

Otterbein University

Digital Commons @ Otterbein

Board of Trustees

Governance

2-2-2024

February 2, 2024 Board of Trustees Meeting Report

Board of Trustees
Otterbein University

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



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Board of Trustees, "February 2, 2024 Board of Trustees Meeting Report" (2024). *Board of Trustees*. 23.
<https://digitalcommons.otterbein.edu/board/23>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Governance at Digital Commons @ Otterbein. It has been accepted for inclusion in Board of Trustees by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Otterbein. For more information, please contact digitalcommons07@otterbein.edu.



**Board of Trustees Meeting Report
February 2, 2024**

Chair's Report

Board Chair Cheryl Herbert welcomed the Board of Trustees to the winter meeting. She reported the Executive Committee met on January 19 and discussed many of the topics being covered today.

President's Report

President John Comerford introduced **Dr. Allan Gozum**, Interim CFO & VP for Business Affairs, who joined the campus on January 2 and will be in the position through the search. He is also the CFO for Antioch University. There are two vice president searches occurring this semester, Vice President for Enrollment Management and CFO & Vice President for Business Affairs. There is a search for an Executive Director for Facilities led by Executive Vice President Blackburn-Smith. The facilities assistant directors and Michael Greitzer, Antioch's facilities director, are maintaining operations. The union contract was extended through the end of March.

John Carroll University athletics are departing the OAC to the North Coast Athletic Conference.

A new partnership with the Church of the Master is being established with Lucy Kelly serving in a shared position as church pastor and Otterbein's director of faith and spiritual life. The church facility will be available for campus use and vice versa.

President Comerford reminded the Board that a compensation plan was adopted in 2018 that included equity increases and a move to performance-based pay. The pandemic slowed progress on the plan, however this January faculty increases were based on a new performance-based model and staff are working towards performance-based compensation through a new performance management system. Otterbein conducted a market equity survey this year and increased the midpoint of all staff paygrades. This impacted a handful of staff. For faculty, the minimum salaries for each of the Tiers and Ranks were examined. There was a significant impact to Tier 1 faculty minimums; Tier 2 and 3 were found to be competitive. Every four to five years, human resources will identify positions against the market which are underpaid to determine salary scale minimum.

President Comerford noted the federal delay of FAFSA data will delay financial aid packages to the middle of March or early April. **Richard Dorman** is leading the Kasich Center initiative focused on critical thinking and character. Early concept slides were shown of the Campus Center dining hall plans, new exterior stair tower, and interior proposed pictures. The exterior stair tower will be started in May. The dining hall will likely be in disruption starting in September with completion in January. We are awaiting construction costs yet anticipate the project to cost between \$5M - \$6M. President Comerford thanked **Vice President Bill Fox** for leading this initiative.

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

President Comerford informed the Board that the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs **Dr. Christina Reynolds** and **Provost/Senior Vice President Wendy Sherman Heckler** reviewed 18 sabbatical proposals for 2024-25 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 18 proposals. President Comerford made a motion to approve eighteen (18) sabbatical proposals for 2024-25. The motion was seconded by **Trustee John Tansey** and unanimously approved.

President Comerford presented a recommendation to award emeritus status to three (3) faculty and two (2) staff members. They have provided Otterbein with a combined one hundred forty-one (141) years of service. Their names and individual years of service are as follows:

Faculty

Dr. Simon Lawrance, Biology & Earth Science (32 years)

Dr. Zhen Huang, Mathematics & Actuarial Science (32 years)

Elizabeth Zeitz, Technical Services Coordinator, Courtright Memorial Library (15 years)

Staff

Connie Richardson, Senior Women's Administrator, Assistant Athletic Director (31.83 years)

Dr. Kathy Ryan, contracted psychologist & director of Otterbein's Counseling Center (30+ years)

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 Pete Bible** and was unanimously approved.

Board Committee Updates

Audit & Risk Management Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Chris Kaiser reported in an upcoming meeting the committee will focus on the Form 990 tax return, June year-end tax return done by Crowe, and the annual pension audit. The Employee Retention Credit of approximately \$5M that we expect to receive is making its way through the government process. The Kilgore property consent decree has been accepted by the court for the 40 acres of reclamation. Trustee Kaiser expressed appreciation to **Interim Vice President Allan Gozum** for his help to Otterbein.

Enrollment & Advancement Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Lisa Hinson shared the committee will meet on March 14 followed by a social reception with the enrollment/development staffs, student scholars and donors.

She reported enrollment numbers for fall 2024 as of January 19, as compared to this time last year:

- Applications are up 14% with 458 more students applying and a total of 3,624 applicants.
- Admits are up 15% with 352 students, 20% are students of color, 15% females, 11% males.
- There are 77 confirmations which is up 24%.

