in the program. New initiatives such as the faculty initiative for student persistence pilot created a more intimate educational experience for students, fostering stronger connections between students and faculty.

When students brought forth an initiative to make the college more sustainable by prohibiting the sale of plastic water bottles on campus, Oakton leadership adopted the proposal and enacted it.

When the state's budget woes meant students wouldn't receive MAP grants, Oakton and its educational foundation stepped in to make sure the students didn't feel the impact.

Like the new Margaret Burke Lee Science and Health Careers Center, it is our hope that the construction of a new student center, approved this past year and begun in June, will yield further collaboration among students and faculty that will strengthen their connection to the college.

Through stories highlighting the college's investments in student success, the outstanding faculty and staff that enable students to succeed, and the connections made between students, faculty and staff, and the community, the 2016 President's Report illustrates Oakton's role in preparing students for academic and life 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 written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joianne L. Smith, Ph.D.  
President



## A New Center for Student Success

In keeping with the college's five-year Facilities Master Plan objective to improve and develop student gathering spaces, construction began in June 2016 for a new \$2 million student center at the Des Plaines campus.

"Space is important in improving student success," notes Oakton President Joianne Smith, who has challenged the college to improve student persistence and ultimately, student completion. "Learning doesn't just take place in the classroom. Learning and collaboration happen in informal spaces—the spaces where students congregate."

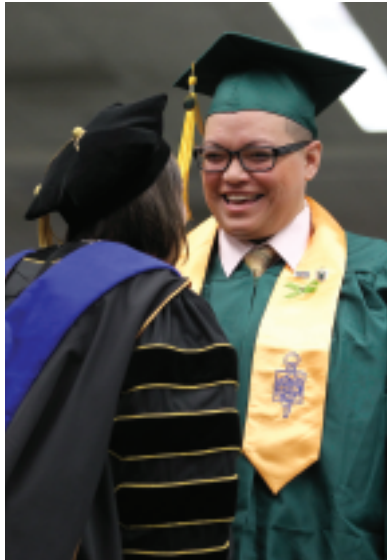
Designed by Legat Architects and constructed by Riley Construction, the student center is scheduled to open for the spring 2017 semester.

Created in approximately 7,300 square feet of existing space across from the cafeteria, the new center will integrate student-related activities that had previously been scattered across campus. Student leaders were among those who provided input toward the design that includes meeting rooms for student clubs as well as space for the Office of Student Life, Student Government Association, and the *OCCurrence* student newspaper. Other features include a multipurpose lounge area with a fireplace, television screens, and floor-to-ceiling windows on the north that offer scenic views of the campus lake.

"Eighty-five percent of students surveyed said that they would stay on campus longer with a space like this," says Oakton Vice President for Student Affairs Karl Brooks. "The student center is important to the social atmosphere of the college, as it will provide the opportunity for students to meet outside of the classroom and strengthen the bonds that they make within the classroom."

*I'm excited for the Student Center. It's important for students to have an open space where they can work in a group. It's helpful to work with peers. I learn with them and from them.*

— George Lucaciu, student



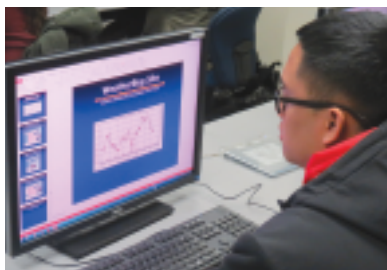
## Oakton Keeps MAP Promise

When a state budget impasse during fiscal year 2016 resulted in a \$6.1 million deficit in the college's operating budget, Oakton students faced the loss of financial aid from Monetary Award Program (MAP) grants. Oakton Community College and the Oakton Educational Foundation stepped in to minimize the impact to students by covering approximately \$700,000 in MAP grants to 600 students during the 2015-16 academic year.

"These are among our most financially needy students, and I am grateful for the foundation's commitment to our students and their generosity in responding to this emergency need," says President Joianne Smith.

Adds Educational Foundation Board President Howard Singer, "Foundation Board members were unanimously in favor of this support and are committed to honoring the mission of Oakton and, most importantly, these students."

The State of Illinois provided funding reimbursement for MAP grants in June 2016, which allowed the foundation to commit \$225,000 to cover MAP for students in the fall 2016 semester, as MAP was not included in a six-month, stop-gap budget passed over the summer.



## Oakton Catches the WeatherBug

Oakton caught a new bug in November 2015 when it installed a WeatherBug weather station, camera, and web-based educational software that allow students, meteorological teams, and online users to access weather data from the Des Plaines campus. The weather station was made possible through a \$20,500 grant from the Oakton Educational Foundation.

"WeatherBug benefits our students because they can use real-time data in lab sessions from our station and from those across the country. Plus, they can see live images of weather events," says Oakton Chair of Physical Science Jennifer Cumpston.

As part of the Introduction to Weather and Climate course, students are provided access to weather camera loops; weather radar maps; area weather summaries including temperature, humidity, dew point, wind speed and direction; barometric pressure; tools to make their own weather maps; and information pertaining to severe weather outlook, watches, and warnings.

"To be able to show students what is going on outside visually and then compare that with actual weather data from that day and past days is invaluable," says lecturer Rick DiMaio.

