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OUACHITA
BAPTIST UNIVERSITY



NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita trustees endorse nursing degree proposal, Berry renovation design plans

By Trennis Henderson, OBU Vice President for Communications

December 13, 2016

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ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Members of the Ouachita Baptist University Board of Trustees addressed a number of issues during their quarterly board meeting held Dec. 8 on the Ouachita campus. Major items of business included authorizing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree and approving the exterior design and budget for renovations to Berry Bible Building and the addition of the Horne Center for Biblical Preaching.

Prior to the board meeting, trustees and other members of the Ouachita community gathered to dedicate Susie Everett Hall, a men's residence hall endowed through a generous gift from Dwight Everett in honor of his wife, Susie Everett, a former Ouachita student and current trustee. The Everetts are the owners of Everett Buick GMC.

Affirming that "place matters," Ouachita President Ben Sells told the dedication crowd, "There may be no more strategic or significant investment than in a residence hall here at Ouachita" as students live and learn together.

During the board meeting, trustees approved a resolution authorizing university administrators to develop and offer "a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree to be granted by the university, pending approval of the appropriate accrediting agencies."

University officials will seek approval from the Arkansas State Board of Nursing and the Higher Learning Commission in preparation for finalizing the proposed degree. The resolution noted that university constituents have expressed strong interest in Ouachita establishing a baccalaureate degree program in nursing and that "recent studies indicate an ongoing need for preparation of bachelor's level Registered Nurses in the state of Arkansas, the region and the nation."

Trustee action on the design and budget for Berry Bible Building renovation and Horne Center construction helps move that project closer to implementation. Berry Bible Building, constructed in 1962, houses classrooms and offices for the Pruet School of Christian Studies. The Horne Center, which will feature a state-of-the-art preaching lab, is named in honor of former Ouachita President Rex Horne. Once fundraising efforts are completed, trustees will take action on a proposal to authorize renovation and construction.

During his report to the board, President Sells highlighted the university's 17 priorities for the 2016-17 academic year, aimed at exemplifying, advancing, resourcing, promoting and supporting the university's mission.

"Even as we dream a larger dream together in the months ahead," Dr. Sells emphasized, "we know that Ouachita must be bigger to be better and to do more good."

“We believe that through their experiences in this environment, focused on the love of God and love of learning, that our graduates can indeed have a big impact on their world, in their generation, for the Kingdom and the common good,” he added.

Board members took time during the meeting to address strategic planning by giving input to the Planning Committee. Trustees shared their perspectives on the university’s internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats as part of Ouachita’s “dream a larger dream” focus to release a five-year set of strategic directions next fall.

In other actions, board members elected five new trustees, including four alumni: Clay Conly (OBU Class of '98) of Bentonville, Ark.; Taylor King ('83) of Arkadelphia, Ark.; Ginger Morgan ('77) of Clinton, Ark.; Dr. Susan Wamble of Pine Bluff, Ark.; and Judge John Ward ('60) of North Little Rock, Ark.

Trustees who completed two three-year terms of service and rotated off the board include: Terri Mardis of Rogers, Ark.; Dr. Ken Shaddox of North Little Rock, Ark.; and Gus Williamson of Batesville, Ark.

Board leaders elected for the coming year include: Jay Heflin, chair, of Little Rock, Ark.; Dr. John McCallum, vice chair, of Hot Springs, Ark.; and Mary Pat Anthony, secretary, of El Dorado, Ark., as well as committee chairs John McCallum (Executive Committee); Beth Neeley of Camden, Ark. (Endowment Committee); Mark Roberts of Malvern, Ark. (Finance Committee), and Randy Sims of Conway, Ark. (Audit Committee).

Board members received a mid-year budget report that the university is on track for a balanced budget for the 2016-17 fiscal year. Among ongoing funding priorities are gifts from alumni and other friends of the university to the Ouachita Cornerstone Fund (formerly the Annual Fund). Trustees also affirmed the Endowment Committee’s decision to increase to \$1 million the amount of funds to be managed by the Ary Student Investment Fund which provides a hands-on educational opportunity for students to be involved in managing university funds.

Trustees also heard an update on accepted applications for fall 2017, with the number of accepted student applications currently 21 percent above the previous year-to-date rate.

Ouachita Baptist University, a leading Christian liberal arts university in Arkadelphia, Ark., is committed to fostering a love of God and a love of learning. For more information, call 1-800-DIAL-OBU or visit www.obu.edu.