

# THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON



**LUIS M. PROENZA**  
**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**

November 14, 2011

Members of the University Community

I am pleased, Dear Colleagues . . .

. . . to forward for your information a summary of actions approved by The University of Akron's Board of Trustees at its regular meeting on October 26, 2011.

## **Presentation to the Board**

Dr. Sherman gave a presentation on Optimizing Student Success: Accountability to Students, State and Ourselves. Noting that 20 percent of Ohio students who have taken the ACT are not prepared for college level coursework and an additional 30 percent of Ohio students require intensive academic support, Dr. Sherman said the disparity in college preparedness leads us to identify students in one of three academic preparedness levels: college ready, emergent, or preparatory. By addressing student preparedness levels with specific programs and policies, we will best be able to guide current students and university applicants on a trajectory that will optimize their academic and professional success.

## **Finance & Administration Committee**

### 1. Personnel Actions

The personnel transactions approved by Trustees as amended are posted online at <http://www.uakron.edu/president/docs/Personnel-transactions-October2011.pdf>.

### 2. Amendment to The University of Akron Alternative Retirement Plan and The University of Akron 403(b) Retirement Plan

The Board authorized the administration to make technical amendments, required by the IRS, to both The University of Akron Alternative Retirement Plan and the 403(b) Plan to bring them into compliance with the Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax Act of 2008; the Pension Protection Act of 2006; and the Worker, Retiree, and Employer Recovery Act of 2008. The Board also authorized an officer of the University to adopt future technical amendments to the Alternative

Retirement Plan and the 403(b) Plan upon prior written notification by the Vice President and General Counsel to the President and Chief Financial Officer without the necessity of further resolutions of the Board.

3. Approved Purchases for more than \$350,000

- \$734,362 per year (the total will vary depending on the amount of coverage selected) to the Minnesota Life Insurance Company (via the IUC-PG) for the University's life and AD&D insurance programs. The rate offered by Minnesota Life Insurance Company is lower than the University's current rate, is guaranteed for three years, and should be more stable because of the greater volume represented through the IUC-PG.

4. Cumulative Gift and Grant Income Report for August 2011

For August 2011, total giving was \$4.5 million, 8 percent less than the \$4.9 million received for August 2010 and 23 percent more than the five-year average of \$3.5 million. The number of gifts decreased, from 2,080 for August 2010 to 1,930 gifts for this fiscal year to date, though continued growth is expected.

5. Honorary Degree—Mr. James D. Oelschlager

In appreciation and recognition of his noteworthy achievements, valued leadership and outstanding service to his community and the University, James D. Oelschlager will be awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree. Mr. Oelschlager, an outstanding community leader who is the founder and CEO of the independent equity investment company, Oak Associates, Ltd., has donated more than \$16.5 million to the University.

6. Honorary Degree—Mrs. Margaret F. Donovan

In appreciation and recognition of her tremendous vision, commitment and support for expanding professional opportunities for women, advancing innovation in engineering and ensuring continued student success at The University of Akron, Mrs. Margaret F. Donovan will be awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree. Mrs. Donovan is a generous benefactor of the University, who established the Margaret F. Donovan Chair for Women in Engineering, the first chair of its kind in the United States, in addition to funding scholarships and facilities focused on women and engineering.

**Academic Issues & Student Success Committee**

1. Research Grants and Sponsored Programs Reports, July-September 2011

For July-September 2011, funding for externally funded research and other sponsored programs was \$25,967,828 for 160 projects. For July-September 2010, funding was \$10,528,233 for 132 projects. For July-September 2011, no patents were issued, two patent applications were filed, and nine disclosures were submitted. For July-September 2010, two patents were issued, six patent applications were filed, and 22 disclosures were submitted.

**Rules Committee**

1. O.A.C. 3359-1-10, Advisory Trustees

This new rule creates and describes the position of Advisory Trustee to permit the University to take advantage of the talents, resources and experiences of individuals who may or may not be residents of the state of Ohio. A maximum of three Advisory Trustees will be selected and removed by a majority vote of the Board and will be eligible for appointment to no more than two consecutive three-year terms totaling no more than six years. They will have no voting privileges and cannot serve as Board officers or committee chairs, but will otherwise participate in all board activities, including committee membership. Advisory Trustees will not be compensated but will be eligible for reimbursement of travel and reasonable and necessary expenses related to their service on the Board.