The WeatherBug system also provides important information to college administrators as they decide whether to close campus for weather-related events such as winter storms and flooding. Current temperatures, precipitation, and forecasts—plus a live image captured from a camera mounted on the main building—help in assessing how the campus is being affected by adverse weather.

Likewise, the WeatherBug station is helpful in determining whether conditions are safe for student athletes to train and compete. "The WeatherBug system gives us information within 100 yards of where our teams are participating," says Director of Athletics Bruce Oates.



## Anonymous Donor Gives \$100K to Support STEM

An anonymous gift of \$100,000 in December 2015 to the Oakton Educational Foundation will support scholarships and programs in manufacturing technology and in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

STEM courses include biology, chemistry, computer science, engineering, mathematics, and physics as well as the college's cutting-edge, 31-credit-hour nanotechnology certificate program. Oakton also offers STEM research courses that allow students to jump into real-world scientific research projects and present findings at a STEM symposium.

Oakton manufacturing technology programs provide students and local industry with quality manufacturing training that creates pathways to employment and strengthens the economy.

"Gifts to the Oakton Educational Foundation such as this directed toward STEM programs are vital to student success and transform many lives of those living in our community," says Oakton Executive Director of Development Mary Knight.



Elizabeth Stenholt in Oakton's theater production of *Sweeney Todd*.

## Outstanding Performers

### Elizabeth Stenholt—Actor

Having appeared in 15 films, 29 professional stage productions, and four television commercials, one would think Elizabeth Stenholt is an old pro. However, at 20 years of age, the Maine West graduate is just getting started. When not going to casting calls and performances, she has been a full-time student at Oakton. Her recent performances have included *Love Kills* at the Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago and *Arcadia* at the Writers Theatre in Glencoe.

### Alisa Kano—Olympian

People from all walks of life find the convenience of an Oakton education conducive to their busy schedules. That list includes Alisa Kano, who enrolled



at Oakton while training at the North Shore Rhythmic Gymnastics Center, Highland Park, for the 2016 Summer Olympics. The performances of Kano and her teammates at the 2015 World Rhythmic Gymnastics Championships in Stuttgart, Germany, qualified the United States to have a rhythmic gymnastics group in Olympic competition for only the second time in history. Team USA went on to place 14th in Rio de Janeiro.



## Environmental Researcher Turned Instructor Paul Gulezian Earns 2015 Ray Hartstein Award for Excellence in Teaching

Assistant Professor of Biology Paul Gulezian, Ph.D. (left), earned Oakton's Ray Hartstein Award for Outstanding Professional Excellence in Teaching in 2015.

Gulezian developed an early fascination with the environment on frequent camping and hiking trips with his parents. His father is a retired environmental scientist who served as the director of the Great Lakes National Program Office of the US Environmental Protection Agency for nearly two decades, and his mother has a background in biology. Today, the younger Gulezian shares his family's passion with his students by leading them into the wilds each week to explore the living laboratory that surrounds the Des Plaines campus.

A typical week in Gulezian's environmental science class begins with a lecture to highlight the information to be learned in the coming days, followed by an outdoor adventure (a lab) where he takes students deep into Oakton's natural surroundings to identify specimens and collect data. The week ends with a Q&A session in one of the Lee Center's new biology labs to help students review, check understanding, and emphasize key concepts.

"We are very lucky at Oakton to be surrounded by all of these natural resources—a freshwater lake, a river, grasslands, wetlands, and forest. It is truly a unique setting for an urban community college," Gulezian explains.

Since most human activities affect the environment in one form or another, Gulezian's classes are interdisciplinary. He recently teamed up with Professor of English Marian Staats to develop a new environmental studies concentration for the college that will assist students in preparing for transfer into four-year colleges in a variety of majors such as sustainability; environmental philosophy, law, and policy; environmental art and literature; environmental engineering and chemistry; conservation biology and natural resource management; and environmental journalism. The concentration supports Oakton's commitment to being "green" by working to preserve and protect natural resources and the planet without compromising future generations.

"We talk about politics and policy, business and capitalism, values and personal choices," Gulezian explains. "It is all interrelated to the environment we live in and draw our living from.

"When you are immersed in a natural environment while catching a fish, examining a plant with medicinal uses, or seeing firsthand the degradation caused by invasive species or pollution, it's hard not to be engaged."

## Peter Sigiols Challenges Students to Reach Full Potential

Peter Sigiols, 2015 Ray Hartstein Award winner for part-time faculty, believes his primary role as an accounting lecturer is to foster interest and understanding for individual students and to challenge them to greater success. As an instructor, Sigiols is known for using extensive real-life examples and sharing his accounting, law, and finance knowledge to help prepare students for future career challenges.

Sigiols began teaching at Oakton part time in 2013. He received a bachelor's and master's degree at Loyola University Chicago before earning a juris doctor degree from John Marshall Law School and a doctor of business administration degree from Argosy University.

## Staff Service Excellence: Stella Pillay, "Mom" to Many

Business Services Program Assistant Stella Pillay has served as a surrogate "mom" to many students during her 26-year career at Oakton, in addition to being a proud parent of a recent Oakton alumnus. She may manage the college's copy service, food service, employee computer purchases, and long-term storage of college records, but her real passion is students. Her friendly face can be seen at many of Oakton's extracurricular events. She also serves on committees at the college and as staff advisor to the Oakton Muslim Student Association. Pillay, who comes from a family of educators, worked for a college in her native India before immigrating to the United States to join her husband.

