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University Update - September 6, 2013

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Otterbein University
University Update: Agenda for Academic Year 2013-2014
President Kathy A. Krendl
September 6, 2013

Well, we did it! *You* did it! Classes have started, residence halls are occupied, and our quiet peaceful village is filled with the sounds of autumn and student voices once again! Congratulations on a successful opening of a new academic year. We started with a series of events to welcome everyone back. It began with our Welcome Back Kickoff on Monday, August 19th, which included an invitation to "Join the Conversation" around Otterbein's identity as a model community. It carried on through the Fall Faculty Conference (*Becoming a Model Community*), where 174 faculty shared teaching and learning innovations and extended through the Freshman Induction on Thursday, August 22nd, with the assurance from our Master Teacher, Professor Jeff Demas, that our students are on top of the world. The week culminated in the Saturday morning Community Plunge on August 24th. It was wonderful to have 350 staff, faculty, and students join together to celebrate Otterbein's commitment to community engagement by working with 23 agencies and organizations around central Ohio.

As classes get under way and we move into the academic year, it is important that we continue to join the conversation beyond our initial celebrations of Otterbein's unique character and begin to think about what it means to be a model higher education community in our day-to-day relationships and operations. Be sure to mark your calendar for Friday, September 27th and join me in the newly renovated 1847 Room in the Campus Center from 12:00 – 1:00 pm to share your ideas and further discuss what being a model community means to you! If you are unable to attend, there's always the option of submitting your suggestions via greatideas@otterbein.edu. We're already starting to receive suggestions from folks.

Strategic Planning – Our Institutional Priorities

Progress to date has focused on four Institutional Priorities (*Invest in Human Resources, Strengthen Financial Resources, Develop a Strategic Enrollment Plan, and Develop New Graduate and Adult Programs*). The highest priority throughout the budget planning process this past year was to dedicate significant financial resources to our investment in human resources (results of the impact of these investments are included below). In addition, the Otterbein Board of Trustees recognized progress in strategic enrollment management and in academic program development with the completion of both the enrollment and academic plans. They accepted the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, which outlined enrollment goals through 2020, and the Academic Plan, which outlined planning processes and future directions for new academic programs. In the implementation phase of these two priorities, the Board adopted new language to reflect progress in these areas. With the completion of these plans these two priorities will now transition to "*Enhance Student Success*" and "*Strengthen Academic Excellence*." Progress on these priorities has laid the foundation for setting our aspirations to become a model higher education community in motion.

Invest In Human Resources

The University is pleased to announce compensation adjustments were made for 129 of our colleagues as part of the multi-year strategy to improve compensation. In addition to the annual continued good service increase, supplemental adjustments were made for 63 faculty, 35 hourly staff and 31 administrators. Additional details regarding the compensation adjustments and other efforts of the Total Compensation Committee are forthcoming. The Total Compensation Committee held its first meeting of the academic year on Thursday, September 5th and will spend the next month preparing this

year's report. We anticipate the release of the report in mid-to-late October and will host open forum sessions for each employee group in late October/early November, similar to last year's schedule.

Improve Financial Strength

Precipitated by the development of various strategic plan components, including the Academic, Strategic Enrollment, Campaign Feasibility, and Campus Master Plans, the University is performing an in-depth assessment of the financial resource requirements and potential strategies to support successful implementation of each plan. A key activity this Fall is preparation of feasibility studies for the Campus Center and our property on 60 Collegeview. During this collaborative process, the University will envision the goals and purposes to be fulfilled in each space, while clarifying the resources required to achieve them. Please look for more information and opportunities to engage in the near future.

Enhance Student Success

The Board's adoption of the enrollment plan allows Otterbein to change the focus of one of our Strategic Priorities from the development of the plan to the core concept of the enrollment plan: *Enhance Student Success*. The enrollment plan is designed to enhance student success as well as improve Otterbein's financial strength. Although the first year of the plan is just beginning implementation, reallocation of resources within the division allowed for new recruitment initiatives and messaging that resulted in several important changes in the entering freshman class profile: they are better prepared academically; it is a larger class than last year's entering class; and although we won't have final numbers until census, we expect the number of non-resident freshmen to increase by approximately 40%. Complete data on the entering class will be released this fall in the fall census report.

Strengthen Academic Excellence

Progress in the academic plan over the summer focused on facilities, program development and considerable work related to accreditation. The transformation of the first floor of Courtright Memorial Library into a 21st century Learning and Scholarship Commons was completed just in time for the opening of the semester. In addition, faculty planning for consideration of a possible Engineering major is well under way. On the accreditation front, the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program received its first time maximum 5-year accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. And four academic departments--Religion and Philosophy; Health and Sport Sciences; Psychology; Biochemistry and Molecular Biology--successfully completed their long-range program development reports; these serve as assessment and planning tools as well as providing models for our accreditation review.

Next Steps

In closing, it's important to note that the four institutional priorities will continue to guide our planning and decision-making as we set our aspirations for becoming a model higher education community in motion. One topic of continuing conversation in focusing on these priorities will be discussions of our current organizational structures. An example that has surfaced over the past year related to the *Enhance Student Success* priority is the idea of co-locating and integrating Student Accounts and Financial Aid over time for the purpose of improving communication and service to our students. The Cabinet will be having ongoing conversations about alignment of operational and administrative functions with our institutional priorities as we work toward achieving our vision of becoming nationally recognized as a model community of educators, leaders and learners who set the pace for higher education and contribute to the common good.

As always, if you have questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me or the vice president of your division. Also, I have been reviewing my notes from the summer coffees and will be asking for volunteers to help with organizing and implementing some of the initiatives that were suggested. Topics like identifying and publicizing Spirit Days; organizing affinity groups around areas of common interest, and creating additional informal gathering spaces around campus. These are just some starting points to consider. I have many pages of notes to review, but these topics gathered lots of interest in several of the discussions. If any of these spark your interest, let me know. Meanwhile, we'll be sending out more invitations to continue the conversation and then to take action.

Speaking of Contributing to the Common Good

September is Hunger Action Month. Some of you may know that I have the honor of serving on the Board of the Westerville Area Resource Ministry (WARM), so this topic is close to my heart. On Sunday, September 15, from noon until 7:00 pm, you're invited to join the Westerville area community for the Great Westerville Food Truck Fest located across from the Westerville Community Center at Nationwide Children's Close to Home Surgery Center, 455 Executive Campus Drive. It promises to be a full day of family time featuring live music, children's activities, a variety of food truck vendors and the main event - raising awareness about hunger issues by uniting the community to package 10,000 meal packages, the equivalent of 20,000 meals, to be distributed throughout Westerville! Learn more about it by visiting facebook.com/TheGreatWestervilleFoodTruckFest. There will be a lot of activity in Westerville as Otterbein once again hosts the Columbus Suburban College that day as well!

Finally, don't forget that for the rest of August and September, if you bring your Join the Conversation coffee mug that you received at the Welcome Back Kick-off to the Roost or the OtterBean you'll get a cup of coffee or tea for free. For those who were unable to attend the Welcome Back Kick-off, please stop by the President's Office - a coffee mug is waiting for you.