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February 3, 2023 Board of Trustees Meeting Report

Board of Trustees

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**Board of Trustees Meeting Report
February 3, 2023**

Chair's Report

Board Chair Cheryl Herbert welcomed the Board of Trustees to the winter meeting. Chair Herbert reported that the Executive Committee approved two resolutions making a change in the University authorization to establish accounts at financial institutions and to sell and assign securities. This was due to a personnel change in the controller position. On behalf of the Board, Chair Herbert recognized the President, Cabinet, faculty and staff for the extra hard work undertaken with the multiple projects such as the HLC submission and the System work.

President's Report

President John Comerford expressed his appreciation to **Vice President Susan Bolt and Patrick Siconolfi**, executive director of facilities management and planning, for their efforts to solve the heating issues on campus during the past couple of weeks. He expressed thanks to the department of theatre and dance for their flexibility during the water damage repair on the Cowan Hall stage. He also noted we had a 100-year old tree fall on the lawn of Towers Hall. President Comerford stated the fall to spring student persistence number is 94%. President Comerford recognized **Trustee David Fisher** for his eighteen months of work on Campus West which is now the property of Lifestyle Communities. President Comerford also announced the Kathy R. Krendl Distinguished Lecture Series will be held on February 16, 7:00 p.m. in Cowan Hall with U. S. Congresswoman Joyce Beatty as the speaker.

Provost/Senior Vice President Dr. Wendy Sherman Heckler provided a brief summary of the Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) program with Grant Hospital. There have been difficulties over the past six months with the Grant Hospital contract. There will be no new CRNA enrollments in the program as we teach-out the students over the next three years.

Provost Sherman Heckler shared the Faculty Assembly has been discussing the merit proposal presented from the ad hoc Merit Committee. There will be training conducted for supervisors and managers. Trustee Susan Millsap added that discussion has focused on process. Faculty Assembly is considering the composition of a merit committee, an evaluation rubric, and what the minimum money amount should be to make a meaningful difference. The faculty are appreciative of the possibility of merit but want to get it right so that it makes a positive difference.

President Comerford introduced **Bill Fox**, Vice President for Student Affairs, who joined the campus the middle of January.

President Comerford moved to approve faculty promotion and tenure decisions. **Trustee Alan Varrasso** seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved. (See names listed under the Board Action section.) President Comerford presented a recommendation to award emeritus status to three (3) faculty and four (4) staff members who have recently retired. They have provided Otterbein with a combined one hundred sixty-one (161) years of service. Their names and individual years of service are as follows:

Faculty

Professor Don Austin, Department of Art & Art History (24)

Dr. Stephanie Patridge, Department of Philosophy & Religion (17)

Dr. Jeremy Smith, Department of English (35)

Staff

Larry Banaszak, Director of Public Safety (19)

Willie Franklin `10, Event and Technology Coordinator (40)

Terry Magas `08, Executive Assistant to the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies (17)

Kristi Robbins, former Chief of Staff, Office of the President (9)

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 the 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 Varrasso** and was unanimously approved.

President Comerford informed the Board that the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs **Dr. Christina Reynolds** and **Provost/Senior Vice President Sherman Heckler** reviewed 16 sabbatical proposals for 2023-24 as recommended by the Sabbatical Leaves Subcommittee. Abstracts of the proposals are included in the Board materials. The Associate Provost and Provost recommended approval of all 16 proposals. President Comerford made a motion to approve sixteen (16) sabbatical proposals for 2023-24. The motion was seconded by **Trustee Nevil** and unanimously approved.

Board Committee Updates

Audit & Risk Management Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Chris Kaiser reported the committee met on November 17 to review the FY22 audit report on the financial statements from Crowe Auditors. The audit report and financial statement was issued on November 30, 2022 and was included in the Board packet materials. Otterbein signed an engagement letter for the preparation of the tax returns due March 15, 2023. The audit of the pension plan for the year ending December 31, 2022 will be performed later this year by Clark Shaffer & Hackett. It will be circulated to the trustees for review. Otterbein recently engaged a firm named Forvis, an audit and consulting firm, to perform a preliminary review of the Federal Employee Retention Credit. This firm provides financial assistance to entities who maintained payroll during the pandemic and is funded by the four relief acts (Cares Act, Relief Act of 2021, American Rescue Plan, and Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act).