## Gloria Liu among 100 Inspiring Women of STEM

Gloria Liu (right), coordinator for the Center for Promoting STEM, was honored as one of *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine's 100 Inspiring Women in STEM. Since 2007, Liu has offered support and mentoring while facilitating field trips, guest lectures, student research programs, and more to expose Oakton students to the breadth of careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields.

Oakton offers diverse community activities through the Center for Promoting STEM, including a summer “bridge” program, peer tutor training, student-industry-teacher simulations, study sessions, seminars, and field trips. During the summer, a variety of youth STEM activities are offered, including robotics and water robotics classes.

“Gloria’s two passions are underrepresented students and STEM, and by connecting the two in a meaningful way, she inspires young people—especially women—to pursue careers in these fields. Her students absolutely love her,” says President Joianne Smith. “Having worked with Gloria on a number of diversity initiatives at Oakton, I know firsthand of her commitment to equity.”



## Peter Hudis's Expertise Sought Worldwide

When he is not teaching humanities and philosophy at Oakton, internationally-renowned speaker and author Peter Hudis, Ph.D. (right), is presenting his articles and books at numerous conferences and academic gatherings around the world. In the last year alone, he has been a featured guest speaker in China, England, Germany, Poland, Norway, New York City, Los Angeles, and at the University of Kentucky.

The liberal arts courses he teaches—philosophy, ethics, and Western culture—are disciplines that he says are “designed to make you better at formulating new ideas and new ways of thinking.”

“What I love about teaching is when I start to see students thinking critically, becoming socially conscious, and reflecting upon their own ways of looking at the world,” he explains.

The son of an auto mechanic and secretary from the Bronx, New York, Hudis never expected to spend his life in academia. However, following his passions led him from Latin American Studies to journalism to philosophy to teaching, writing, and speaking.

His research, editorial work, and thoughtful writing has made him one of the world's leading experts on two revolutionary philosophers of the twentieth century: Rosa Luxemburg (1870-1919), heralded as one of the great women's activists, and Frantz Fanon (1925-61), one of the most influential black writers against racism and colonialism.

Hudis is the co-editor of *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader* (2004), *The Letters of Rosa Luxemburg* (2013), and Volumes 1 and 2 of *The Complete Works of Rosa Luxemburg* (14 volumes are planned in all). In 2015, he completed his book *Frantz Fanon, Philosopher of the Barricades*. He has also contributed a chapter to *Makers of Jewish Modernity: Thinkers, Artists, Leaders, and the World They Made* (2016).

“Historical circumstances have created a worldwide resurgence of interest in the writings of Fanon,” Hudis says, noting the social upheavals such as the Arab Spring in the Middle East and the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States have also sparked his students' interest.

“Students come to us at a formative time in their lives. In liberal arts classes, they learn to read and comment on what other people think, and then they start to ask their own questions. What's right? What's wrong? What's the meaning of life? These questions open your mind to different ideas and influences. It is the beginning of a long journey toward finding your destiny,” says Hudis.





## Oakton Robotics Takes Second in NASA Competition



For the third year in a row, the 13-member Oakton Robotics team placed among the top 10 at the National Aeronautical Space Administration Robotic Mining Competition (NASA RMC) with its highest finish yet: second place. As one of just two community college teams participating in the NASA competition against 43 teams from four-year colleges and universities, Oakton's team of first- and second-year students bested teams of students from some of the top engineering programs in the country.

In the competition, teams design and build remote-controlled mining robots to traverse simulated Martian terrain and excavate regolith (simulated Martian dirt). Oakton's robot, *Owl Capone* (left), went head-to-head against other teams' robots to collect and move the most regolith within a specified amount of time. The final score also reflects the quality of Oakton's presentation, documentation, and team-generated publicity for the event.

"I cannot say enough about how proud I am of our team. Even if we had not won anything, I still would be proud of our positive attitude throughout the competition," says team leader Karolina Klimont of Des Plaines, who is now enrolled at Milwaukee School of Engineering.

Her teammates included Lachlan Chen (Skokie), Carlos Cruz (Morton Grove), Michael Habisohn (Park Ridge), William Kann (Park Ridge), Mahavish Mahmood (Norrridge), Chris Moirano (Chicago), Pedro Morales (Niles), Lynette Sugatan (Niles), Mohankumar Vegesna (Niles), Matthew Wasiewicz (Park Ridge), and Shawn Zachariah (Des Plaines).

With grant funding from the Oakton Educational Foundation, Student Government Association, and NASA, Oakton Robotics finished eighth of 46 teams the year before, earning honorable mention for most improved systems engineering paper. The work of that team was the foundation for this year's success.

NASA judges were so impressed by the research conducted by Oakton students for their robot, they asked the students to share it with NASA for use in developing a rover for a planned expedition to Mars.

"Programs such as these give our students hands-on training and experience in working on 'messy' problems with no clear solutions," says Gloria Liu, coordinator of the Oakton Center for Promoting STEM.

