

Otterbein University

Digital Commons @ Otterbein

Board of Trustees

Governance

4-27-2024

April 27, 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, "April 27, 2024 Board of Trustees Meeting Report" (2024). *Board of Trustees*. 24.
<https://digitalcommons.otterbein.edu/board/24>

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.

Otterbein University
Board Report to the Community
April 27, 2024

Chair's Report

Board Chair Herbert and Vice Chair Harrell met with the Faculty Assembly Executive Committee (FAEC) on Thursday and felt it was an outstanding meeting spending positive time on the merit pay system process. Each faculty assembly member highlighted rewarding moments. Chair Herbert extended her thanks to the committee.

President's Report

President Comerford provided an update on behalf of the Staff Assembly (SA). Their members volunteer to assist with homecoming and commencement with various assignments. Staff Assembly has raised \$6,623.83 through several fundraisers to support colleagues during the holiday, the Promise House, W.A.R.M., and Westerville Caring and Sharing. Additionally, they have provided \$1,550.79 in emergency financial assistance to colleagues. The SA end-of-year luncheon announcing the recipient(s) of the Marilyn Day/Joanne Van Sant Support Staff Award and the Spring 2024 Staff Professional Development Conference will occur in May.

Senior Grace Sims '25, coordinator of the non-partisan group Raise Your Voice, was recognized for being selected to serve this spring as a Democracy Fellow for the national Campus Vote Project, representing Otterbein and the state of Ohio. Senior Abby Vitali '25 led the Otterthon Team to a record \$12,000 donation from their dance marathon to Nationwide Children's Hospital. They met their goals before President Comerford and Vice President Fox had pies in their faces.

President Comerford shared athletic spring teams highlights:

- Men's basketball had their best finish in 19 years. Jack Clement was selected to play in the NABC/Reese's Division III All-Star Game, taking place March 16 in Fort Wayne, Ind.
- Track & Field qualified two for the NCAA Indoor Championships. Sophomore Peyton Proffitt (pole vault) took third for her third All-American award, while freshman Richmond Honkpo (long jump) landed 10th in his first national appearance.
- Coach Rastetter represented NCAA Central Regional Wrestling Coach of the Year. He is now one of eight finalists for Division III National Coach of the Year.
- Two wrestlers (Cale Callahan and Noah Houchins) were regional placers.
- This has been one of the best years ever for Cardinal student athletes in the classroom. Athletes have received the highest number ever of All-OAC Academic awards in the winter season and one of the highest-ever numbers in the Fall.
- Spring OAC tournament play could possibly be in Baseball, W-Lax/M-Lax, W-Tennis/M-Tennis, and M/W Golf.
- George Powell, Baseball coach, obtained his 600th win.

There are two vice president searches occurring with a verbal commitment from the VPBM. A search consultant has been hired for the VPBA/CFO and is moving along well.

President Comerford expressed thanks to:

- Interim Vice President Gozum for serving in three roles - VPBA for Antioch, VPBA for Otterbein and CCG Treasurer. He has developed systems at Otterbein for building future budgets based on actual revenue and spending rather than rolling budgets forward, closing quarterly and cashflow projections.
- The Admission staff and especially the Financial Aid staff given the FAFSA situation.
- Vice President Fox and his committee for the Campus Center Renovation planning.

- President Comerford acknowledged Evelyn Widner '49 who provided an estate gift around \$1.25 million dollars.

President Comerford moved to award emerita status to Dr. Sue Butz.

Whereas, Dr. Sue Butz has demonstrated a conscientious and strong commitment to the University; and

Whereas, she has 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 **Dr. Sue Butz** for her many contributions to the life of Otterbein University over her 18 years and do hereby confer upon her Emerita status.*

Trustee Tansley seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Board Committee Reports

A. Audit and Risk Management Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Kaiser reported the committee met on Thursday, April 25. They heard from Toya Remaly, tax manager from Crowe, who reviewed the June 30, 2023, 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 Audit Committee approved the draft return. The full Board received the return to review by May 3 prior to filing. The return is a public document and does contain a listing of the Board members.