2. O.A.C. 3359-2-02, Organization of Instruction

The revisions to this rule reflect the naming of the new health college that includes a School of Nursing as well as the extant schools of the College of Health Sciences and Human Services. Section (E) also is modified to be consistent with the language in the Collective Bargaining Agreement with Akron-AAUP.

3. O.A.C. 3359-20-02, Organization of the University

To streamline rules and avoid redundancy, this rule will be rescinded. Each provision in this rule is either covered by the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Akron-AAUP or by language in other rules.

4. O.A.C. 3359-20-03, The Faculty: General Personnel Policies

This rule also will be rescinded, as each provision in the rule is either covered by the Collective Bargaining Agreement with Akron-AAUP, is being transferred to Rule 3359-9-02, or is addressed in other rules.

5. O.A.C. 3359-9-02, General Academic and Administrative Personnel Matters

The applicable provisions from Rule 3359-20-03, which is being rescinded, are consolidated into this rule as part of the continuing effort to streamline the University rules. In addition, the revisions of this rule eliminate mandatory retirement provisions that had not been implemented for decades.

6. O.A.C. 3359-20-03.4, Concluding University Employment

This rule is being updated to remove language covered by the Collective Bargaining Agreement with Akron-AAUP or provisions in other University rules in an effort to avoid redundancy and inconsistency.

7. O.A.C. 3359-43-01, Constitution

This rule is being revised to change the name of the Associated Student Government to Undergraduate Student Government. In addition, the Constitution has been revised to satisfy the

changing needs in the organization. All of the modifications have been approved by the representative committees and through formal action of the undergraduate student government.

### **New Business**

#### 1. Additional Days of Paid Leave

Dr. Proenza recommended that the Board grant three additional days of paid leave to staff and contract professionals between the Christmas and New Year holidays in recognition of the significant and collective efforts of those employees in contributing to the institution's growth and student success through their supporting roles. The University already was scheduled to be closed on December 24-27, 2011, and January 2, 2012, for holiday observances. With the additional three days, most of the University—with the exception of facilities and personnel required to conduct previously scheduled events and maintain essential physical infrastructure and safety—will be closed on December 24, 2011-January 2, 2012, allowing savings in utility and other operational costs. Past experience indicates that closing for a slightly longer period should not inconvenience students.

### **Notes**

#### 1. President's Report

After noting noted that I and Vice Chair Pogue would excuse ourselves early to attend a meeting of the Ohio Business Roundtable, I said it merits our concerted effort to better educate colleagues around the state on the kinds of analyses that we have made here at The University of Akron so that these complex issues are better understood and developed without prejudice to all. I then directed the Board's attention to three broad issues:

- The tuition/state-appropriation issue;
- The need for new metrics to measure university success in educating students; and
- Ohio's emerging efforts to reduce the need for developmental/remedial college courses.

#### **The tuition/state-appropriation issue**

I referenced an article that had been published the prior week by Inside Higher Education titled, "It's Not Me. It's You." The article provides a fairly comprehensive treatment of some of the issues that surround matters of tuition and state appropriation. It recounts, for example, how several legislatures have summoned their presidents of public universities to account for escalating tuition.

Citing a report in that day's Wall Street Journal on private institutions raising tuition at an alarming rate, I said those increases seem smaller to those who do not consider the base to which the percentages apply. For example, a 4 percent increase on a \$40,000 tuition base is considerably more than a 5 percent increase on a \$10,000 base, and the disparity continues to be about 2 to 1, or 3 to 1, depending on the institution.

Of course, the average president of a public institution is likely to say to the legislature, “It’s not me; it’s you,” hence, the name of the Inside Higher Education article. That article makes some points that may be worth considering:

- The “bottom line” is that there are only two major sources of revenue for public institutions—tuition and state appropriations.
- In 1972, state funding accounted for about 75 percent of the cost of educating a university student in Michigan, for example. Today state funding makes up less than 12 percent of the University of Michigan’s budget. The situation is similar, whether for Ohio State or The University of Akron.