*Over time we've learned a lot about this robot, and from my experience, I'd say our success and outstanding performance was not just changing a lead acid to lithium ion battery or using the wheels from our 2014 robot—it was the team's chemistry"*

Mohankumar Vegesna, team mechanical lead



Faculty advisor Angelo Gero asked Sugatan, a 2011 Glenbrook North High School graduate, to lead Oakton's 2017 attempt to conquer the Mars robot challenge after only a year as a team member working on the computer science group that developed the robot's autonomous drive abilities.

"Angelo tells us that working with unknowns and a limited budget is 'real' engineering. At Oakton, you have to wear different hats and understand other areas of engineering. I am studying to be a mechanical engineer, but I led the computer science group last year," says Sugatan.

Next year, with a new robot, Sugatan hopes to lead Oakton to the ultimate victory.

"At the competition this past May, we placed ahead of both UIC and UIUC and all other teams except the University of Alabama, which is led by a former NASA robotics expert. This coming year will be an even greater challenge because we are developing an entirely new robot," she explains.

"It's about pushing students to the limit, challenging them to go beyond what they thought they could do," adds Liu.

That extra effort is paying off for Sugatan. At her first employment fair during her first semester at UIC, two large engineering companies—Navistar and General Electric—requested an interview.

"Out of more than 1,000 people at the fair, G.E. offered me one of its highly competitive co-op positions for the spring semester because of my experience with the Oaktobots. However, I had to turn them down because I will be leading the team this spring," she says.

G.E. will just have to wait for this inventive Oakton alumna.

## Big Success in a Small World

For Davaadorj Bayansan, Ph.D., it really is a small world after all. Oakton's first nanotechnology graduate is employed full time in this exciting new field at a startup company, NanoAl, located within the Illinois Science + Technology Park in Skokie.

Nanotechnology is science and manufacturing that deals with all things smaller than 100 nanometers. To put that in perspective, a human hair is approximately 100,000 nanometers wide. The technology manipulates individual atoms and molecules to create materials and machines with new possibilities for mankind.

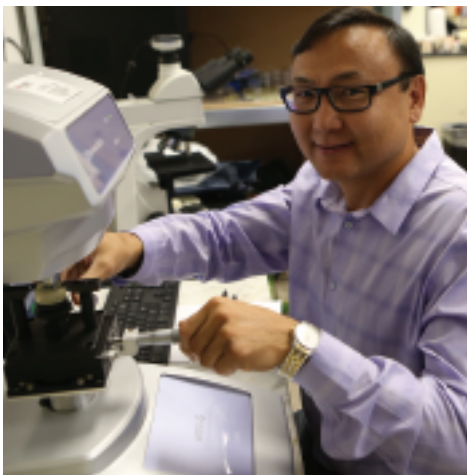
Bayansan has moved across the world with his family. Born and raised in Mongolia, he earned a bachelor's degree in Russia and completed his Ph.D. in nuclear physics at the University of Hamburg in Germany. Upon completion of his doctorate, he immigrated to the United States with his wife, who is a medical doctor, and their three children.

Because there weren't many jobs for nuclear physicists, Bayansan enrolled at Oakton to upgrade his skills. The certificate program in nanotechnology was his ticket to a whole new line of work.

"As a physicist, I work with mathematical equations and understand the properties of atoms from a theoretical perspective," he explains. "However, now that I work in the field of nanotechnology, it is very exciting because I can go beyond mathematical proofs to actually transforming matter in the real world."

At NanoAl, nanotechnology is used to transform the natural properties of aluminum for commercial use.

"By adding different ions to aluminum, we can change the way the atoms align to develop new materials never before seen by mankind. We can go beyond traditional metallurgy to revolutionize aerospace, transportation, defense, and consumer goods," Bayansan says.



## Sustainable Oakton

The Students for Social Justice Club made its case to the Oakton Community College President's Council on why they believe a ban on sales of single-use plastic water bottles on campus is appropriate by presenting 1,150 petition signatures and dozens of letters in support of their objectives.

The council approved the sustainability effort. It took effect November 1, 2016.



The initiative began in 2015 with students in an Oakton Community College honors core seminar taught by professors Hollace Graff and Richard Stacewicz. As students learned more about the complicated issues surrounding bottled water, their commitment to the assignment gained momentum, and the class project grew into a campus-wide political action to ban sales from vending machines and food service.

"This type of transformative experience is illustrative of how an Oakton education ties the classroom to the real world and offers a laboratory to innovate," President Smith explains.

Oakton is among a number of colleges across the nation that have taken a similar stance, including local universities Northwestern and Loyola.

"We challenged the students to research an environmental issue from many perspectives and to take an ethical position, right or wrong, on their research," says Graff. "The amazing thing was that the students didn't stop when the class was over and graded. Those who didn't graduate last spring saw it through for another year until they had created change on campus."

At the college's annual student leadership awards banquet, the Students for Social Justice Club received the "Event of the Year" award for its work on this project.

## From Oakton to Facilitating Arts Programming in Haiti

In June 2016, spring graduate Lance Lindsay (right) and Oakton Training Specialist Cynthia Townsend spent six days in Gonaïves, Haiti, as part of a humanitarian mission that facilitated arts programming with over 100 Haitian youths. The arts conference was held at a school that Townsend has been working with since 2011.