- The recent Otterbein Scholars Day welcomed 210 families. Spring 2024 returns are at 95% for full time, first time and transfers which is the highest return percentage in over ten years. Graduate enrollment is down due to declines in nursing and MBA.

Executive Vice President Jefferson Blackburn-Smith shared the additional resources approved for use to increase enrollment are showing early signs of very positive returns. There are significant increases in applications in all areas resourced: STEM, equine riding team, nursing, eSports, and women’s wrestling. The innovation proposals are going through a re-application process for next year’s funding.

Trustee Hinson shared advancement fundraising numbers:

- Commitments (all gifts and pledges) currently stand at \$4,113,000 (down just slightly from FY23 at this time but well ahead of FY22).
- Otterbein Fund is currently at \$446,000 (exactly half way to goal and running at par with FY23).

Development travel outside of Ohio has recently or will shortly include Florida, Southern California, Chicago, Texas, Pennsylvania, Carolinas, CT and NYC. Fundraising for the Campus Center (Phase II) continues and will feature a family legacy mini-campaign this spring. Engagement of alumni, families and friends continues to grow with events in Ohio and nationally. Alumni Council is leading a new “In the Loop” virtual series with each academic division, in partnership with our Coordinator Liaisons. The Institutional Advancement staff continue to partner with Johnson, Grossnickle and Associates (JGA) to frame engagement and fundraising for the future campaign.

Financial Resources Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Pete Bible shared the committee will meet next week with Goldman Sachs. The January 31, 2024 combined assets are at \$136,221,274. We are performing comparable to the benchmarks. Total investments are up \$63M since partnering with Goldman Sachs.

Governance Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair David Fisher shared the committee has met in early January and discussed these topics:

- change to the Code of Regulations of Article VI, Section 1 and Article VII, Section 2 renewal of terms for trustees, related to Chair and President serving without full voting privileges on all Board committees.
- filling of open seat(s) for FY25 and currently reviewing several prospective trustees’ profiles to return to the Board with recommendations, and,
- granting emeriti status for staff as noted under President Comerford’s report.

The committee will meet several times this spring to interview prospective alumni, faculty and student trustees.

Student Success Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Mindy Phinney shared the committee met on January 8 and reviewed faculty tenure, promotions, and sabbaticals. Student Affairs updated the committee on the status of the NCAA eligibility of graduate students participating in athletics. We are still waiting for the result. The assistant athletic director and sports psychologist are on campus. Grants and state money of \$126,000 were received for mental health initiative and renovating the health center to a counseling center for the fall 2025. It will be staffed with Antioch University mental health program counselors. The Higher Learning Commission was pleased with the ongoing efforts of the Coalition. A new learning management system, Bright Space, has been purchased to be used for both Otterbein and Antioch. The

implementation of the new merit process recognized 75 faculty with good service and 29 faculty exceeding expectations. The DEIB is being rebranded to be called 'Belonging - Tied Together'.

Constituency Reports

Faculty Trustee Report

Trustee Susan Millsap indicated Faculty Assembly has gathered feedback on the new merit process and making possible adjustments. Overall, there seems to be agreement the process went well for the first time. Faculty Assembly is hosting a town hall for the entire campus with the conversation revolving around what we want an Otterbein education to make possible for students.

Trustee John Tansey extended appreciation on behalf of the faculty for the approved promotions, tenure, and sabbaticals, and the salary merit increases. There are several upcoming events involving faculty's engagement, service and scholarship. Last Saturday, twenty-four faculty participated in the Otterbein Scholars Day welcoming, interviewing, grading, and engaging prospective students. The Faculty Development Scholarship Committee hosted a faculty scholar speaker series. There was an inaugural Career JumpStart for STEM sophomores. The Integrative Studies Lecture speaker, Megan Buskey, will discuss her book, *Ukraine is Not Dead Yet*. The Science Lecture Series will be on Feb. 21 with guest speaker, Dr. Diana Aga. Over the past month, 45 faculty were involved in these events among the many others occurring on campus.

President Comerford recognized **Trustee John Tansey** for being named a fellow of the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB). He is one of seventeen new members.

Student Trustee Report

Trustee Yasmeen Khafagy expressed the students have started the spring semester strong. There have been a few building heat issues during the winter freeze and appreciated facilities efforts to make improvements. **Trustee Mahad Yusuf** noted the student government elections are underway with declaration of candidacy due the end of the month. Meet-the-Candidates evening, elections and inauguration will occur during March and April. Students are engaged in academic conferences, developing new organizations, planning robust student activities and welcoming new Greek members. Student Trustee information will be distributed next week.

