

Otterbein University

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Board of Trustees

Governance

4-29-2023

April 29, 2023 Board of Trustees Meeting Report

Board of Trustees

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Otterbein University
Board Report to the Community
April 29, 2023

Chair's Report

Board Chair Herbert shared she met with the Faculty Assembly Executive Committee (FAEC) on Thursday and felt it was an excellent meeting. Faculty representatives noted the discussion on merit pay has been collaborative and invigorating. Additional topics discussed included the work related to the new system, budget, the need to express gratitude to others, and STEM vs liberal arts programs. Chair Herbert also noted the executive committee of the Board met yesterday reviewing many of the topics being discussed today. She also announced that Vice Chair Eddie Harrell was inducted into the Ohio Foundation of Independent Colleges Hall of Excellence. Chair Herbert announced on behalf of the Board, along with her personal sentiments, the appreciation for all the hard work of the faculty and staff this year. She also expressed thanks to Board members for their time and effort for the extra meetings this year and to those trustees who attended the Higher Learning Commission meetings.

President's Report

President Comerford noted this year has seen meaningful challenges but also big wins in the areas of the partnership, innovation projects, increased retention rates, compensation decisions, and a \$4M investment in energy efficiency across the campus. He expressed thanks to a wonderful team who has worked a fast pace. President Comerford publicly recognized the facilities department with thanks to Patrick Siconolfi, Executive Director Facility Management/Planning and Susan Bolt, Vice President for Business Affairs/CFO for their attention to the facility needs this past winter. He extended appreciation to the trustees for their engagement, time and effort this past year.

Board Committee Reports

Audit and Risk Management Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Kaiser reported the Committee met on Thursday, April 27. They heard from Toya Remaly, tax manager from Crowe, who reviewed the June 30, 2022, 990 tax return for the University. The return not only covered the financial information and reporting, but also an activities report and disclosures for the University to make sure the organization continues to meet the requirements of not-for-profit status and thereby tax-free operations and other benefits. The return is a public document and does contain a listing of the Board members. The full Board received the return to review by May 5 prior to filing. The Audit Committee approved the draft return. The audit for the year ending June 30, 2023 will be performed by Crowe audit staff. Trustee Kaiser noted the agenda for the next committee meeting will include a review of the pension plan audit, update on the potential opportunity to apply for the employee retention tax credit, and performance compensation measurements which include HR and IT training modules. Trustee Kaiser thanked the committee and the support staff for all their work in this area.

Enrollment and Advancement Committee

Trustee Casperson reported the committee met this morning and received updates from Michael McGreevey, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, and Jefferson Blackburn-Smith, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Marketing. The enrollment discussion was around insights that high school seniors are slower in making decisions, 25% of students are applying to ten or more schools, and understanding the new enrollment landscape attracting 17-year olds. Enrollment Management will conduct an admitted student survey to understand the factors that influenced student enrollment decisions. Positive news is that the returning student retention is at 94% extending beyond the pre-Covid retention of 93%.

In advancement, fundraising at this point of the year continues to be strong, buoyed by the crowdfunding campaign *Founder's Day of Giving* this past week. Overall, 408 donors contributed over \$116,000 and it was great to see the enthusiasm for Otterbein. Vice President McGreevey extended appreciation to Trustee Buys du Plessis for hosting a reception in Chicago, Trustee Emerita Oman for hosting former trustees at the Columbus Club, Trustee Nevil for supporting the theatre showcase in New York City, Trustee Bible for hosting business analytic students in NYC, and Trustee Jordan for working with math and actuarial students.

The committee was joined by Andy Canada, senior consultant for Johnson Grossnickle and Associates (JGA) for a deeper dive on research provided from the Institutional Advancement assessment. JGA has been working closely with the Advancement team and others to assess the Advancement operation and understand where there are opportunities to enhance the philanthropic base.

Financial Resources Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Bible reported the committee met with Goldman Sachs for a market analysis review of the investments. The committee also reviewed the proposed FY24 operating and capital budgets. President Comerford provided a review of the budget projections to the trustees in the all-Board meeting this morning.

Governance Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Fisher shared the Governance Committee has held several meetings this spring with primary emphasis on the selection of new trustees, revising governance documents and discussing key areas for board efficiency and effectiveness.

With the support of the Governance Committee, the current officers will continue their service within their approved terms for Fiscal Year 2024.