"It is such a special thing to see both American young people and Haitian young people realize the value of their talents and gifts," Townsend recalls.





## Students Rehab Home for Vietnam Vet

While some college students on spring break head for a warm beach, others roll up their sleeves and grab a hammer. The Oakton Habitat for Humanity Club took its hard hats to downstate Sangamon County for a week of building structures and making friendships.

According to club president Jonathan Powell, “We do it to help others, but no matter how hard you work, you always get 10 times more out of it than you put into it.”

Seventeen students worked together with two faculty advisors for several days putting on new siding and finishing drywall on a house that was being rebuilt for Vietnam veteran Marshall Brown. All funds raised for the project by the club were generously matched by a State Farm Insurance Company grant.

“It was a lot of hard work for a great cause, but I think the student volunteers had a wonderful experience,” says Marvin Bornschlegl, faculty advisor. “They had fun, made new friends, and went home excited about what they accomplished.”

Adds student Cory Melnick, “We were exhausted at the end of each day, but it was a good feeling. Everyone was very encouraging, and I discovered that I could accomplish as much as anyone.”

## Volunteers Get History Lesson at Methodist Campground

Sorting through the remnants of history—old posters, personal letters, camp directories, summer program leaflets—at the Historic Methodist Campground of Des Plaines, organizing them by date, and reviewing them for historical significance was an important experience for students enrolled in lecturer Cheryl Thayer’s sociology course.

“By delving into more than 100 years of campground records, the students get valuable access to files that can lead to further study,” Thayer explains. “Seeing how an institution like the Methodist Campground has developed and changed over time is invaluable for the study of history.”

More than a lesson in history, Oakton students connected with this community partner to gain experiential benefits in leadership, organization, and working with clients.

“We are always on the lookout for community projects that help a nonprofit organization while also helping our students develop skills,” says Service Learning Coordinator Karen Roth, who made the initial contact with the campground.

Oakton graduate Artur Stasiek of Niles volunteered to develop historical presentations for the Oakton library while a student at the college. Now he is pursuing museum studies at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.



“You can only learn so much in the classroom. Sometimes you need to get out and sift through files to see for yourself how history is recorded,” Stasiek adds.

“We found a letter from a woman to her granddaughter talking about a murder that supposedly took place here in 1984. That’s all we know so far, but it’s a mystery we are pursuing,” says Bhumi Shah, an Oakton student from Des Plaines.



## Oakton Students Help with Medical Care in Nicaragua

More than 20 members of Oakton’s Students for Global Health and Sustainability Club went to Nicaragua as a part of Global Brigades, one of the largest student-led nonprofit organizations for health and sustainable development.

They stayed in hostels with bunk beds and no television or air conditioning during the hottest month of the year while providing essential medical care for nearly 1,000 people.

“I will never forget all the smiling faces I saw,” says Skokie resident and Oakton nursing alumnus Dennis Estorco. “The trip made me appreciate what I have. Although it was exhausting, it was definitely worth it.”

The volunteers, many of whom spoke Spanish, had the opportunity to practice their language skills and health care training. They shadowed licensed doctors in medical consultations, assisted in a pharmacy under the direction of licensed pharmacists, and took patient histories

and vitals in triage settings. They also taught proper hygiene and the importance of exercise to Nicaraguan children.

“After seeing families of five or more living in a house with a dirt floor and roof made of tarps, I have a new idea of what it means to live simply. The trip changed not only how I think about spending my money, but also what I find important in life,” adds Alex Daemicke, who now attends Rush University.

The Students for Global Health and Sustainability Club formed in 2015 with the mission of empowering communities in developing countries with viable solutions that improve their quality of life. Students held numerous coffee and bake sales on the Oakton Campuses to help raise the minimum of \$1,500 per person needed to go on the nine-day trip.

Notes Professor of Nursing Christine Feighery, who served as an advisor for the group, “It was a challenge to go, but it was harder to say goodbye to all the good people we met. I’ll never forget when we were leaving—a man hugged me and told me how much he appreciated us.”

## Graduate Profiles: Simone Montgomery and Roxana Berinde

Oakton students Simone Montgomery of Winnetka and Roxana Berinde of Morton Grove were selected in a national competition as 2016 Coca-Cola Community College Academic Team Scholars. Both also earned significant scholarships and acceptance to their top-choice schools.

Montgomery, a New Trier High School alumna, received the Coca-Cola Silver Scholar award worth \$1,250 and a silver medallion. She was also named an Oakton Wentcher Transfer Scholar, which awards up to \$10,000 per year.

Now enrolled at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), Montgomery is double-majoring in English and political science. On campus she is involved in Global Siblings, which pairs domestic students with international students to create global friendships, and The Writer’s Den, which provides her extra opportunity to write and share her work. As the first woman in her family to go to college, she also qualified for a scholarship from UCLA’s “She’s the First” program.

Montgomery’s extracurricular activities at Oakton were many. She served as co-president of Students for Social Justice, co-president of Honors Student Organization, vice president of program services for the college’s Phi Theta Kappa chapter, and a student ambassador. She also was active in Reaching Out to Others (ROTO), a service club that identifies community needs and develops projects and programs to address them.