Enrollment & Advancement Committee

Trustee Yasmeen Khafagy noted the committee met earlier this week and heard an update on fundraising and enrollment. **Vice President Michael McGreevey** provided results of fundraising during the first half of the fiscal year. After lagging behind all fall, the Otterbein Fund made up the gap and ended December at \$468,000 which is very similar to last year at this time. Overall fundraising or “commitments” are equally strong at this point at \$3.6M compared to \$3.6M last year. Cash received is

very strong at \$4.1M compared to \$2.8 last year. Consistent with a continuing national trend, donor numbers are slightly down.

Trustee Khafagy noted the major part of the meeting consisted of a presentation from Andy Canada, senior consultant for JGA (Johnson Grossnickle and Associates). JGA has been working closely with the Advancement team and others to assess the Advancement operation and understand opportunities to enhance the philanthropic base.

In the meeting, **Vice President Jefferson Blackburn-Smith** shared the overall enrollment for Spring 2023 is down 4% (88 students) from last spring, but this was not a surprise. Traditional undergraduate enrollment was only down 1% from a year ago. Most important, the fall semester to spring semester persistence rate jumped 4% (to 94%) from last year. 94% persistence is higher than last pre-Covid fall to spring persistence rate of 93% which is good news. We continue to see softening of enrollment in the adult undergraduate and graduate pools, making the work being done with the new System more important than ever.

Financial Resources Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Pete Bible provided an update from Goldman Sachs noting the total investment pool as of December 31, 2022 was \$128M, down from \$150M. Trustee Bible noted we have weathered the pandemic, economic uncertainty, and have a good result. He thanked the committee members and Goldman Sachs for all their efforts.

Governance Committee

Trustee and Chair David Fisher shared the committee has met frequently with the most recent meeting held on January 18. The committee continued its discussion on officer succession planning and expects to bring a motion forward at the spring meeting. In addition, other topics being discussed or on a future agenda include the following:

- renewal of terms for trustees,
- feedback from current trustees about how to strengthen board experience and operation,
- filling of open seat(s) for Fiscal Year 24 and currently looking at several prospective trustees to return to the Board with recommendations,
- granting emeriti status for faculty and staff as noted under the President Comerford's report,
- review of criteria for emeriti status for faculty and staff, and,
- refreshing the *Standards for Trustee Practice*.

Trustee Fisher thanked **Trustee Theresa Harris** for her willingness to serve on the System Board. She is joining **Trustees April Casperson and Dan Gifford**. The committee will meet several times this spring and will also interview prospective student trustees.

Student Success Committee

Trustee and Chair Jim Francis shared the committee met on January 27, 2023 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.

Vice President Bill Fox reported university police is looking to hire two officers and he will have an update in April on an officer hybrid plan. The new football coach, Tommy Zagorski, has been hired and starts February 6. As of the committee meeting, there had been eight positive Covid tests since December 1. Vice President Fox shared there were nine students who tested positive this week and are either at home or quarantined on campus. Trustee Francis mentioned the Covid protocol will be changing and will

follow the Franklin County Public Health guidelines. Otterbein is working to provide a new protocol announcement which is complete and clear. The Academic Affairs team is having conversations on merit compensation with Faculty Assembly. Trustee Francis shared news from the Point regarding a partnership with EMC² who is working with the Army to develop a way to utilize plastic waste into a technology for use in additive manufacturing. He noted students along with EMC² are working with a new 3D printer, tensile strength testing machine and identifying ways to repurpose windmill blades. The committee heard about ChatGPT which is an artificial intelligence (AI) tool where students can enter a short prompt and the chat bot will generate a response. The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) is working to create a conversation to discuss the challenges and opportunities posed by ChatGPT and how to use it constructively.

Constituency Reports

Faculty Trustee Report

Trustee Susan Millsap extended congratulations to the faculty who received promotion, tenure and sabbatical approval. She reiterated the discussion at Faculty Assembly on the merit proposal presented from the ad hoc Merit Committee. She noted Otterbein faculty governance colleagues have been in touch with Antioch University Senate Leadership to discuss the Otterbein shared governance system and how the new system might work within respective systems.

Trustee John Tansey shared that faculty have been active in pursuing grants to help students succeed. These grants include Choose Ohio First, National Science Foundation, Ohio Board of Nursing, Martha Holden Jennings grants and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute Inclusive Excellence Program (HHMI-IE3). Some of these grants provide support for students to engage in research, work with a peer mentor, or support programming for students who normally might be at risk of not persevering or succeeding in their chosen major or in college in general. Trustee Tansey noted twenty-four faculty members are involved in these grants which is nearly ¼ of the faculty.