Alumni Trustee Report

Trustee Kathryn Stephens shared there are two Alumni Council candidates being interviewed for the alumni trustee position. Recently, the Alumni Council met with President Comerford and **Vice President Michael McGreevey** to receive a campus, Institutional Advancement and Coalition updates. The Alumni Engagement Team will execute a spring survey to engage alumni feedback. Affiliate Alumni Networks and Boards met to discuss ways to improve the alumni volunteer framework and communication. These representatives will be invited to an annual Alumni Council meeting. A new engagement series called "In the Loop with the Alumni Council" provides current topics for alumni education. The Alumni Council celebrated with the December graduates and families. The Alumni Awards Subcommittee have selected seven alumni to receive 2024 Alumni Awards at Homecoming & Family Weekend. Within Institutional Advancement, candidates are being considered for the 2024 Mary B. Thomas '28 Commitment to Otterbein Award.

Board Presentations

A. Coalition for the Common Good (CCG)

Trustee and CCG Board of Director Dan Gifford noted the Board is full and meeting every-other-month. Trustee Casperson will be leaving the CCG Board in June. The Otterbein Governance Committee will consider a new appointment. There is a draft of the president's job description, goals and

KPIs. The \$5M investment fund is being allocated with \$650K committed so far on marketing, staffing, shared service start-up. Another \$261K is allocated for the third quarter.

Academic Program transfer agreements are in place yet Otterbein continues to own graduate curriculum. Graduate Education Accelerated Pathways (GEAP) for Clinical Mental Health and four other programs are set and will be marketed to incoming Otterbein students. The goal is to have ten GEAP programs by the end of the Spring semester.

The shared LMS (learning management system) was selected to allow seamless interfacing between Otterbein and Antioch classes. Antioch's general counsel serves Otterbein as well and eventually will be an employee of the shared services organization. Interim Vice President Gozum is CFO at both institutions through summer and will develop multi-year roll-out of shared services.

Trustee and CCG Board of Director Theresa Harris shared the graduate assistant agreement is in place, allowing Otterbein to keep GAs who currently work on campus. We are continuing to pursue approval from the NCAA allowing Antioch graduate students to play Otterbein athletics. Enrollment FY25 goals for new Antioch central Ohio programs are: Ed.D. (14), CMHC (28) and MBA (24). These goals are on top of existing Antioch enrollment. Joint marketing is being designed to promote the Antioch University brand in central Ohio differentiating it from Antioch College and lifting Otterbein and Coalition brands with it.

There will be an in-person CCG meeting in June at the Seattle campus.

B. Ruffalo Noel Levitz Financial Modeling Report

President Comerford introduced **Katherine Cooper**, Assistant Vice President, Consulting Service for Ruffalo Noel Levitz. Katherine provided an overview of an effective financial aid modeling process, scholarship strategy, and roadmap to plan for 2024 and 2025. Katherine was extremely complimentary of the Otterbein Financial Aid Team. A new initiative to be marketed is a \$2,000 award (that can be included in percent of need met with gift) for students who live outside of 30+ miles from campus and non-Pell eligible. First year model projections shared enrollment and financial impact of change which reflect keeping merit the same as before, adding the Ohio grant and setting need based gift aid models. A transfer model was shown with additional student projections. Looking ahead to 2025 planning, a strategy will be to move high school GPA ranges for merit offerings.

C. New FASFA process

Executive Vice President Jefferson Blackburn-Smith provided a report of the new FASFA process. He noted the new form is working and is easier to complete. It provides new calculation of need offering more students who will be eligible for the Pell Grant. The FASFA data is to be provided in mid-March and is a significant financial delay. Otterbein's team is communicating with families to share pro-active information and offering more time to review financial packages.

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, 2024 as follows:
 - Promotion to Professor to **Jonathan Johnson** (Art & Art History).
 - Promotion to Professor, Non-Tenure-Track to **Kristy Drobney** (Academic Support Center).

- Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor to **Kirk Kayser** (Mathematics & Actuarial Science), **Allison McGrath** (Education), **Alexander Rocklin** (Philosophy & Religion), and **Ashley Simons** (Health & Sport Sciences).
- **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 VI, Section I; Article VII, Section 2) related to Chair and President serving without full voting privileges on all Board committees.
- **Resolution to Renew Trustees**
 - The Board of Trustees approved a resolution to renew second-term trustees: **Dr. Talisa Dixon** and **Greg Jordan** and renew third-year term trustees: **Jim Francis**, **Dan Gifford** and **Mindy Phinney**.

Future Board of Trustees Meeting Date

Saturday, April 27, 2024

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Jefferson Blackburn-Smith, Executive Vice President for Strategic Initiatives, at 614-823-1232 or jblackburnsmith@otterbein.edu.