“I will always be so appreciative to Oakton,” Montgomery says. “It has been the best two years of my education...I feel more at home there than anyplace else. This school really feels like it has a persona, a personality, a beating heart, and I get the sense that people care about me here.”

Niles West High School graduate Roxana Berinde earned the Coca Cola Bronze Scholar award, garnering a scholarship disbursement of \$1,000 and a bronze medallion. She also received the prestigious Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship, worth up to \$40,000 per year, to complete her bachelor’s degree at Loyola University Chicago where she is currently working toward a degree in international studies.

Born in Romania, Berinde completed most of her schooling in Italy before entering the United States and enrolling for her last year of high school. Although she speaks three languages fluently, she had only been in the country for 10 months when she enrolled at Oakton.

“I was still adjusting to the U.S. system, which I found very confusing,” she says. “Now, because of my experiences at Oakton, I earned a scholarship that will pay for the rest of my college education.”

Berinde participated in the Honors Program, served as co-president of Students for Social Justice and Phi Theta Kappa honor society, and was president of ROTO. She and Montgomery were instrumental in leading the effort to make the college more sustainable by eliminating the sale of single-use plastic water bottles.

“Getting involved in student life really impacted my experience at Oakton,” Berinde says.



Roxana Berinde received the Cooke Scholarship worth up to \$40,000 per year.



Simone Montgomery received the Wentcher Scholarship worth up to \$10,000 per year.

## Financial Report

Oakton remains fiscally sound. The college's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) is available at [www.oakton.edu/cafr](http://www.oakton.edu/cafr) for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016, and for the other four fiscal years included in this report.

Oakton experienced a significant reduction in state revenue for fiscal year 2016 because of the state's fiscal challenges. Unrestricted state revenue declined by \$4.3 million, or 77 percent, from FY 2015 to FY 2016. The college does not expect state revenue to return to its FY 2015 level, and stop-gap budgets are likely to continue for the next few years. Anticipating revenue losses, Oakton maintains healthy reserves. Oakton's leaders are engaged in ongoing discussions to ensure fiscal stability given the new reality of limited state funds while minimizing service impacts to our students.

<b>Condensed Statement of Net Position and History</b>					as of June 30
(In thousands)	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16
<b>Current Assets</b>					
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$9,344	\$4,396	\$11,169	\$9,494	\$9,988
Short-term Investments	71,051	91,279	83,407	95,081	99,865
Property Tax Receivable, net	23,444	22,987	23,307	23,908	24,008
Student Tuition and Fees, net	6,364	6,322	6,353	6,507	7,108
Other Accounts Receivable	3,381	3,228	2,043	2,375	2,040
Inventory	1,220	1,272	1,085	661	741
Other Prepaid Expenses	427	2,153	967	953	776
<b>Noncurrent Assets</b>					
Long-term Investments	64,722	32,993	31,660	16,618	10,064
Property Tax Receivable	—	—	—	—	—
Student Loans	37	53	(6)	12	29
Capital Assets	89,502	115,499	142,360	150,625	151,750
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(33,371)	(34,132)	(36,475)	(40,280)	(45,681)
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>236,121</b>	<b>246,050</b>	<b>265,870</b>	<b>265,954</b>	<b>260,688</b>
<b>Deferred Outflows of Resources</b>					
SURS Pension Contribution	—	—	—	45	37
<b>Total Assets and Deferred Outflows of Resources</b>	<b>236,121</b>	<b>246,050</b>	<b>265,870</b>	<b>265,998</b>	<b>260,725</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>					
Accounts Payable	4,882	8,185	6,728	4,533	2,126
Accrued Salaries	678	930	1,597	1,647	1,728
Accrued Interest Payable	92	87	86	122	115
Other Accrued Liabilities	1,918	980	808	969	999
Unearned Revenues	10,722	10,590	10,498	10,472	11,149
Current Portion of Long-Term Obligations	1,705	2,030	2,110	2,195	2,619
<b>Noncurrent Liabilities</b>					
Accrued Compensated Absences	1,414	1,365	1,426	1,426	1,669
Other Accrued Liabilities	5,970	5,824	5,773	5,579	5,326
Unearned Property Tax Revenues	—	—	—	—	—
Long-Term Debt Obligations	28,506	26,248	38,440	37,037	34,079
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>55,887</b>	<b>56,239</b>	<b>67,466</b>	<b>63,980</b>	<b>59,809</b>
<b>Deferred Inflows of Resources</b>					
Unearned Property Tax Revenues	22,309	23,089	23,720	24,250	24,743
<b>Total Liabilities and Deferred Inflows of Resources</b>	<b>\$78,196</b>	<b>\$79,328</b>	<b>\$91,186</b>	<b>\$88,230</b>	<b>\$84,552</b>
<b>Net Position</b>					
Net Investment in Capital Assets	53,186	60,780	71,264	71,113	69,371
Restricted	20,554	23,366	20,539	24,603	27,023
Unrestricted	84,185	82,576	82,881	82,053	79,779
<b>Total Net Position</b>	<b>\$157,925</b>	<b>\$166,722</b>	<b>\$174,684</b>	<b>\$177,769</b>	<b>\$176,173</b>

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 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 foundation at 847.635.1893 to receive a copy.

