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February 2020 Board of Trustees Meeting Report

Board of Trustees

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Otterbein University
Board of Trustees Meeting Report
February 14, 2020

Chair's Report

Board Chair **Mark Thresher** welcomed the Board of Trustees to its winter meeting. Chair Thresher reported that the Executive Committee met on Thursday, February 6, at 6:00 p.m. The Executive Committee approved a recommendation to honor **James A. and Kathleen C. Rutherford P'99** with the Mary B. Thomas Commitment to Otterbein Award in recognition of their longtime service and generous financial support to the University. They will be honored at the Alumni Awards Celebration Gala on Saturday, April 25, 2020. Other topics covered at the Executive Committee meeting included recruiting for diversity, custodial and dining services, reorganization, state capital budget request, and corporate partnerships.

Chair Thresher thanked President Comerford and Cabinet for leading the discussion at the All-committee meeting on Friday, February 7, which covered a variety of topics including the strategic planning process and institutional priorities, designation as a Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation Campus Center by the AACU, property and real estate review, campus center and dining hall plan update, corporate partnerships and tuition benefit program information, The Point 2.0, Only Otterbein marketing campaign update, compensation study update, Academic Affairs reorganization, and Athletic Training program changes.

Chair Thresher expressed thanks to faculty who participated in the Sabbatical Showcase including **Rob Braun** (Department of Health and Sport Sciences), **Robin Grote** (Department of Chemistry), **Yiyuan Liu** (Department of Business, Accounting and Economics), **Jennifer Merkowitz** (Department of Music), **Nathaniel Tagg** (Department of Physics), and **Gayle Walker** (Department of Music). He also expressed gratitude to Interim Dean of Students **Julie Saker** for facilitating the senior student panel on Friday afternoon, which featured students **Madison "Madie" Moore, Emily Knoth, Ben Sauter, Morgan Mains, Casey Rife, John Posey, Kennedy Mensah, and Martha Nyarko**. Chair Thresher stated that listening to the senior students reflect on their academic, athletic, and leadership experiences at Otterbein with such inspiring personal stories was the highlight of the day.

Chair Thresher shared that he met with **Bruce Mandeville, Sarah Bouchard, and Joan Rocks** of the Faculty Assembly Executive Committee (FAEC) on Thursday, February 6. Discussion centered around the reorganization of Academic Affairs, partnership with Columbus State Community College, The Point, and other development opportunities on west campus. He noted that it was a positive discussion.

President's Report

President John Comerford began his report by congratulating **Trustee Eddie Harrell** on his selection as a 2020 inductee into the Ohio Foundation of Independent Colleges' (OFIC) Hall of Excellence. Eddie was selected as one of two 2020 inductees into the Hall of Excellence. The induction ceremony will take place at OFIC's Evening of Excellence on Wednesday, April 22, 2020 at The Grand Event Center in Grandview Heights (Columbus), Ohio.

President Comerford shared the Democratic Presidential Debate Impact Report noting that more than 500 students attended the event, and 131 students were employed by CNN for debate preparation. He

emphasized that hosting the debate resulted in a lasting reputational shift in Central Ohio, which will have a positive impact on Otterbein for years to come.

President Comerford stated that the United Methodist Church will consider a plan that would allow more conservative churches an exit option at the next General Conference scheduled for May 5 – 15, 2020. **Trustee Reverend Larry Brown** shared that there are seven to eight proposals coming forward with the possibility of more proposals coming from the floor at the conference. He noted many constituencies were involved in the proposal allowing more conservative churches to exit, which is promising.

President Comerford shared information about a community engagement strategy involving small group dialogue dinners. He thanked **Trustee Emerita Jane Oman** for hosting the first dialogue dinner for trustees emeriti in October. In addition, Westerville community leaders were invited to attend a luncheon, which was held at the Frank Museum in December. President Comerford thanked **Trustee Rebecca Princehorn** for hosting a dinner in March. Huntington President & CEO Steve Steinour will host one this spring as well. We are planning to have dialogue dinners in New York and Chicago, which will involve a mix of alumni. Trustees should contact President Comerford if interested in hosting. The discussion has been framed around the new strategic plan and the future of higher education.

President Comerford made a motion to approve the strategic plan institutional priorities as presented and approved by the Planning Committee on January 29, 2020, and University Senate on February 5, 2020 as follows:

- Provide a forward-thinking, quality education, which integrates an innovative general education program, disciplinary rigor, and professional preparation for all students that is inclusive, accessible, and affordable.
- Enhance student development through innovative, broad-based academic and co-curricular opportunities that build campus connections and community.
- Advance the public good through intentional educational programming and purposeful connections to community needs.
- Build strategic partnerships to grow our reputation, build revenue, and maintain relevancy to benefit students.
- Attract, retain, and support a professionally active faculty and staff who believe in our mission and values, put students first, and represent the diversity of our community.
- Improve financial and operational strength by enhancing student enrollment and retention, identifying operational efficiencies, and growing a supportive donor base.

