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### September 20, 2024 Board of Trustees Meeting Report

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Otterbein University  
Board of Trustees Meeting Report  
September 20, 2024

**Chair's Report**

Board Chair Harrell called the meeting to order and welcomed Emeriti Trustees and new trustees to the Board meeting. He mentioned the executive committee met earlier this week to review many topics on today's agenda. He met with the Faculty Assembly Executive Committee yesterday with good dialogue around merit pay, faculty retention, health of the organization, student retention, and the Coalition for the Common Good (CCG).

**President's Report**

President Comerford provided a CCG update. The Antioch Chancellor is retiring and a search committee has been organized. The graduate programs are transitioning. A dean of nursing and health sciences has been hired and working towards accreditation in the graduate program. The shared services organization is reviewing combined IT services.

President Comerford introduced Jeff Nutter, new CFO and Vice President for Business Affairs, who will begin on September 30. He thanked Allan Gozum who has served as the interim CFO. Kirk Carlson was welcomed as the new Vice President for Enrollment Management. Michael McGreevey was noted for his years of service as Vice President for Institutional Advancement (VPIA) now serving as the Special Assistant to the President for Principal Gifts and Special Campaigns. Greg Lott, Athletic Director, is the chair of the VPIA search committee. The incoming first-year class increased 12% over last year and new adult and transfer students increased by 20%. President Comerford recognized the athletic coaches who have 70 more student athletes than last year. The Higher Learning Commission conducted their ten-year review on September 9 and 10. They had positive remarks and indicated we have done a lot of work in the last ten years. Otterbein has received the HHMI grant to assist underrepresented students in the STEM programs and the Title III grant providing support staff on campus for coaching high risk students.

**Board Committee Reports**

**Audit & Risk Management Committee**

Trustee and Committee Chair Kaiser reported the committee met this morning. He thanked Interim CFO Gozum and his staff who supported the presentations. The committee reviewed minutes of April 25 and heard a summary of the 403B retirement 403B audit review by White, Schaeffer and Hackett. The committee heard an IT audit review by Jared Wallace, Interim CIO with Ellucian, and campus preparedness for Fall 2024 update from Steve Shipp, Risk Management Director. The committee reviewed the committee charter which was approved. The committee did approve the drafted audit report and the 5500 Form to be filed by October 15. Emeriti Trustee Huston asked if the critical information in Otterbein system is encrypted. It was reported that information is encrypted in transit (which is when data is being transmitted between different devices or locations across a network).

**Enrollment and Advancement Committee**

Special Assistant McGreevey shared the committee heard and discussed information provided by the Advancement Team. McGreevey noted key metric takeaways from FY24 and plans for FY25. The introduction of new and expanded giving opportunities in the second half of FY24 saw early positive response, especially in the scholarship/financial aid area. The development team has set aggressive goals for the year, including \$7.1M in commitments. The engagement team is focused on a changing landscape of volunteer engagement and hosted events.

Key recommendations from the JGA assessment have been or are in process of implementation. The process of selecting a new CRM is currently in a pause mode as we consider opportunities to collaborate with the CCG and await the transition to a new vice president. The committee received an update on two special fundraising initiatives both with a major gift appeal strategy.

- **Rike Center** (new court floor and bleachers): \$140K raised to date toward \$250K fundraising goal. Several major gift conversations underway.
- **Campus Center Phase II** – the dining experience: \$714K raised since July 2023 to date toward \$2M goal with many conversations underway or planned this year. Focus is on legacy families and organizations. Total raised for entire Campus Center to date is \$5.2M.

Executive Vice President Blackburn-Smith noted it was a strong enrollment year with an increase in incoming and upperclassmen students plus more students living on campus. There was an increase in men, students outside the central Ohio, though a decrease of Columbus City School students and students of color. The census report of enrolled students is 2,332. There was a significant increase of Pell eligible students noted at 44% of the incoming class. The graduate enrollment is in transition to Antioch University with a planned 50% decrease from last year. There is a decline in retention of first year students of almost 3% which will be examined. There will be new initiatives to drive enrollment goals and the merit scholarship structure. The committee approved the committee charter.

### **Governance Committee**

Trustee and Committee Chair Fisher shared the committee talked about the new trustee process to replace trustees leaving and the mentoring program for new trustees who were assigned a trustee mentor. The committee reviewed the current trustee and prospective trustee matrix. Trustees will be sent in January 2025 a trustee self-assessment for feedback of their Board experience.