The employee retention tax credit claim is on hold with the federal government. It was noted we will receive interest when the claim is paid out. The auditors do think the claim is valid. The audit for the year ending June 30, 2024 will be performed by Crowe audit staff.

B. Enrollment and Advancement Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Hinson reported the committee met this morning. She recognized the four excellent graduating students who spoke at the luncheon. Each trustee received notecards to write thank you notes for donor gifts. Trustee Hinson reported the crowdfunding campaign *Founder's Day of Giving* which occurred this past week is in its third year. Overall, 709 donors contributed over \$242,992. The Spring fundraising update report included:

TOTAL FY24 Giving:

- Commitments: \$6.7M (\$6.5M goal)
- Cash received: \$5.5M (\$5.8M FY23 to date)

ANNUAL GIVING

- Otterbein Fund and Other Unrestricted/ Budget-Relieving: \$757K (\$1.55M goal)
- Unrestricted Bequests: \$6,000 (to date) and \$1M projected (\$425K goal)
- Founders Day of Giving results: \$243K and 709 donors

Campus Center – Phase II

- \$2M already raised
- \$2M additional goal (FY24-FY25) with \$318K raised to date

Trustees Fisher and Gifford are serving as champions for the Campus Center Family Legacy Campaign. Vice President McGreevey expressed appreciation to all trustees for their giving and announced notable gifts from Bud Yoest '53, Virginia Longmire '55, Mark '78 and Debbie Thresher '77, Trustees Phinney '85 and Nevil '71.

ENROLLMENT REPORT

Vice President Blackburn-Smith shared the impact of the FASFA situation. Otterbein's commitments are up 5% year over year, while 7 out of 10 OAC schools are down 12 – 48% in deposits.

Trustee Hinson thanked everyone for their generosity.

C. Financial Resources Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Bible reported the committee met with Goldman Sachs for a market analysis review of the investments. He noted the investments are up \$10M in the first quarter. Since 2017, the University has invested with Goldman \$62,000,000 in net proceeds from various sources, which has grown to \$141,000,000 in assets as of March 31, 2024. The committee also reviewed the FY24 operating budget and the proposed FY25 operating and capital budgets. There was also discussion on the Campus Center Renovation Phase II cost increase and the sale of properties resolutions.

D. Governance Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Fisher shared the Governance Committee has met several times since January to review potential trustee profiles and applications. He expressed thanks to Vice Presidents McGreevey and Blackburn-Smith for their assistance in presenting a matrix of potential trustees. The committee interviewed candidates to serve as an Otterbein appointee to the Coalition for the Common Good Board, at-large trustees, and Otterbein student, faculty, and alumni trustee positions.

E. Student Success Committee

Trustee and Committee Chair Phinney noted the committee heard a number of updates. Student Affairs counseling services has helped over 700 students, faculty and staff this past Fall. State funding has been received for the conversion of the health center into a well-being center. Federal funding for \$800,000 has also been requested. In the Fall of 2025, there will be several Antioch therapists to assist in the center. Rev. Lucy Kelly, associate pastor of the Church of the Master, is also serving as Otterbein's Director of Faith and Spiritual Life. Student engagement is reviewing Greek life issues and developing a strategic plan. Athletics is working collaboratively with Advancement for strategic commitment for athletic alumni philanthropy giving. The committee endorsed the Campus Center Phase II renovations.

The committee recognized the outstanding faculty achievements noted in the Board packet. The Class of 2023 Undergraduate Outcomes Survey indicated 87.4% graduates are employed in field of choice. The national average is less than 50%. The fall to spring retention rate was 95%.

Provost Sherman Heckler shared a number of faculty achievements, international sabbatical projects, and awarded grants. Dr. Dobson highlighted the "Belonging, Tied Together: Otterbein Now" Plan. Trustee Phinney reviewed the four ideals in the plan.