- *Cheryl Herbert, Chair*
- *Eddie Harrell '94, Vice Chair*
- *Alan Waterhouse '82, Secretary*
- *Theresa Harris, Assistant Secretary*

At this time, the committee continues its deliberation of new at-large trustees and will bring forward a nomination from a strong list of candidates at a future meeting.

The committee continued to review documents that guide the operation of the Board. Several motions were offered for approval for revisions and modification. Trustee Fisher shared the modified and amended changes for the Code of Regulations and Articles of Incorporation that will supersede the existing Code of Regulations and Articles of Incorporation, effective on the date of the official and legal closing of the System.

Trustee Fisher offered sincere appreciation to fellow trustee committee members for their thoughtful and dedicated work this year on important topics and issues. He also offered heartfelt gratitude to Trustee Debbie Currin for her leadership and numerous contributions to the work of the Governance Committee.

Student Success Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Francis noted the committee met this morning to hear a number of updates. The Point reported to have eighteen advantage partnerships which has fostered 110 prospective student applications and 27 students have confirmed to date. Events and conferences have planned and implemented 848 events, added two new staff members, and have a full summer of events. Students at the Point are working with the Westerville Public Library on a two-year project to

build a dragon egg for a Halloween display to complement the dragon built a couple of years ago. Vice President Fox provided his first 100 days update to the committee which was included in the Board packet. He is listening to students, building bridges across student affairs and academic affairs, identifying barriers for students to access programs and services. The student engagement survey results will be help to determine future programs for students. A search is underway for an athletic director, the football coach has been hired and the Otterbein Police Department has all three shifts covered. Counseling services saw 149 new appointments from January 1 to April totaling 495 appointments this academic year with both numbers reflecting an increase from last year. The Antioch partnership will bring additional counselors on campus to improve outreach. There is an average of 75 Promise House shoppers each week and 150 students stopping each week at the pop-up Promise House shop. Over 45 emergency financial grants were provided to students to help reduce barriers. Trustee Francis recognized the faculty achievements listed in the Student Success report in the Board packet sharing the breadth and the depth of faculty scholarship and research. He also congratulated the faculty who received tenure and promotion. All the permanent faculty positions have been filled for tenure track. Three visiting faculty have been hired and two more will be hired.

Constituency Reports

Alumni Trustee Report

Trustee Stephens expressed support for the Institutional Advancement Team leading successful work this year with a reduced staff. She also shared an update from Alumni Council:

- There are 17 members on the Alumni Council with over 35 new member nominations.
- Total living alumni in the Otterbein's database is 28,903 with 20,000 living in Ohio; 2nd place is Florida.
- Alumni volunteer engagement in 2022 was 156 at 29 events.
- The strongest social media engagement is on the Alumni & Family Engagement Facebook page with over 3,000 followers; second is LinkedIn Alumni Group. There is work to be done to increase followers.
- The Alumni Council philanthropic giving stands at 76% support overall.
- The Founders Day of Giving raised \$116,000 with 80% Alumni Council participation towards supporting the challenges.
- Led by Alumni Council Chair Maggie Ellison and Council Member Erin Ensign, the council is reimagining themselves and the 14 affinity/network groups to form communication lines and liaisons to the Council.
- Planning for Homecoming & Family Weekend is in the works focusing to develop strategies for engaging alumni and volunteers at the event.

Faculty Trustee Report

Trustee Millsap shared the focus of Faculty Assembly (FA) has been the creation of a process for awarding performance-based merit pay. While this has been a long discussion, the faculty have come out of it with a greater renewed understanding of what is done as faculty and a greater appreciation for the differences between varying fields of study. Next year FA have created an ad hoc merit committee to test the processes for evaluation before they are placed in the *Faculty Manual*. Out of the discussion, there has been conversation on the need for a statement on 'service' around what is included in service and what is expected.

There is optimism around the possibilities with the Antioch agreement and a desire to reestablish a faculty lounge area for connection with colleagues. Trustee Millsap expressed congratulations to faculty who received promotions and tenure and noted the faculty achievements shared in the Board packet.

Trustee Tansey noted student spring Honors Program and how the faculty are integral in the student's academic success. There are numerous additional roles that faculty provide such as student travel experiences, both in the U.S. and internationally, or readjusting trip details due to changing climate conditions at the intended location. There were 18 faculty mentors to 19 senior students who conducted their honor thesis. There were 80 internships across academic programs. Faculty supported students to present their research finding at national level conferences and faculty who advised student organizations such as speech and debate team, student publications, OtterFit program, concerts and much more.

Chair Herbert commented that this report was very informative and important for us to understand the role of a faculty member.