## 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 debt financing the Lee Center, remodeling of campus buildings, and infrastructure improvements—part of Building Together, the college's five year Facilities Master Plan.

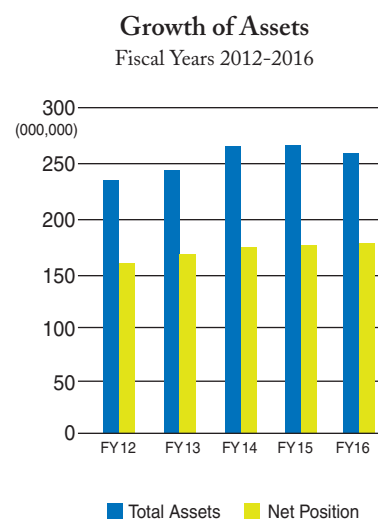
Noncurrent liabilities represent long term obligations, usually due over a number of years. These include estimated amounts of accrued compensated absences, net other post employment, health care benefits (OPEB), and principal payments on the long-term debt that are due beyond the next fiscal year.

## 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. Net position decreased \$1.6 million from FY 2015 to FY 2016.

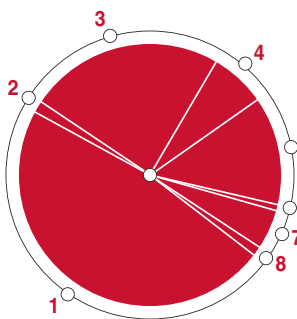




### 2015 Property Tax Rates for a typical homeowner in Oakton's district

Taxing Body	Rate*	% Total
County	1.050	9.52%
City	1.803	16.34%
Township	0.22	1.99%
Grade School	4.788	43.40%
High School	2.901	26.30%
Oakton	0.270	2.45%
<b>Total Rate</b>	<b>11.032</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

\*In dollars per \$100 of equalized assessed valuation



Revenues by Source

1. Property Tax	45.00%
2. Local	0.75%
3. State	24.32%
4. Federal	7.73%
5. Students	15.82%
6. Chargebacks	0.05%
7. Auxiliary Enterprises	5.55%
8. Other	0.78%

### Property Taxes

Property taxes accounted for 44.9 percent of Oakton's funding sources for fiscal year 2016. For the 2015 tax year, the college's property tax rate for a typical homeowner was .271 of the property's assessed value—making up about 2.5 percent of the homeowner's total property tax bill. For the 2016 tax year, this rate is projected to increase to .275 of the property's assessed value. However, Oakton's tax rate is the lowest among nine peer community colleges within the Chicago collar counties.

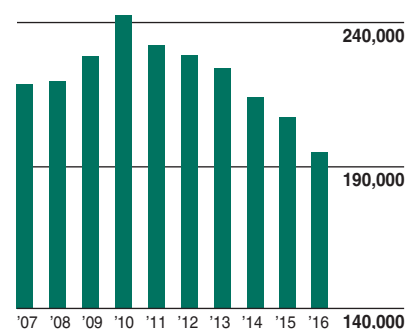
### Revenues for the years ended June 30

(In thousands)	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16
<b>Operating Revenue</b>					
Student Tuition and Fees	\$15,614	\$16,097	\$15,835	\$17,007	\$17,517
Chargeback Revenue	95	75	69	60	59
Auxiliary Enterprises	6,994	6,655	6,370	6,515	6,145
Other Sources	1,742	1,320	1,231	871	868
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>24,445</b>	<b>24,147</b>	<b>23,505</b>	<b>24,453</b>	<b>24,589</b>
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>95,238</b>	<b>96,406</b>	<b>98,849</b>	<b>106,549</b>	<b>111,553</b>
Operating Loss	(70,793)	(72,259)	(75,344)	(82,096)	(86,964)
<b>Non-operating Revenue</b>					
Property Taxes	43,456	46,590	48,002	49,004	49,820
Local Grants and Contracts	758	1,004	1,274	805	825
State Grants and Contracts	21,094	24,257	24,750	27,364	26,920
Federal Grants and Contracts	10,458	9,647	9,576	9,357	8,555
Investment Income Earned	1,483	406	492	(104)	336
Interest on Capital Asset Related Debt	(1,124)	(848)	(789)	(1,247)	(1,088)
<b>Non-operating Revenues, Net</b>	<b>76,125</b>	<b>81,056</b>	<b>83,305</b>	<b>85,180</b>	<b>85,368</b>
<b>Change in Net Position</b>	<b>\$5,332</b>	<b>\$8,797</b>	<b>\$7,961</b>	<b>\$3,084</b>	<b>(\$1,596)</b>



## Credit Hour Enrollment History Fiscal Years 2007-2016

Oakton's credit hour enrollment has declined each year for the past six fiscal years. The improving economy since the recession ended in 2009 had a negative effect on the college's enrollment and subsequent funding acquired through tuition and fees. There is a direct relationship between the unemployment rate in Oakton's district and enrollment. Credit hour enrollment tends to decline during periods in which the unemployment rate is low. Other community colleges also 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.