The article also notes that many university presidents have made it a high priority to try to convey to lawmakers that state support is vital to advancing the education and preparedness of our citizenry.

I said that, obviously, many are indicating that the economy is not likely to turn around anytime soon, and the state’s highest priority for the foreseeable future will be K-12 as it is perceived to be the central obligation of state governments. Legislatures and Congress, therefore, increasingly will debate about higher education as more of a private good than a public good. The debate, unfortunately, tends to be at the loss of higher education precisely when college today is the prerequisite for employment as high school once was.

### **The need for new metrics to measure university success**

I referred to two articles on the critical need for better metrics in assessing university success with regard to educating students—“Moneycollege” by Ryan Craig, a partner at University Ventures Fund, and “Completion Rates in Context” by Craig A. Clagett, a vice president at Carroll Community College in Maryland. While the latter focuses more on community colleges, it makes points that apply to any aspect of higher education. Both articles conclude fundamentally that a single measure does not apply in higher education. I explained to the Board that the federal standard for making such comparisons of graduation rates and student success specifically refer to first-year, full-time students, but only a small percentage of all college students across the nation fit those criteria or stay in that cohort. As stated in “Moneycollege,” “We measure what we measure because it’s easy to measure, but it doesn’t mean that it means anything.”

As I have stated in other ways, we have to find a way for higher education to own up to the fact that selectivity or expense cannot be a proxy for excellence; we need to find other measures. I have yet to meet a university—whether it is Harvard, Stanford or whatever—that has a monopoly either on green grass or on weeds. Thus, it behooves us to be more grown up and more measured in the things that we say, because it is time that we stop punishing schools for trying to educate students and praising those that simply accept students who will graduate no matter where they go to school.

I urged the Trustees to read those articles and mentioned having received a note from Chancellor Petro, and I expect to be visiting with him and the Board of Regents. I also have been contacted also by the Association of Public Land-Grant Universities with an invitation to visit with their senior staff on these issues. They understand that we need to move to a unit record, not to these average measures of cohorts and so forth.

### Ohio's efforts to reduce the need for remedial college courses

I was very pleased to report that Ohio is taking additional steps to address the burdensome issue that is facing all of its institutions—remedial (or developmental) coursework. On October 24, the Ohio Board of Regents and the Department of Education announced the creation of the Ohio High School and Higher Education Alignment Initiative. There will be 10 grants, each worth more than \$100,000 over three years, to be awarded in January to consortia of high schools and universities and career centers that submit winning proposals for partnerships to enable more high school students to move successfully into college. I affirmed this as a positive element and said nobody should graduate from high school who is not reflecting the expected levels of knowledge and competencies that a 12<sup>th</sup>-grade education is supposed to hold. The expectation is to have this aligned with requirements for college readiness and to have all of the basic standards in place by 2013. The Chancellor is on record indicating that he wants four-year universities to eventually phase out remedial programs, because presently more than 40 percent of all students going to college find themselves needing to take at least one remedial education course.

One might say that we are making progress in inches rather than leaps, but it is progress, and let us hope that we can sustain it.

I then listed some highlights of recent University accomplishments:

- Head Men's Soccer Coach Caleb Porter was named the head coach of the U.S. Under-23 Men's National team, which will compete for a berth in the 2012 Olympic Games in London. Coach Porter will continue in his capacity as the head coach of the Zips. During the week before the Board meeting, Coach Porter attained his 100<sup>th</sup> win, in the fastest time in which any collegiate soccer coach has done so.
- Wayne College's Office of Continuing Education and Workforce Development will receive a \$1-million grant from the Department of Labor to provide IT network training for displaced workers and unemployed students.
- Dr. Robert Lord, Distinguished Professor of Psychology, was named the 2012 recipient of the Distinguished Scientific Contributions Award from the Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology.
- The Center for the History of Psychology is featured on a Travel Channel program titled, "Mysteries at the Museum" to be aired on October 29 at 4 p.m. with commentary by Dr. David Baker, the Center's executive director.