Student Trustee Report

Trustee Yasmeen Khafagy shared the students are happy despite the heating challenges. She noted the African American Student Union has been renamed the Black Student Union. The Muslim Association and HOLA have reorganized. A public health organization received Narcan/Nalozone training. **Trustee Madelyn Nelson** shared they met with **Vice President Bolt** to confirm bi-weekly pay for students will start in the fall and to understand the financial statement. They met with interim Otterbein Police **Chief Paul Weiner** and **Deputy Rick Tiburzio** to discuss ways to increase engagement with students. Trustees Nelson and Khafagy are working with Vice President Fox to build relationships with OUSG. Trustee Khafagy noted the Dining Advisory Board has been reestablished and making positive changes. The student trustees are initiating efforts to be visible on campus by sponsoring an open table at the library, holding office hours and conducting media interviews. They are explaining the student trustee application process which is held this semester.

Alumni Trustee Report

Vice President Michael McGreevey reported for **Trustee Kathryn Stephens**. He noted the Alumni Council had a successful meeting this past Homecoming & Family Weekend, where they were joined by **Jeff King**, CDO, and **Frank Dobson**, Director of Social Justice and Activism, who shared their vision for DEI initiatives at Otterbein. Members of the Council will be attending a breakfast on February 7 at Bricker & Eckler to welcome Mr. King and Dr. Dobson. In collaboration with the Office of Alumni & Family Engagement, the Alumni Council is working to build awareness for the new efforts and initiatives among diverse alumni populations.

In November, a Council subcommittee selected eleven outstanding alumni to receive 2023 Alumni Awards. The Council is working to collaborate through the Alumni & Family Engagement Office to

determine how it can be an active partner in the new Otterbein READY program. At the upcoming March meeting, the Council will be envisioning a broader framework for its role as the overarching advisory to all the Otterbein networks and alumni groups, with a goal of improving engagement, communication, and the overall volunteer experience. Young Alumni Council hosted an event at PINS Mechanical in Dublin where the alumni class years ranged over a 60-year period. There will be a new virtual series launched this spring, featuring each academic division and in collaboration with the Coordinator Liaisons. The Council is currently seeking nominations for its next slate of members. If you have any recommendations, please send them to Vice President McGreevey or Dana Viglietta, interim executive director of alumni and family relations.

Board Presentations

President Comerford introduced **Luc Attlan**, attorney with Faegre Drinker. Mr. Attlan provided a summary of the System Affiliation Agreement and Strategic Operating Agreement. **Trustee Dan Gifford** shared his perspective on the agreements and noted appreciation for the work that Faegre Drinker has provided. **Trustee Casperson** noted beyond the System Agreements and Higher Learning Commission application, the System Board meets monthly and email daily. Work is moving forward for the System branding by Ologie, an advertising agency in central Ohio. The System academic planning meetings are continuing this spring semester along with joint town halls.

Vice President McGreevey introduced **Andy Canada**, Senior Consultant and Director of Data Analytics for Johnson, Grossnickle and Associate (JGA) who is conducting an Institutional Advancement assessment. The assessment is focused on the work of advancement, efficiencies, streamlining, staffing, and potential donor pool. Mr. Canada will return to the April Board meeting for a full report on the Advancement Audit as well as the Board's role in moving the process forward.

Action

In addition to actions previously described in this report, the following action was 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, 2023 as follows:
 - Promotion to Professor to **Robert Braun** (Health & Sport Sciences), **Carrigan Hayes** (Chemistry), and **Meredith Meyer** (Psychology).
 - Promotion to Professor Rank, Librarian as Staff with Faculty Rank to **Rares Piloiu** (Courtright Memorial Library).
 - Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor to **Elena Caruthers** (Engineering, Computer Science & Physics) and **Jeremy Llorence** (English).
 - Promotion to Associate Professor, Non-Tenure-Track to **Chai Sribanditmongkol** (Nursing).
 - Promotion to Senior Instructor, Non-Tenure-Track to **Joseph Wilkins** (Health & Sport Sciences).
- **Resolution to Authorize Otterbein University to purchase 0 Center Street, .0133 Acre Alley Vac Old Lots 7 8, Westerville Ohio.** Otterbein was informed the property located at 0 Center Street, Westerville, Ohio 43081 was owned by the estate of Calvin C. Allen, Sr. The estate offered to sell the property to the University.
- **Resolution to name 25 W. Home Street:** The Board of Trustees approved a resolution to name the residence hall located at 25 W. Home Street in honor of President Emeritus Thomas Kerr and Donna Kerr.

Future Board of Trustees Meeting Date

Saturday, April 29, 2023

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.