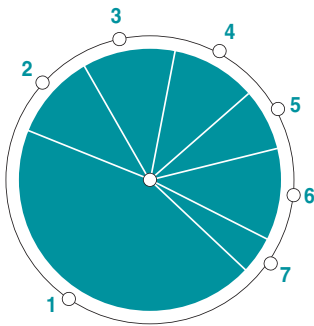
**Operating Revenue** for the 12 months ending June 30, 2016, increased by \$135,000—from the prior year's \$24.5 million to \$24.6 million—for the reasons detailed below. Operating revenues stem from Oakton's provision of instructional and related services to students. Non-operating revenues derive from sources unrelated to Oakton's core mission.

- Tuition and fees revenue increased by \$510,000. Oakton increased the per credit hour tuition rate from prior year's rate of \$103.25 to the current rate of \$111.25. Revenues were impacted by declining enrollment. The reported credit hours declined from prior year's hours of 206,620 to the current year's hours of 195,601.
- Auxiliary revenue decreased by \$370,000 due to continued declining bookstore sales and a decrease in the adult education/continuing education credit hour grant and continuing education tuition revenue.

**Non-operating Revenue** for the 12 months ending June 30, 2016, remained flat at \$86.4 million—for the reasons detailed below.

- State grants and contracts decreased by \$444,000 due to a decline in unrestricted and restricted state grants of \$5.2 million offset by an increase of \$4.8 million in state payments to the SURS pension plan for Oakton. Based on the special funding situation, Oakton recognizes a pension expense and related revenue from the state. The pension expense and related revenue was \$24.4 million in fiscal year 2016 as compared to contributions of \$19.6 million in fiscal year 2015.
- Property and replacement taxes increased by \$800,000 due to inflation-based property tax increases.
- Federal grants and contracts decreased by \$800,000 primarily related to a reduction in federal financial aid under the Pell Grant Program based on lower credit hour enrollment and the end of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College Career Training Grant Program during FY 2016.
- Investment income increased by \$400,000 primarily because the College incurred a loss on its investment in the Illinois Metropolitan Investment Fund (IMET) in FY 2015. No investment losses were recorded in FY 2016.

Tuition and Fees (per credit hour)				
Fiscal Years	Student Activities Fee	Construction Fee	Tuition (In District)	Total
2011-2016				
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
2016	\$3.00	\$2.00	\$106.25	\$111.25



Expenses by Type of Service

1. Instruction	46.51%
2. Academic Support	11.21%
3. Student Services	12.04%
4. Operations and Maintenance of Plant	9.05%
5. General Institutional Support	7.41%
6. Auxiliary Enterprises	8.91%
7. Depreciation	4.86%

**Faculty (FTE) for credit and continuing education programs**

Fiscal Years 2011-16	No. of Faculty
2011	509
2012	497
2013	467
2014	494
2015	459
2016	461

**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, 2016, grew by \$5 million—from the prior year’s \$106.5 million to \$111.6 million—for a number of reasons.

- Instruction expenses increased by \$5.4 million mainly due to recognizing pension expense instead of contributions by the state of Illinois to the State Universities Retirement System of Illinois pension plan on behalf of Oakton employees; these are reflected as employee benefit expenses by Oakton. Additionally, contractual salary increases contributed to the increase.
- Academic support expenses increased \$1.2 million. This increase is attributable to an increase in SURS expense and contractual salary increases.
- Operations and maintenance of plant costs decreased \$400,000 as Oakton ended its purchases of non-capitalized equipment and supplies for the occupation of the Lee Center and Enrollment Center occurring in FY 2015.
- Depreciation increased \$1.5 million as major construction projects such as the Lee Center were completed and became operational.
- General administration and institutional expenses decreased by \$2.2 million. This decrease is comprised of a variety of components including: employee vacancies during the fiscal year, new administrators hired at lower salaries than previously, and an increase in the employees’ share of benefit costs based on union contracts.
- Financial aid expenses decreased by \$600,000 driven by reduced State of Illinois funding and the decline in our student enrollment.
- Auxiliary enterprises expenses decreased by \$400,000 due to continued declining bookstore sales as well as close monitoring of expenses due to the state’s financial situation.

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

(In thousands)	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15	FY16
Instruction	\$43,578	\$45,094	\$43,718	\$46,510	\$51,885
Academic Support	9,871	9,858	11,045	11,300	12,508
Student Services	13,936	13,097	13,150	13,556	13,432
Operations and Maintenance	8,418	8,619	9,358	10,516	10,099
General Institutional Support	7,844	7,751	8,740	10,477	8,266
Auxiliary Enterprises	9,044	9,439	10,050	10,264	9,935
Depreciation	2,547	2,548	2,788	3,926	5,427
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$95,238</b>	<b>\$96,406</b>	<b>\$98,849</b>	<b>\$106,549</b>	<b>\$111,552</b>



## Oakton Unveils New Athletics Logo

Owls are keen, swift and relentless. Flying with stealth and confidence, the image of the owl reflects the natural forest that surrounds Oakton as well as wisdom, perception, and determination. Owls are also a modern reminder of the importance of environmental conservation.

“The new logo brings a lot of energy to the athletics program,” says Athletics Director Bruce Oates of the college’s new athletics identity, which was unveiled December 10, 2015. “It captures the spirit of our athletics teams, and we hope it helps strengthen the feeling of identification with Oakton.”

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