Constituency Reports

A. Alumni Trustee Report

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

- Trustee Stephens recognized and supported Sonya Higginbotham '99 as the new Alumni Council trustee representative and Tammy Myers '88 as the new director on the Coalition for the Common Good Board.
- "In the Loop" engagement sessions are being hosted by Council members in the areas of "Different Directions for Doctors" and mid-career change.
- There is a 2024 Cardinal Alumni Survey currently open to all members of the Otterbein community to obtain feedback and advice.
- The 2024 Alumni Awards Ceremony will be at Homecoming & Family Week on Friday evening, September 20 in Battelle Fine Arts Center in conjunction with Board activities that day.
- Alumni Affinity Networks & Boards will have a liaison to the Alumni Council to help increase communication and share information, feedback and needs for their respective groups. The Young Alumni Board has grown to 26 members doubling membership since 2020.
- The Alumni Council will meet on Saturday, April 27 in conjunction with the Toast to the Class of 2024 and attend the Noble Transitions Ceremony.
- Members of the Alumni Council agreed to sponsor a Founders Day of Giving Challenge to inspire fellow alumni to support the Day.

Faculty Trustee Report

Trustee Millsap shared the focus of Faculty Assembly (FA) has been to continue to fine tune the merit process. With the passing of Dr. Chris Reynolds, the search for an Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs has begun. For the last couple years, the faculty have been working with Academic Affairs on revising how departments conduct their departmental reviews which happen every five years. The new process will continue to be monitored by the Planning Committee.

The Faculty Scholar Development Committee has been working hard to increase faculty awareness of funding opportunities and connecting the faculty with the grants office and other financial resources available to assist in their scholarship and other professional development opportunities. This year they have awarded \$30,290.00 from 31 requests. Summer research grants of \$1,000 each are currently being awarded.

Trustee Tansey identified ways faculty have been serving the institution besides teaching. Faculty have been involved with the search for the new Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs, Vice President for Enrollment Management and search committees for faculty vacancies. In addition, faculty have also been involved in recruiting new incoming freshmen to the university through one-on-one meetings as well as admissions recruiting events. Faculty play a central role in Otterbein's governance structure, and have just wrapped up their annual elections. This year roughly 126 faculty serve on faculty committees within the governance structure. These numbers do not include those serving on Ad hoc committees, doing external service for a professional organization, service to a department, or service to programs, or student groups on campus.

Several ad hoc committees have been established to examine specific questions related to policies and practices. One of the committees is examining faculty/student evaluation efforts. A second ad hoc committee is examining how faculty lines have been awarded.

Otterbein is changing the learning management system (LMS) from Blackboard to Brightspace. Antioch University will use Brightspace and having a common platform will make it easier for students and faculty who are taking courses offered by either institution.

Trustee Millsap expressed gratitude for Trustee Tansey's service to the Board. Chair Herbert commented that the report was very informative and important for us to understand the role of a faculty member.

Student Trustee Report

Trustee Yusuf highlighted students and administration collaborated through two initiatives. Student government worked with Institutional Advancement to reimagine the annual Donor Mixer. Students provided Campus Center Renovation student feedback event sponsored by the Dining Advisory Board, a joint committee of both students and advisors with Parkhurst Dining Service. OUSG updated their constitution and bylaws which was passed by the University Senate. There were 32 student senators inaugurated on April 11. OUSG used all available funds in their budget by the start of March.

Trustee Khafagy shared the student government reached out to the Uptown business area to offer and suggest potential student discounts and familiarized businesses with Otterbein and OUSG. Students, faculty, and staff as well as community members came to campus and watched the solar eclipse on April 8. Trustee Khafagy thanked Dr. Paul Wendel, his students, and the Student Affairs staff who coordinated the overwhelmingly successful event.

Trustee Yusuf thanked Trustee Khafagy for serving as the student trustee.

