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5-28-2019

### University Update- May 2019

Academic Affairs

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#### Recommended Citation

Affairs, Academic, "University Update- May 2019" (2019). *University Updates & Communications from the University President*. 68.

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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May 28, 2019

Dear Colleagues,

The weather finally feels like summer and so does campus. When I see how beautiful our campus looks this time of year, I am reminded that this is not by accident. Our facilities and grounds crews do a wonderful job and I am very thankful for their work.

There is still much going on over the summer months, so here are a few updates:

#### Athletics Successes

In case you have not heard, the Otterbein Cardinals finished the year strong with OAC Championships in Baseball (including George Powell's 500<sup>th</sup> win as coach!), Softball, and Men's Golf. That totals a remarkable eight OAC championships including Baseball, Men's Cross Country, Women's Cross Country, Men's Golf, Women's Soccer, Softball, Women's Indoor Track, and Women's Volleyball and six NCAA tournament appearances. Also, for the first time in Otterbein history we won the Women's OAC All-Sports Trophy! This is especially impressive given our lack of swimming programs. Our student-athletes also maintained a 3.338 GPA, which is higher than the all-Otterbein average. Congrats to our Athletics staff, coaches, and outstanding student-athletes!

#### Enrollment

Summer undergraduate enrollment is down significantly (28 students vs. 54 last year). This is clearly an area of opportunity for us. Graduate enrollment, however, is positive with a decrease in students (235 vs. 262) and an increase in hours (1467 vs. 1270).

Fall is also coming into clearer view with 650 first-year confirmations (up 6%), led by growth in Pell-eligible students. It is still early, but we also have 71 adult/transfer undergraduate confirmations, which is seven more than this point last year. Graduate enrollments are especially early and stand at 29 confirmations, up two.

We have gotten data from most other Ohio privates and we are part of a minority that will see growth in the fall. We expect our tuition discount rate to exceed the budget, but hope that the headcount growth will cover this expense. More to come as we get closer.

## Alloy

As I mentioned in an early update, we were exploring a partnership with Alloy Consulting to jointly deliver professional development programs in their client companies (all Fortune 1000 firms). These are not credit-bearing, but will carry the Otterbein “brand” and be vetted by the Curriculum Committee.

I am pleased to say we have finalized a pilot program agreement with Alloy for up to two years or three courses. We will share revenue through this period and given our success will build it up from there. I believe there will be a significant market for such programs.

## Strategic Planning

We have scheduled a two-day retreat in June with Cabinet and the leaders of Faculty Assembly, Staff Assembly, and Student Government) to jump-start the new strategic planning process. We will work out more details for the new process that will allow any member of our campus community to propose strategic initiatives. We will then have each division and assembly cover their perceived strengths and weaknesses. This will lead us to draft high-level goals for the plan.

All this will be presented in draft form in the fall so that everyone on campus can have input. I just find it best to have such a conversation with a draft to work from.

## UMC

Finally, in what feels like a never-ending saga, the future of our relationship with the United Methodist Church continues to be on my mind. Our Board issued an official “dissent” from the Church’s new discriminatory policies in late April. Since then, you may have seen that Baldwin-Wallace and Mount Union have disaffiliated from the Church and Ohio Wesleyan is taking a one-year “pause.” Interestingly, no institutions outside of Ohio have changed their affiliation.

I feel comfortable that we have made Otterbein’s values around diversity and inclusion clear. I do not know how long we should wait to see change in the Church, but I remain hopeful that an inclusive form of Methodism will emerge.

Thank you all for all you do!

Sincerely,

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

John Comerford, Ph.D.  
President