

Minorities get mentors at OU

Minority student retention is the goal of a new mentoring program to assist 100 Oakland University students starting this fall.

Adults from the community will assist the students with four core issues: motivation, career decisions, academic support and multiculturalism.

The program is entitled MARCS. Multicultural Association for Retention and College Success. The program originated with the OU Office of Student Life, and MARCS is supported by a 16-month grant of \$100,000 from the state Office of Minority Equity within the Department of Education.

"Our overall goal is retention," says Maura Selahowski, MARCS project director. Selahowski and Dean of Students Dave Herman designed the OU MARCS funding proposal.

The MARCS students have been chosen for fall with half being regularly admitted first-year students and half being regularly admitted students of sophomore or higher standing.

ADULTS FROM the area communities will aid the students, and there will be meetings the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month during the school year. Students will attend both sessions with mentors joining them for the first Tuesday. A mentor's attendance at the

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— Maura Selahowski
OU project director

second monthly meeting is optional.

The weekly meetings will include speakers addressing one of the four program components, and then a skill-development workshop will be held.

Organizing the program with outside mentors is intended to give participating students an entry point for their post-college years. "The mentors will help establish contacts out in the community that we hope the students can keep for the rest of their lives," Selahowski explains.

An advisory group from the university, Detroit, Pontiac and Rochester will assist in the program.

MARC is the newest OU program to aid minority enrollment; if it succeeds, attempts to renew funding or identify other avenues of support will be made.

Son's tragedy points up need

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2,000 or more mentally ill persons "out there who are not getting (housing) services."

Most live alone in unsupervised settings or with family members who are poorly equipped to deal with the demands of chronic illness.

SOUTHFIELD ATTORNEY Phil Tomlinson, president of the Oakland chapter of the Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Michigan, claims a shortage of adequate housing is the fault of the county's Mental Health Services board, which he said refuses to assume full-management status that would permit housing development.

"There are no innovative, state-of-the-art residential possibilities here because the county refuses to assume its responsibility. It's a great shame, resulting in a chaotic housing situation," Tomlinson said. He blames the situation as the primary reason his 35-year-old sister, diagnosed a schizophrenic 15 years ago, has been hospitalized the past nine years. Had there been adequate housing, "she definitely would have been released earlier."

In an effort to spur county action, the alliance has filed a class action suit calling for "adequate and appropriate" mental health care in Oakland County. "We hope to improve the situation by compelling the (mental health) board to spend money on adequate housing and staffing," Tomlinson said.

Presently, the number of patients seeking release from Oakland County's only psychiatric hospital, Clinton Valley, numbers 65 to 70 at any given time, according to Michele Uttersson of the center.

"If a person is fairly high function-

ing and is reasonably cooperative, placement is not much of a problem. But those with specialized needs could remain here indefinitely," Uttersson said.

"A LIFETIME OF GRIEF" is how Dorothy McQueen of Southfield describes watching a loved one slip from family embrace into the horror of mental illness. In 1978 her son, then 25, was diagnosed a paranoid schizophrenic. In 1979 she helped found the alliance.

Two years ago, members of the alliance purchased Grayling House in Farmington, a six-bed living facility licensed and operated by the state. The group's efforts to purchase a second house were rebuffed by state officials, who said there was no funding to operate a second home.

In addition to licensing such facilities, the state is also responsible for

'It's hard to believe. One of the wealthiest counties in the country and unable to help its mentally ill.'

— Roger Garvelink
Birmingham schools superintendent

all but a very few placements, based on existing formulas. Two beds at Grayling House, for example, are reserved for patients discharged from psychiatric hospitals in the "catchment" area, which includes the Clinton Valley Center, Lafayette Clinic in Detroit and the Ypsilanti Regional Psychiatric Hospital.

Brad Garvelink was not eligible for such a placement because he was discharged from a hospital in Minne-

sota. "They couldn't help us in any way, except to say put him in Clinton Valley, even though we were told his condition would probably regress there," Roger Garvelink said.

"It's ironic. When Brad needed help for his mental problems, we couldn't find it. But when he was struck by a truck and lay dying, he received the finest medical care money could buy. But it's too late."

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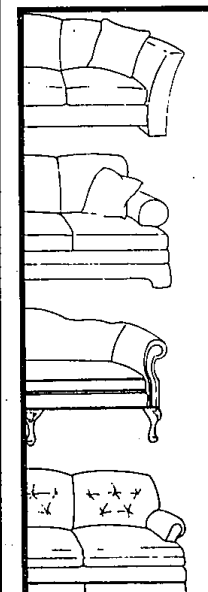
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