

Otterbein University

Digital Commons @ Otterbein

Board of Trustees

Governance

2-2021

February 2021 Board of Trustees Meeting Report

Board of Trustees

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.otterbein.edu/board>

 Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

Otterbein University
Board of Trustees Meeting Report
February 5, 2021

Chair's Report

Board **Chair Mark Thresher** welcomed the Board of Trustees to the winter meeting. Chair Thresher reported the Executive Committee had a virtual meeting on Thursday, February 4, at 3:00 p.m. Items covered included curricular market research, program financial analysis, Campus Center update, Kilgore update, Braun Farm update, and the Mary B. Thomas Commitment to Otterbein Award.

Chair Thresher shared that he met with the Faculty Assembly Executive Committee (FAEC) on Thursday, February 4, with discussion on the various strengths and challenges facing Otterbein and our confidence facing our future. The next phase of the program discontinuation was also discussed.

President's Report

President John Comerford expressed appreciation to the remarkable faculty, students and staff on campus. He shared that everyone has helped the campus community to operate in a safe and healthy environment. He expressed our appreciation for having received federal stimulus dollars which has helped the FY21 budget. Cabinet is in the process of reviewing budgets and the strategic planning process. President Comerford noted that President Biden's higher education relief proposal does not reference private colleges like Otterbein and we are advocating for inclusion of our sector.

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

President Comerford informed the Board that twenty (20) sabbatical proposals for 2021-22 were recommended by the Sabbatical Leaves Subcommittee. Both the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs, **Dr. Christina Reynolds**, and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, **Dr. Wendy Sherman Heckler**, endorsed all twenty (20) sabbatical proposals. The Student Success Committee unanimously endorsed the recommendations. President Comerford noted that many faculty delayed their sabbaticals for a year. Abstracts of the proposals recommended for approval were included in the Board materials.

President Comerford moved to approve twenty (20) sabbatical proposals for 2021-22. The motion was seconded by Trustee Jim Francis and unanimously approved.

President Comerford shared that two recipients have been selected this year for the Mary B. Thomas Award for Commitment to Otterbein and endorsed by the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees. This award was established in 2011 by President Emerita Kathy A. Krendl and the University's Board of Trustees to recognize the remarkable commitment of Otterbein investors to the University. President Comerford said the news will be shared with the respective recipients and the campus community with the intention to present the award at Homecoming and Family Weekend in the fall.

Board Committee Updates

Audit and Risk Management Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Chris Kaiser shared members of the Audit and Risk Management Committee attended the University Virtual Town Hall featuring a Protect the Nest Update. The Team

worked hard to prepare for a safe campus environment adjusting to CDC and Franklin County Public Health guidelines.

Enrollment and Advancement Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair David Fisher shared spring enrollment for undergraduate and graduate students is down 9% for each, with an increase in part-time enrollment. Fall '21 enrollment applications are up significantly. Trustee Fisher reminded the Board that the application fee was eliminated this year, tests are optional and a lower percentage of admits (70%) have filed the FAFSA than last year (76%). Vice President Jefferson Blackburn-Smith indicated the decrease in the spring enrollment mirrors Fall '20 numbers.

Trustee Fisher highlighted the *For the Love of Otterbein* engagement and fundraising initiative. Currently, the Annual Giving program is providing any gift of \$50 or more an Otterbein face covering. The Institutional Advancement Staff received the 2020 Silver Award recognition from CASE District V for innovative virtual engagement series. The committee will meet on February 17th to continue their work.

Financial Resources Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Peter Bible reviewed the Goldman Sachs, capital budget and federal aid updates. The long-term investment performance is up \$9 million as of December 31, 2020. The FY 2021 projected net operating budget is ahead by \$1.7 million because of COVID federal aid received to fund revenue loss. Anticipated additional aid is \$3.3 million of which \$1.1 million is for student aid and \$2.2 million to the University for COVID relief. University capital budget spending is at a minimum and primarily related to upgrades for cybersecurity needs.

Governance Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Eddie Harrell shared the Governance Committee met to continue to manage the at-large trustee pipeline and selection, selection of alumni, student and faculty trustees, United Methodist pastor representative, emeriti trustee process, board officer and committee chairs, and board meeting frequency and structure.

Student Success Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Cheryl Herbert noted the Student Success Committee reviewed faculty achievements and encouraged all trustees to spend time reviewing them. As usual, they are extremely impressive. Committee members also reviewed the spring Housing Report and an update from The Point. There are 90 prospective Advantage Program student applications for this coming fall. She mentioned Otterbein received \$250,000 from the State of Ohio for The Point 2.0. Trustee Herbert referred the Board to the survey results in the Board materials referencing student feedback on remote teaching and learning. She noted the faculty and staff did a wonderful job of providing creative ways to engage students. She shared there will be a limited number of faculty line adjustments from the program discontinuance process and the administration is working through a well-defined process to update the Board at the next meeting.

Board Presentations

Three sabbatical showcases were presented to the Board by:

- **Dr. Shelley Payne**, Health & Sport Sciences, Allied Health Curriculum Evaluation
- **Dr. Meredith Meyer**, Psychology, Empirical Investigation of Beliefs about Policy Efficacy
- **Dr. Anthony DeStefanis**, History & Political Science, Military Strikebreaking and the National Guard.

An academic presentation featuring the Department of Religion & Philosophy was presented to the Board by **Dr. Andrew Mills**, Department Chair. A student panel was moderated by Dean of Students **Julie Saker** and students Logan Nelson '23, Frandie Francique '21, Katherine Clifford '21, Sarah Thomson '23 and Zach Thomson '21.

Board Action

The following actions were taken by the Board of Trustees:

- **Resolution to Approve Changes to the Conflict of Interest Policy and Disclosure Form for Trustees and Officers**
The Board of Trustees approved changes to the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Policy and Form for Trustees and Officers, Appendix A of the Otterbein Board of Trustees Code of Regulations, as recommended by the Governance Committee.
- **Resolution to Approve Changes to the Audit and Risk Management Committee Charter**
The Board of Trustees approved changes to the Audit and Risk Management Committee Charter related to staff designee to the committee as recommended by the Governance Committee.
- **Resolution to Award Promotion and Tenure:** The Board of Trustees approved a resolution to award promotions and tenure effective August, 2021 as follows:
 - Promotion to Professor was awarded to **Jennifer Merkowitz** (Music), **Shelley Payne** (Health & Sport Sciences), **Paul Wendel** (Education), and **Rebecca White** (Theatre & Dance).
 - Tenure was awarded to **Lori Kay Harvey** (Music) and **Barry Wittman** (Engineering & Computer Science).
 - Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor was awarded to **Kristina Escondo** (Modern Languages & Cultures) and **Pei Pei** (Mathematics & Actuarial Science).

Future Board of Trustees Meeting Dates

Friday, April 30 – Saturday, May 1, 2021

May 1 – 2, 2021 (Commencement Weekend)

August 6, 2021

October 8 – 9, 2021

February 4 – 5, 2022

April 29 – 30, 2022

April 30 – May 1, 2022 (Commencement Weekend)

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.