## 2. Provost's Report

Dr. Sherman began his report by outlining its main topics: fiscal integrity, excellence and capacity assurance, strategic investment and initiatives, and remaining relevant and connected.

### **Fiscal Integrity**

Dr. Sherman reminded the Board of efforts to improve utilization of instructional space this fall semester and said he was pleased to report that the involvement of the Office of Academic Affairs with the departments in scheduling classes was successful. Dr. Sherman said that there are more students being served this year than last across all hours of the day and all days of the week. He noted that 8,200 more students are being served this year across all hours of the day on Friday compared to a year ago. He complemented the faculty and administrators who helped to reconcile our schedule to use our space more effectively and efficiently.

From the e-learning and online perspective, Dr. Sherman reported that Vice President Sage is leading a group in discussions with Pearson, a company experienced in the e-learning and online areas, about the possibility of providing back-office services to support online students fully. He said that this is part of the University's strategy to move aggressively in expanding its online programs.

### **Excellence and Capacity Assurance**

Dr. Sherman said interaction with the deans regarding capacity and excellence analysis through their academic program reviews would take place soon. Those analyses will lead to decisions about faculty positions in each college, he said. The conversation also will include discussion of the use of part-time faculty, particularly when an academic program's full-time faculty are not carrying a full instructional load.

Dr. Sherman said he was pleased to report the convergence of the Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Creative and Professional Arts is on schedule, if not ahead. A draft of the new bylaws for the converged college was distributed to all faculty on October 21, he said. There will be a two-week window for discussion, comment and revision. He said the revised bylaws will be presented at a joint college meeting on November 15, and a week-long voting window will follow. The results will be announced at the college meeting on November 28, after which the appropriate rules will be brought to the Board.

### **Strategic Investment and Initiatives**

Dr. Sherman reported that the University Council Exploratory Committee and others are supporting the council's implementation, which is progressing as planned. Excellent cooperation has been received from all constituencies on campus, he said, and by the end of October, each of the nine standing committees will have met.

Dr. Sherman said that he soon would begin searches for the inaugural dean of the College of Health Professions and the next dean of Wayne College.

Dr. Sherman said that, on October 21, the Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences hosted a three-hour listening session with women faculty to learn more about the ways in which the College and the University can promote career success of women. Approximately 40 faculty, from assistant professors through distinguished professors, participated in the session, which also was attended by Candace Campbell Jackson, Elizabeth Reilly, Becky Hoover and Judge Jane Bond.

### Relevant and Connected

Dr. Sherman reported that the University did make a difference on Make-A-Difference Day on October 23. More than 1,000 students, faculty and administrators participated by helping to make Akron, and the University Park Area, a better place to live, work and study. He said this was one of the largest groups of participants since the University became involved in this national initiative, which is led by a steering committee comprised of faculty, administrators, staff and students. Dr. Sherman observed that this year's program was more organized and efficiently run than any such program had been in the past, and he commended those individuals who helped to make that happen.

Dr. Sherman reported that Jeannette Walls, author of this year's Common Reading Program selection, *The Glass Castle*, spoke to a sold-out audience at E. J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall on October 12. Incoming students were assigned to read Ms. Walls book, which in turn is being used in many first-year classes including English Composition, Basic Writing, the Student Success Seminar and certain sections of social-sciences classes. Dr. Sherman added that Judge Bond met Ms. Walls at the reception preceding her lecture and shared with her some insights from having dealt with court cases involving child neglect. Ms. Walls noted that interchange in her remarks to the audience, which included Forum Series ticket holders, University faculty, staff and students, community members, and high school students and their English teachers who were bused to campus to attend.

In closing, Dr. Sherman reflected that these activities evince the University's commitment to student success as well as the success of the community ... because when students, and the community, succeed, we succeed.

### 3. Next Regular Meeting

The Board's next regularly scheduled meeting will occur on Wednesday, November 30, 2011 in the Student Union, Board Room 339, with an executive session to begin at 7:30 or 8 a.m. and the public session to begin no earlier than 10 a.m. Committee meetings are scheduled for Monday, November 21, 2011, starting at 8 a.m.

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