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February 4, 2022 Board of Trustees Meeting Report

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Otterbein University
Board of Trustees Meeting Report
February 4, 2022

President's Report

President Comerford expressed appreciation to the essential employees who are on campus today to support the students and campus during the snow day. He also thanked the Protect the Nest Team for the return to campus testing plan and the smooth start to the semester. The leadership team is working on the financial and capital budget. President Comerford shared the campus is at the high point of the innovation funding program which is an investment in new ideas to serve the students and provide revenue. This has been a grassroots effort engaging shared governance with six proposals being reviewed by Cabinet and the Planning Committee.

President Comerford moved to approve faculty promotion and tenure decisions. **Trustee Deborah Currin** seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved. (See names listed under the Board Action section.)

President Comerford shared the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs **Dr. Christina Reynolds** and Senior Vice President and Provost **Dr. Wendy Sherman Heckler** have unanimously approved the 2022-23 sabbatical recommendations provided by the Sabbatical Leaves Subcommittee. The Student Success Committee unanimously endorsed the abstracts of 21 proposals recommended for approval. Abstracts of the proposals were included in the Board materials.

President Comerford moved to approve twenty-one (21) sabbatical proposals for 2022-23. The motion was seconded by **Trustee Elijah McCutcheon**. The motion was unanimously approved.

President Comerford presented a recommendation to award emeritus status to seven (7) faculty members and four (4) staff members who have retired. They have provided Otterbein with combined service of 313 years. Their individual years of service are as follows:

Faculty

Dr. Terry Hermsen, Department of English (17 years)

Dr. Glenna Jackson, Department of Philosophy & Religion (29)

Professor John Kengla, Academic Affairs (35)

Professor Regina Kengla, Academic Support Center (21)

Dr. Lou Rose, Department of History & Political Science (30)

Dr. Barbara Schaffner, Department of Nursing/Associate Provost for Graduate Studies (36)

Professor Denise Shively, Department of Communication (28)

Staff

Phil Bovenizer, Associate Director of Financial Aid (41)

Jon McClintock, Director of Information Technology Services (32)

Diane Nance, Director of Grants and Sponsored Program & adjunct faculty (inclusive 17 years)

Terri Tracy, Associate Director of Technical Support, Information Technology Services (27)

President Comerford made a motion to approve the following **Resolution to Award Emeritus Status**:

Whereas, these educators and staff have demonstrated a conscientious and strong commitment to the University; and

Whereas, they have shown outstanding dedication and loyalty in service to students of Otterbein University.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Trustees of Otterbein University, on behalf of the entire University community, express deepest appreciation to these dedicated educators and staff for their many contributions to the life of Otterbein University and do hereby confer upon them Emeritus status.

The motion was seconded by **Trustee Peter Bible** and the Board unanimously approved. **Chair Cheryl Herbert** expressed extreme gratitude to the recognized faculty and staff emeriti for their time, effort and service to Otterbein.

Board Committee Updates

Audit & Risk Management Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Chris Kaiser reported the Audit & Risk Management Committee met on Friday December 10, 2021. The highlights from the meeting include that the committee requested a review of EIIA (Educational & Institutional Insurance Administrators) insurance coverage and policies, received an IT transition of services update and the completion of the audit of the June 30, 2021 financial statements. The audit report was distributed to the Board. The audit firm, Crowe, raised these highlights and concerns which were the decline in tuition & ancillary revenue, revenue from various Covid relief programs offset these declines but will not continue, and positive bottom line is largely due to investment returns which are unpredictable and volatile. The committee recognized the work and cooperation from the Business Office staff.

Upcoming items which will be addressed are tax returns for the year ending June 30, 2021, preparation for the Pension Plan audit for the year ending December 31, 2021 and positive news on finalizing the Kilgore Property/Center for Equine Sciences remedial clean-up of the brown field with 50/50 sharing of costs with the US Government. The committee thanked everyone who worked on the endeavor.

Chair Herbert offered congratulations on a clean audit to Vice President Bolt and the Business Office staff.