Board Action

The following actions were taken by the Board of Trustees:

- **Resolution to Accept the Graduating Class of 2024**
 - The Board of Trustees approved a resolution to accept the graduating class of 2024 as presented by President Comerford. It was noted that a total of 532 degrees would be awarded including 446 bachelor's, 60 master's, and 26 doctorate degrees.
- **Resolution for Honorary Degrees**
 - The Board of Trustees approved a resolution to present a Doctorate of Humane Letters to the 2024 Graduate Commencement Speaker, Dwight Smith, Founder, President & CEO, (retired) of Sophisticated Systems, Inc.
- **Resolution to Accept the 2024 Mary B. Thomas Commitment to Otterbein Award**
 - The Board of Trustees approved a resolution to present The Austin E. Knowlton Foundation as the next recipient of the Mary B. Thomas '28 Commitment to Otterbein Award.
- **Resolution to Adopt the 2024-25 (FY25) Operating Budget**
 - The Board of Trustees approved a resolution to adopt the proposed 2024-25 (FY25) operating budget with total operating revenues at \$64,261,201.
- **Resolution to Approve University Capital Budget Allocation for 2024-25 (FY25)**
 - The Board of Trustees approved the proposed 2024-2025 (FY25) Capital Budget Allocation of \$1,495,585.
- **Resolution to Approve Campus Center Renovation Phase II Cost Increase**
 - The Board of Trustees authorized and instructed the Otterbein University Administration to proceed with the Campus Center Renovation Phase II project, with a not to exceed cost of \$7,385,589.00.
- **Resolution to Authorize Otterbein University to Sell Properties**
 - The Board of Trustees approved a resolution to authorize Otterbein University to sell 111 W. Park Street and 194 W. Main Street, Westerville, Ohio, 43081.

- **Resolution to Appoint representative to the Coalition to the Common Good Board of Directors**
 - The Board of Trustees approved a resolution to appoint **Tammy Myers `88** to serve as the Otterbein representative on the Coalition to the Common Good Board of Directors.

- **Resolution to Appoint New Trustees**
 - The Board of Trustees approved a resolution to appoint:
 - **Sonya Higginbotham `98** (alumni trustee for a three-year term),
 - **Dr. Michael Hudoba** (faculty trustee for a three-year term),
 - **Julianna Grubich`26** (student trustee for a two-year term),
 - **Jon Hargis `79** (at-large for a three-year term), and
 - **Rev. John Edgar** (at-large for a three-year term).

- **Resolution to Appoint new Board officers for a new three-year term**
 - The Board approved the new Board officers for a three-year term:
 - **Eddie Harrell `94**, Chair
 - **Theresa Harris**, Vice Chair
 - **Mechelle Buys du Plessis**, Secretary

Board Special Recognition

The Board of Trustees concluded the meeting by recognizing and thanking departing Trustees **April Casperson `03**, (2021 – 2024), **Cheryl Herbert** (2010 – 2024), **Yasmeen Khafagy `25** (2023 – 2024), **Kathryn Stephens `97** (2021 – 2024), **John Tansey** (2021 – 2024), and **Al Waterhouse `82** (2007 – 2023).

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.

2024-2025 Board of Trustee Meetings

- Friday, August 2, 2024, **virtual** – 9:00 – 10:30 am
- Friday, September 20, 2024, **in-person meeting**: 8:30 – 11am committee meetings, 11 am – 4 pm Board meeting; Board Reception/Dinner, 5:30 pm
- Saturday, September 21, 2024 Homecoming & Family Weekend
- Friday, December 6, 2024, **virtual** – 9:00 – 10:30 am
- Friday, February 7, 2025, **virtual** – 9:00 am -12 pm
- Friday, May 2, 2025 –Welcome Reception 4:00 pm
- Saturday, May 3, 2025, **in-person meeting**: 8:30 am – 11 am committee meetings, 11 am – 3 pm Board meeting; Board Reception/Dinner, 4:00 pm
- Sunday, May 4, 2025 Commencement Day