

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by Roderick J. McDavis

Since late 2004, committees of faculty, administrators, staff, and students have worked to develop a strategic plan to guide the University's decisions and investment priorities over the next five years.

This strategic plan, entitled "Vision Ohio," is a product of a task force I charged with developing a road map for achieving the four goals set forth in my inaugural address: to become a nationally prominent research university; to increase the diversity of the University community; to expand the University's base of financial support; and to increase partnerships regionally, statewide, nationally, and globally.

The Russ College plays a key role in two of the four research areas in which Ohio University will make a special investment over the next five years: new technologies, and energy and the environment.

Supporting the new technologies area, the NanoBioTechnology Initiative will investigate health problems such as cancer and diabetes—diseases especially prevalent in our region of Southeast Ohio. It also will explore technologies with potential for commercialization and job creation in Ohio, and it proposes new graduate programs in biomedical engineering and biophysics. Currently, we are searching for a new faculty member in biomedical engineering to help establish the graduate program.

Comprising three teams, the initiative includes the BioMolecular Innovation and Technology Partnership. Chemists and biomedical engineers such as Chemical Engineering Associate Professor Doug Goetz study the molecular basis of diseases to develop diagnostics, drugs, and treatments for health problems such as cancer and diabetes. Goetz has received grants to study the mechanisms and therapeutics for inflammation and cardiovascular disease.

A second team studies biomimetic nanoscience and nanoscale technology, wherein biological manufacturing strategies are used to create a new class of materials at the nanoscale. A third group, the Appalachian Rural Health Institute-Diabetes Research team,



President McDavis addresses guests at the National Academy of Engineering prize banquet in Washington, D.C., in February 2005, celebrating the Russ Prize.

aims to improve the health status and quality of life of underserved rural populations. Russ College researchers are part of both these groups.

In support of energy and environment research, the Consortium for Energy, Economics and the Environment (CE3) will receive funding to bolster its studies of air and water pollution and environmentally friendly energy technologies.

CE3 unites faculty and students from the Voinovich Center—who study regional watershed pollution and reclamation—and the Institute for Sustainable Energy and the Environment (ISEE)—which monitors air pollution and develops clean coal technologies including new varieties of fuel cells—to jointly tackle major energy and environmental issues, help legislators shape policy, and provide new research opportunities to Ohio University students.


Kevin Crist, director of ISEE's Center for Air Quality and an associate professor of chemical engineering, monitors and models fine particulate matter and mercury emitted by coal-fired power plants in the Ohio River Valley.

David Bayless, director of ISEE's Ohio Coal Research Center and a professor of mechanical engineering, studies the bioremediation of greenhouse gases. He works with faculty such as Gerri Botte, assistant professor of chemical engineering, to develop new fuel cells that could create a more efficient, environmentally friendly power source.

As part of this exciting research, students get real-world learning. One possibility for the future is an "energy/environmental campus" on the Ridges, where students are integrated in different types of projects that involve academia, industry, and community partners.

In addition, the state can draw on Ohio University engineers and scientists to learn how to meet and comply with federal air and water quality standards.

The Russ College's strategic areas of research—bioengineering, energy, and the environment, and smart civil infrastructure—are well aligned with the University's investment priorities.

"Vision Ohio" will help Ohio University establish a distinct identity as the University enters its third century of excellence. The Russ College is an integral part of this effort. 

Learn more about "Vision Ohio" at www.ohio.edu/provost



Ohio University President
Roderick J. McDavis