The motion was seconded by **Trustee Joan Rocks** and unanimously approved.

President Comerford presented information about the 2020 Undergraduate Commencement speaker, **Tanny Crane, President & CEO of Crane Group**. President Comerford made a motion to award the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters to Ms. Crane as approved by the University Senate on February 5, 2020. The motion was seconded by **Trustee Theresa Harris** and unanimously approved.

President Comerford presented a recommendation to award emeritus status to three (3) faculty and five (5) staff members who are retiring this year or who have recently retired with a combined two hundred thirty-nine (239) years of service. Their individual years of service are as follows:

Faculty

Dr. Beth R. Daugherty, Department of English (36)

Dr. Robert Johnson, Department of Theatre and Dance (33)

Dr. Robert Kraft, Department of Psychology (32)

Staff

Lucy Cryan, Business Operations Manager, The Point – Office of the President (26)

Laurie Draper, Administrative Assistant, Alumni Relations – Institutional Advancement (23)

Mark Pfeiffer, TV/Video Production Coordinator, Department of Communication (25)

Judy Ralph, Account Manager, Student Financial Services – Enrollment Management (30)

Tom Yarnell, Director of Student Financial Services – Enrollment Management (34)

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 Joan Esson** and unanimously approved.

President Comerford informed the Board that the School Deans reviewed 27 sabbatical proposals for 2020-21 as recommended by the Sabbatical Leaves Subcommittee. Abstracts of the proposals are included in the Board materials. The Deans recommended approval of 26 of the 27 proposals, and **Provost and Sr. Vice President Wendy Sherman Heckler** concurred resulting in two motions.

President Comerford made a motion to approve twenty-six (26) sabbatical proposals for 2020-21. The motion was seconded by **Trustee Dan Gifford** and unanimously approved.

President Comerford made a motion for a conditional approval of a twenty-seventh year-long sabbatical proposal based on the ability to address staffing concerns as approved by the Provost and Sr. Vice President. The motion was seconded by **Trustee Cheryl Herbert** and unanimously approved.

Board Presentations

An academic showcase featuring the Department of Communication was presented to the Board of Trustees by faculty members **Dr. Chris Reynolds** and **Dan Steinberg**. Students **Sen Li '20**, **Aselya Sposato '21**, and **Katie Frame '22** shared their experiences as well. The well-received presentation included information about the department's commitment to scholarship, teaching, and service with an emphasis on its ability to balance theory and practice. Networking opportunities, portfolio-building exercises, internship opportunities, travel abroad experiences, and strong connections with alumni were also shared as part of the impressive presentation.

Action

In addition to actions previously described in this report, the following action was taken by the Board of Trustees:

- **Resolution to Approve University Capital Budget Plan for the 2020-21 Academic Year**
 - The Board of Trustees approved the Fiscal Year 2021 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021) Capital Budget Allocation of \$2,370,641.00 as summarized on Attachment A.

- **Resolution to Authorize Otterbein University to sell the Stichweh home and place the proceeds into The Joanne M. Stichweh Fund.**
 - The late Professor Emerita Joanne M. Stichweh '67 retired from Otterbein University Department of Art in 2009. She devoted her life to the arts as both a professor of art history and studio art and as a professional award-winning artist.
 - Professor Stichweh made a charitable gift of her estate that included several annuities, her vehicle, and her home to Otterbein to establish The Joanne M. Stichweh Fund.
 - As recommended by the Enrollment and Advancement Committee, the Board of Trustees approved a resolution to authorize Otterbein University to sell the property located at 238 Red Barn Court, Westerville, Ohio, and to place the proceeds from such sale into The Joanne M. Stichweh Fund.

- **Resolution to Approve Proposed Changes to the Faculty Manual**
 - As approved by Faculty Assembly and the Board of Trustees Student Success Committee, the Board of Trustees approved a resolution to approve proposed changes to the Faculty Manual
 - Student Success Committee Chair **Cheryl Herbert** expressed deep appreciation for the work done by the thirteen-member Faculty Manual Study Committee led by **Dr. Paul Wendel**, which was an enormous undertaking.

Future Board of Trustees Meeting Dates

May 1 - 2, 2020 (Commencement Weekend)

May 3, 2020 (Undergraduate Commencement)

August 6, 2020 from 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm (Summer Teleconference Meeting)

October 9 - 10, 2020

February 5 - 6, 2021

April 30 – May 1, 2021 (Commencement Weekend)

May 2, 2021 (Undergraduate Commencement)