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OUACHITA
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NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita trustees honor Halaby, approve new faculty and staff

By Trennis Henderson, OBU Vice President for Communications

March 30, 2015

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5206

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—The Ouachita Baptist University Board of Trustees approved numerous personnel-related issues during the board's quarterly meeting March 12 on Ouachita's Arkadelphia campus. Actions ranged from approving new faculty and staff appointments to tenure, promotion and sabbatical recommendations.

Dr. Raouf Halaby, who has taught at Ouachita since 1973, was named Professor Emeritus of Visual Arts and English. Dr. Halaby graduated from Ouachita in 1968 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and earned the Master of Science in Education from Ouachita in 1970. He also holds a Doctor of Education degree from East Texas State University.

Dr. Halaby has served as a Ouachita faculty member for 42 years, beginning in 1973 as an assistant professor of English. He was promoted to associate professor of English in 1980 and then to professor in 1988. In 1994 he was named chair of the Department of Visual Arts. Since 1998, he has continued to serve as professor of visual arts and English.

A scholar of English and American literature, the classics and art history, as well as a professional sculptor, Dr. Halaby has influenced generations of students in multiple disciplines. He has regularly taught fine arts classes for Ouachita's CORE curriculum to students of all majors. Raised in western Jerusalem and Beirut, Lebanon, he came to the United States in 1965 when he received an international scholarship to Ouachita. Dr. Halaby is fluent in Arabic, English, French and Hebrew and has had numerous opportunities to lecture and publish both in the U.S. and Europe.

New faculty appointments effective in the fall of 2015 include Amber Chelette, assistant professor of kinesiology and leisure studies in the Huckabee School of Education, and Nevada Mills, instructor of music and assistant director of bands in the School of Fine Arts.

Chelette holds a Bachelor of Science degree in athletic training from East Texas Baptist University and a Master of Arts in movement science from Columbia University. She is currently completing her doctoral work for a Ph.D. in motor behavior, which she expects to receive in May. Chelette has served as an instructional assistant in health and human performance at the University of Houston since 2010. She previously was athletic director and physical educator at Manhattan Christian Academy in New York.

Mills earned a Bachelor of Music in Education degree from Henderson State University in 2006. He currently is completing course work to earn a Master of Science in Education degree from Arkansas State University in August. He has served for the past five years as a junior high band instructor, including his current school, Watson Chapel Junior High School in Pine Bluff and Lakeside Junior High School in Hot Springs. He previously was the director of bands in Mena.

Board members also ratified the hiring of five new administrative staff members, including:

Paige Anders, assistant football coach. Anders is a 2006 graduate of Valdosta State University. He has coached at Arkansas Tech University, Coffeyville Community College, Texas Tech University, Butler Community College and Valdosta State University.

Matthew Cook, admissions counselor. Cook is a 2014 Ouachita graduate with majors in Christian studies and mass communications. He will be recruiting prospective students in South Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi.

Amber Goodrum, student success coordinator. Goodrum is a 1999 Ouachita graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Education degree. She previously served as an adjunct academic skills reading instructor. In her new role, she is working with Ouachita's tutoring program, meeting one-on-one with students and assisting the Academic Success Center with other student success programs.

Wilson Jones, head men's soccer coach. Jones is a 2009 graduate of the University of the Ozarks with a Bachelor of Science degree in physical education. He is pursuing a master's degree in exercise physiology at Midwestern State University. He served as an assistant soccer coach at Ouachita in 2012-2013 as well as at Howard Payne University, Midwestern State and the University of the Ozarks.

Jason Tolbert, chief financial officer. Tolbert is a 1998 Ouachita degree and holds an MBA degree in accounting from the University of Arkansas-Little Rock. A certified public accountant, he has held management and accounting positions with several businesses and organization and has served since 2004 as controller of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation. He will begin his new position March 30.

Six assistant professors who have taught at Ouachita since 2009 were approved for tenure, including Summer Bruch, assistant professor of visual arts; Dr. Chris Brune, assistant professor of finance; Dr. Sara Hubbard, assistant professor of chemistry; Dr. Rebecca Jones, assistant professor of communications; Dr. Ryan Lewis, assistant professor of music; and Dr. Ruth Plymale, assistant professor of biology.

Nine faculty members were approved for promotion, including Dr. Tully Borland, from assistant professor to associate professor of philosophy; Dr. Kevin Cornelius, from associate professor to professor of physics; Dr. Joey Dodson, from assistant professor to associate professor of Biblical studies; Tiffany Eurich, from instructor to assistant professor of communications; Dr. Jim Files, from assistant professor to associate professor of accounting; Dr. Margaret Garrett, from assistant professor to associate professor of music; Daniel Inouye, from assistant professor to associate professor of theatre arts; Dr. Chris Mortenson, from assistant professor to associate professor of history; and Dr. Rachel Pool, from instructor to assistant professor of education.

Faculty members approved for sabbaticals in fall 2016 include Dr. Scott Duvall, professor of Biblical studies; Dr. Margaret Garrett, associate professor of music; Dr. Scott Holsclaw, professor of theatre arts; and Dr. Kevin "Casey" Motl, associate professor of history. Approved for sabbaticals in spring 2017 are Dr. Sara Hubbard, assistant professor of chemistry, and Dr. Jeffrey Sikes, professor of mathematics.

In addition to personnel issues approved by trustees, recent administrative personnel actions include:

Chris Chionuma, named last year as interim head coach of wrestling, has been promoted to head coach of Ouachita's wrestling program.

Ashlee Giles, assistant director of admissions counseling, has been named director of online and concurrent enrollment programs.

Dr. Rob Hewell, professor of music and director of the worship studies program, also will serve as coordinator of online course development.

Dr. Keldon Henley, vice president for institutional advancement, also will supervise student financial services.

Dr. Wesley Kluck, vice president for student services, also will oversee the work of campus safety.

Bill Phelps, director of IT services, has been named assistant to the president for IT services and facilities management.

Marla Rigsby, IT software specialist, has been named instructional design and technology specialist.

Brooke Zimny, assistant director of communications since 2008, has been promoted to director of communications and marketing.

PHOTO OF HALABY AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AT <http://www.obu.edu/news/2015/03/23/ouachita-trustees-honor-halaby-approve-new-faculty-and-staff>.