Enrollment & Advancement Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Lisa Hinson reported the committee met early in January. The official census enrollment data for spring semester continues to reflect an impact of the pandemic. The overall enrollment of 2,362 students is down 164 from last spring semester. Undergraduates are down 108 students or 5% and Graduate enrollment is down 56 or 16%. We did see more undergraduate seniors graduate in December than is typical. At the Graduate level, we are seeing declines in nursing and education.

As of the end of day on Wednesday, February 2, there were 101 confirmations for fall 2022 which is up 23, or 29%, over last year on this date. Though early, we are ahead of confirmations on this date for the last several years. The committee heard high level results for the 13-month (2021 calendar year) *For the Love of Otterbein: The Time is Now* fundraising and engagement initiative. Commitments from gifts and pledges totaled \$6,223,298 (\$5.17 million in cash) and a donor count of 3,058. This was an increase of giving for the past three years. The top areas receiving support were Otterbein Fund, Scholarships/Endowments for Access and Affordability, the Campus Center, and student emergency funds.

Fundraising in 2022 will leverage the University's 175th anniversary and focus on raising support for The Otterbein Fund, Campus Center, *Every Student Will*, Innovation Fund, and Endowed Scholarships/Funds. Total Board participation stands at 72% with total commitments (gifts and pledges for the current fiscal year as of 1/31/22) of \$437,531. This includes 70% (\$83,540) directed toward the Otterbein Fund. Chair Hinson thanked trustees for their support and encouraged all trustees to help us reach 100% participation this year.

The Committee held discussion on the plans for the University's 175th Anniversary this year and how to continue to promote robust Circles of Influence and Engagement, specifically in Central Ohio.

Financial Resources Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Bible reported the committee will meet on February 18, 2022. As of December 31, 2021, the long-term investment pool is \$144 million. The short-term investment is \$3.7 million. Trustee Bible expressed gratitude to Vice President Bolt and the Business Office who have worked intensively on the bond refinancing. Vice President Bolt reviewed the Otterbein bond issue. The issue refunded \$24,051,795 outstanding debt through the issuance of \$26,650,000 par value debt sold with \$1,861,111 premium. This funded \$4,000,000 new money for energy projects and all cost of issuance. Trustee Bible stated we maintained an excellent rating of Baa1 stable. Trustees Herbert, Bible, Kaiser expressed accolades to the Business Office for the excellent work done in conducting the bond refinancing.

Governance Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair David Fisher shared the committee has met twice since the fall Board meeting to continue the work of orienting new trustees, supporting current trustees and our work as a Board, and recruiting future trustees. The Governance Committee moved to recognize and honor Mark Thresher as trustee emeritus. The entire Board of Trustees seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

The Committee presented the changes to University policy 119.0 regarding emeritus status. The committee will review trustee candidates for a student, faculty and at-large trustee to bring to the Board for approval at the spring meeting.

Student Success Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Jim Francis noted the committee met on January 6, 2022 and recommended faculty tenure and promotion, sabbatical leave and faculty emeriti. The committee received update reports from The Point, Student Affairs, Academic Affairs and student retention as noted in the committee minutes. The committee received an informative presentation of the *Every Student Will* initiative. The program goals are to guarantee every student will graduate with at least one immersion/high impact experience, students will intentionally plan and map their undergraduate experience, and students will discuss post-graduate plans with their advisors/mentors.

Trustee Francis reported the Protect the Nest Team prepared a return to campus Covid testing plan. Numbers have continued to decline over the past four weeks. Trustee Francis thanked the Protect the Nest and Covid Team for all their exemplary work.

Chair Herbert stated the *Every Student Will* program will be a differentiator for Otterbein.

Constituency Reports

Faculty Trustee Report

Trustee Joan Rocks shared that faculty have returned to almost normal conditions in the classroom this spring and seem to be doing well as the majority of us are back to face to face teaching. She and Trustee Tansey completed walking tours of academic departments during the fall semester. The meetings provided an opportunity to clarify and communicate directly with colleagues and were informative and constructive to help build better communications. Various faculty committees are active in high workload mode, specifically Curriculum Committee, Personnel Committee and the new Interim Tenure Review Committee. The Innovation Fund has infused a new energy with exciting program proposals that could potentially benefit the University. Several different faculty groups are working with the Student Success and Career Development staff, along with the General Education Committee, to think through and plan for various elements of *Every Student Will*.

