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University Update - February 2019

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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February 6, 2019

Dear Colleagues,

Let's hope last week's weather will prove a rare phenomenon. I truly hate to cancel classes and I am sorry if that has thrown you off your work or teaching rhythm. This week feels like spring already, but we know that winter is likely not done with us yet – despite Punxsutawney Phil's prediction.

Food Service

It has been over 15 years since Otterbein bid its food service contract. I believe regularly bidding our services is a good way to ensure our pricing is fair and our service reflects current best practices. To that end, we will be issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for food services shortly. This is no reflection on Bon Appetite's performance, just a normal thing to do on a regular basis. Vice President and Dean for Student Affairs Bob Gatti is leading the process along with a committee appointed to review the proposals.

The RFP will include the Café at The Point and the right to bid on (but not necessarily be selected for) all catering on campus. It will also include a one-year temporary plan while the Campus Center is off-line for renovations. Finally, it will protect the jobs of all our dining services hourly staff including employees at The Point Café. These processes often result in some exciting new ideas, so I am looking forward to it!

Custodial Services

Speaking of bidding our contracts on a routine basis, our out-sourced custodial service was also bid and we are in the middle of the process now. The new contract will include more regular deep cleaning services to ensure all areas of campus are not just clean, but look good. As always, please let Facilities know if there are areas of concern.

Columbus State

You may know that Columbus State has been offering non-degree programs in Westerville for many years. We already have many partnerships with Columbus State to ensure access and

affordability for students to attend Otterbein. Most notable is our Dual Admission program that launched this fall and has over 30 students already enrolled.

We are in early discussions with Columbus State on how to build on our partnership and create a new model of private/public collaboration that can be a national model. The goal will be to build pipeline programs for students who start at Columbus State to seamlessly move towards Bachelor's and even Master's Degree programs at Otterbein. This may involve a number of academic programs, facilities, and services. Know that you may be contacted in the coming months as we consider this exciting possibility to serve more students.

Events and Rentals

Otterbein's campus is like many other college campuses – it is built for peak usage during weekdays 32 weeks per year. Clearly, we would benefit from making it available (for a fee of course!) beyond those periods to outside groups. The Point was built with this in mind and is already realizing revenue from rentals.

The problem is we are not arranged to be very “customer friendly” if a group wants to rent space on our campus. Different buildings and outdoor spaces are controlled by different offices, rates and billing vary widely, and food service and facilities set-up are not integrated into the rental process. In other words, if you want to rent our space, we make you work hard to do it!

I would like to explore the centralization of this function into an office that can be the “one-stop shop” for rentals and signature event support. We could actively seek revenue growth opportunities that take advantage of our existing assets. Of course, this will take some significant changes to internal processes like scheduling, marketing, and billing.

To that end, I have asked Matthew D'Oyly, Director of Constituent Communication and Philanthropic Programs, to begin this work as a part-time temporary assignment working with Vice President and Chief of Staff Kristi Robbins. I hope we can solve these internal issues and then consider how we permanently create such a “one-stop shop.” I am sure Matthew will be in touch with many of you as we begin this work.

Board Meeting

Finally, our Board will be back on campus for their meeting this Friday and Saturday. Significant items on the agenda include our relationship with the United Methodist Church as they consider a new stand on human sexuality, a closing report on the STAND fundraising campaign and plans for the Campus Center fundraising, early thoughts on the purpose of some of our non-academic property, the *Only Otterbein* marketing campaign, and the upcoming Higher Learning Commission review. They will also hear from a student panel and the faculty in the Master of Science in Allied Health program. We will also ask their approval for emeritus status for some recent and future retirees, an honorary degree for our commencement speaker (AEP CEO Nick Akins), and faculty sabbaticals. Trustees will also attend a special event at The Point as we thank leadership level donors and officially dedicate several named spaces.

We will get out a summary of the meeting soon after its conclusion. There are also two open-format (we can talk about whatever you want!) town halls coming up on February 13 and April 1 from 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm in Roush Hall 114 to talk more.

Thanks again for all you do and enjoy the warm snap!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Comerford', written in a cursive style.

John Comerford, Ph.D.
President