### **Financial Resources Committee**

Trustee Yusuf shared that Trustee Bible attended the Otterbein University Student Government (OUSG) general assembly meeting to discuss university investments. The OUSG president met with Trustee Bible and Interim CFO Gozum to gain specific understanding of the University's investments. Trustee and Committee Chair Bible noted the committee heard from Charlie McFarland from Antioch who shared growth opportunities for the CCG. Rodney Fowles, CIO from Antioch, shared information on the shared services concept. The budget was shared and noted it is being worked through the audit process. There are four plots on the Braun Farm. Rightway Medical has expressed interested on one of the four plots. Trustee Bible moved Resolution 25-01 to authorize Otterbein University to negotiate sale of property located at the corner of Cooper Road and Collegeview Road in Westerville, Ohio. Trustee Gifford seconded the motion. The motion was approved. Trustee Bible indicated the committee met with Goldman Sachs. Before the federal rate cut of this week, the endowment was at \$145M.

### **Student Success Committee**

Trustee and Committee Chair Phinney stated the committee approved their charter. They heard an update from CDO Dobson noting there is a focus on first generation students. She referred the trustees to the committee's Board packet materials which highlighted new faculty and faculty achievements. The committee acknowledged the work of Dr. Carrigan Hayes and Dr. Michelle Acker. The new faculty list was reviewed along with the replacement process for faculty. There is intentional recruitment strategy of diverse faculty. Trustee Phinney noted receipt of the Title III Grant & Healthy Minds Grant, a successful HLC visit, Campus Center renovations with a January 2025 completion, and innovation programs providing an e-sports arena at the Point and women's wrestling on campus. Student Affairs is obtaining student's input on residence housing for the future. Athletics had fantastic achievements in academic performance and was noted in the top third of Division III. The committee heard about educational and training programs around the fall election and the support of student's mental health through the fall semester. There are numerous interfaith programs being offered.

### **Constituency Reports**

#### **Alumni Trustee Report**

Trustee Higginbotham reported the Alumni Council met in August adding ten new members to tally twenty-five alumni on the council. There is an increase in the council's diversity and out-of-state participation. The council learned about Otterbein's enrollment, the Lifelong Learning Community coordinated by faculty emerita Dr. Alison Prindle, and received a campus update from President Comerford. The Alumni in the Loop program is on October

15 featuring six alumni physicians with 30 Otterbein students signed up to participate. The Alumni Awards Ceremony will be held this evening at the Point. Trustee Higginbotham extended compliments to Dana Viglietta, Executive Director of Engagement.

### **Faculty Trustee Report**

Trustee Mike Hudoba introduced himself. He shared that many faculty members are focusing on recruitment and retention, specifically with a number of external grants. Dr. John Tansey leads a team with the HHMI grant, focusing on retention of underrepresented groups in first-year STEM courses. Faculty and staff have worked to submit a new Choose Ohio First grant for a number of disciplines to provide more opportunities for future students. Faculty, along with the hard-working staff members of Student Success and Career Development, have been organizing and running program-specific Career Jumpstart events in the departments of Business/Communication and Engineering/Computer Science.

Trustee Hudoba provided Trustee Millsap's report. The faculty continues to fine tune and address elements of the merit raise increase. Faculty are evaluated on teaching, scholarship, and service. The merit raise process has brought attention to the need for a definition of service. We continue to discuss and refine the student evaluation process of faculty teaching. This has been a very robust discussion between faculty and students on how to use this process so that both students and faculty benefit from the process. Updates to the Faculty Manual are being discussed on how librarians fit into the evaluation and merit process. We are also working on adding the Merit Review Committee as a permanent committee to the Manual. The proposed READY Day, which has faculty support, is being discussed in terms of how it will affect the academic calendar. Overall, it has been a good start to the academic year.

### **Student Trustee Report**

Trustee Yusuf highlighted the student vice-chair program within the governance committee. OUSG identified a campus commissioner will lead more concentrated initiatives. This year, the commissioner is chiefly committed to fostering safety initiatives for students in the Fall semester. OUSG is sponsoring a Town Hall on October 24 to foster free speech in a respectful manner.

Trustee Grubich recognized OUSG Vice President Rowan Ratvasky for his coordination of the new student senators process and elections. There were 243 voters which doubled the number of voters in the Spring senator election. The student senators will be inaugurated on October 3. Athletics is providing virtual session for athletes on the topics of mental health and mindfulness.

### **Board Presentations**

Faculty sabbatical poster presentations were provided by Professors Phyllis Burn, Daniel Cho, LoriKay Harvey, Amanda Kline, Pei Pei and Kerry Strayer.

The All-Committee Meeting of the Board heard presentations on the case for a campaign, Belonging Plan and the fall political landscape preparations.

### **Board Action**

The following action was taken by the Board of Trustees:

- The Board of Trustees approved a motion to authorize Otterbein University to negotiate sale of property located at the corner of Cooper Road and Collegeview Road in Westerville, Ohio.

### **Future Board of Trustees Meeting Dates**

Friday, December 6, 2024, **virtual** – 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Friday, February 7, 2025, **virtual** – 9:00 am – 12:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 3, 2025, **in-person meeting**: 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, May 4, 2025 Commencement Day