Trustee John Tansey reported faculty have been proactive in preventing academic misconduct during final exams and projects. They have worked with the Office of Academic Support to implement support systems for students which enhances the learning process. There are four faculty searches going on for new fulltime faculty lines and several searches for one-year visiting lines. A group of department chairs will attend the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) Chairs workshops this summer. With the return of the Faculty Scholar Development Committee funding and engagement with Sponsored Programs, faculty are implementing multiple research projects that will benefit the entire University. Faculty have also increased efforts to work with the Office of Admission with prospective students and trying to market academic programs more broadly.

Student Trustee Report

Trustee Hannah Sturgeon and Trustee McCutcheon shared updates on the student return to campus for spring semester, winter weather, dining advisory board, residence life and the status of the black student experience. Trustee McCutcheon shared there has been an increase in black Greek Life on campus. Most recently, the NPH chapter meeting was hosted on campus. African American Student Union and the Office of Social Justice and Activism is working on building a coalition of all black student unions in the City of Columbus and surrounding area. This coalition is to provide resources and tools to keep students engaged. Trustee McCutcheon stated this is heading in positive directions, addressing concerns and making great progress.

Alumni Trustee Report

Trustee Kathryn Stephens noted the Alumni Council met on October 8 and welcomed five new members who are Bob Buchan '76, Holly Schultz McFarland '78, Tammy Roberts Myers '88, Sheronda Whitner '12 and Kyle Williams '07. The Alumni Council unanimously approved to recognize the Otterbein Network of Japan, making it the first international alumni network. Council members received a 'Spot a Cardinal' information packet to share with potential students. Marcus Fowler joined Otterbein as the Director of Alumni & Family Engagement Programs and has 15 years of experience in alumni engagement. The 2022 Alumni Awards honorees include three Rising Stars, five Otterbein Alumni Awards and one Honorary Alumni Award. The Family Engagement Network launched in 2021, and in January 2022, Mike & Pate Rudolph P'23 were named the inaugural chairs. The network provides meaningful connections among parents/families. Vice President McGreevey shared the launch of Otterbein's 175th Anniversary and upcoming year's festivities. Trustee Stephens asked the trustees to participate in the 175th Giving Challenge set for April 26-28, 2022. This Founders Day initiative will focus efforts on social mobility fundraising as well as the overall 175th giving priorities with a goal of 175 gifts in 48 hours.

Board Action

The following actions were taken by the Board of Trustees:

Resolution to Award Promotion and Tenure: The Board of Trustees approved a resolution to award promotions and tenure effective August, 2022 as follows:

- Promotion to Professor to **Jennifer Bennett** (Biology & Earth Science), **John Chovan** (Nursing), **Eric Jones** (Communication), and **Kathryn Plank** (Education).
- Promotion to Professor, Non-Tenure-Track to **Lisa Marr** (Biology & Earth Science).
- Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor to **Megan Chawansky** (Health & Sport Sciences), **Michael Hudoba** (Engineering & Computer Science), and **Amanda Kline** (Art & Art History).
- Promotion to Associate Professor, Non-Tenure-Track to **Andrew Calinger-Yoak** (Biology & Earth Science) and **Kirk Hummer** (Nursing).

Resolution to award trustee emeritus status to Mark Thresher: The Board unanimously approved to recognize and honor Mark Thresher with trustee emeritus status.

Resolution to Approve Changes to the University Policy 119.0 regarding emeritus status: The Board of Trustees approved changes (noted in *italics*) to the University Policy 119.0 regarding faculty and select

administrators/staff '*with exemplary service*' or a minimum 15 consecutive years of fulltime service at Otterbein University are eligible for consideration for emeritus status in the rank held in the department served at the time of retirement '*or departure from the University, or in the event of death.*'

Future Board of Trustees Meeting Dates

Friday, April 29, 2022

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Michael McGreevey, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, at 614-823-1305 or mmcgreevey@otterbein.edu.