Student Trustee Report

Trustee Nelson shared several student experiential learning opportunities. There are 47 students who are participating in the May term study abroad opportunities in Malawi, Uganda, England, Vietnam, Spain and Greece. There are five internships abroad and several unique summer internships. Trustee Nelson provided examples of student immersive experiences utilizing the 5 Cards funding.

Trustee Khafagy shared more activities have been provided with increased student involvement. The first Black Student Excellence Ball was held and Iftar sponsored by the Muslim Student Association. There are new additions in the library including standing desks, computer chargers, and bean bag chairs. The Sports Management Club has provided student intramurals this semester. The Otterbein University Student Government inaugurated 42 student senators which is ten more than last year. The student government used all of the student life allocations to support student involvement grant requests. There are student conversations around updating the Rike Center with student athletes encouraging renovations of the weight room. The men's locker room renovations are complete.

Trustee Khafagy expressed thanks to former Trustee Hannah Sturgeon and Trustee Nelson for their service on the Board and for serving as a mentor for her.

Chair Herbert shared she is consistently overwhelmed by what Otterbein's amazing students are doing, serving as leaders on and off campus.

Board Action

The following actions were taken by the Board of Trustees:

- **Resolution to Accept the Graduating Class of 2023**
 - The Board of Trustees approved a resolution to accept the graduating class of 2023 as presented by President Comerford. It was noted that a total of 611 degrees would be awarded including 495 bachelor's, 81 master's, and 35 doctorate degrees.
- **Resolution for Honorary Degrees**
 - **The Board of Trustees approved a resolution to present honorary degrees to the 2023 Commencement Speakers.**
 - Barb Smoot, President & CEO, Women for Economic and Leadership Development, Graduate commencement speaker: Doctorate of Humane Letters
 - Jonathan Hargis '79, retired Executive Vice President & Chief Marketing officer, Charter Communications, Undergraduate speaker: Doctorate of Humane Letters
 - Rob Portman, Former Senator, Undergraduate commencement speaker: Doctorate of Public Service

- **Resolution for Financial Authority**
 - The Board of Trustees approved a resolution for the controller to serve as Authority to Sell and Assign Securities and Authority to Establish and Maintain Accounts at Financial Institutions.

- **Resolution to Appoint Student Trustee**

The Board of Trustees approved a resolution to appoint **Mahad Yusuf `26** (student trustee for two-year term)

- **Resolution to change the Code of Regulations**
 - The Board of Trustees approved a resolution for the changes to Otterbein’s current Code of Regulations (Article II, Section III; Article IV, Section 2, 3 and 4) related to officer terms and succession planning.

- **Resolution to revise the Standards of Trustee Practice**
 - The Board of Trustees approved a resolution for changes to the Otterbein Trustee Standards of Practice, specifically Standard 2: Attendance and Involvement and Standard 3: Leadership through Philanthropy.

- **Resolution to Modify Articles of Incorporation**
 - The Board of Trustees approved a resolution, in preparation of the creation and launch of a new System for graduate and adult programs, regarding modifications to the University’s Articles of Incorporation which become effective on the date of the official and legal closing of the System.

- **Resolution to Modify Code of Regulations**
 - The Board of Trustees approved a resolution, in preparation of the creation and launch of a new System for graduate and adult programs, regarding the University’s current Code of Regulations which become effective on the date of the official and legal closing of the System.

- **Resolution to Adopt the 2023-24 (FY24) Operating Budget**
 - The Board of Trustees approved a resolution to adopt the proposed 2023-24 (FY24) operating budget with total operating revenues at \$60,886,262.

- **Resolution to Approve University Capital Budget Allocation for 2023-24 (FY24)**
 - The Board of Trustees approved the proposed 2022-23 (FY23) Capital Budget Allocation of \$1,010,625.

Board Special Recognition

The Board of Trustees concluded the meeting by recognizing and thanking departing **Trustee Deborah Currin `67** (2011 – 2023), **Student Trustee Madelyn Nelson `23** (2022 – 2023) and **Student Trustee Hannah Sturgeon `23** (2021-2022).

Future Board of Trustees Meeting Dates

- Friday, August 4, 2023, virtual
- Friday, September 15, 2023 in-person meeting
- Saturday, September 16, 2023 Homecoming & Family Weekend
- Friday, December 1, 2023, virtual
- Friday, February 2, 2024, virtual
- Saturday, April 27, 2024 in person meeting
- Sunday, April 28, 2024 Commencement