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For immediate release

Ouachita trustees approve director of nursing, receive positive updates on enrollment, retention and fundraising

March 16, 2018

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Members of Ouachita Baptist University's Board of Trustees have affirmed a major step in Ouachita's plans to establish a Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, endorsing the appointment of Dr. Brenda Trigg as director of nursing.

Trustees also heard positive updates on enrollment, retention and fundraising trends during their quarterly board meeting held March 8 on Ouachita's Arkadelphia campus.

The Arkansas State Board of Nursing notified Ouachita in December that the university's innovative dual enrollment program with Baptist Health College Little Rock qualifies as an RN to BSN completion program which does not require official approval from the State Board of Nursing. The next step is for Ouachita to seek approval for the program from the Higher Learning Commission, including hosting an HLC visiting team on campus.

Pending final HLC approval, Ouachita's first full cohort of freshmen entering the new program would enroll for the Fall 2019 semester. In preparation for the HLC visit and related issues, Dr. Trigg will help coordinate Ouachita's plans for the HLC review, develop course syllabi for the nursing courses and help launch the new program.

Dr. Trigg, who has served more than 30 years in the nursing profession, is an experienced nurse educator. She holds degrees from Baptist Health School of Nursing in Little Rock as a Diploma Registered Nurse, bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and the Doctor of Nurse Practice degree from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. She also is certified in Gerontology Nurse Practice.

As an educator, she has served as a clinical instructor at St. Vincent Health Services, an assistant professor of nursing at Henderson State University and professor of nursing and chair of the Department of Nursing at Southern Arkansas University. She also has taught online courses as an adjunct instructor for Chamberlain University and Kaplan University.

"We are pleased to have Dr. Trigg lead our efforts in this strategic area of growth," said Ouachita President Ben Sells. "Her experience in clinical and educational settings will serve us well as we launch Ouachita's nursing program for the benefit of students and to address the need for more nurses in this state and region."

In other actions, President Sells highlighted Ouachita's theological and missional contexts in his report to trustees. Affirming the theological imperative to trust God's direction for Ouachita, he said the university's recent HLC reaccreditation report "demonstrates that we excel in delivering Ouachita's Christian and academic mission."

In the areas of student enrollment and retention, Dr. Sells reported that student applications and acceptances for the Fall 2018 semester are up from the previous year. That increase follows a 17.9 percent gain in the number of first-time students last fall.

Dr. Sells noted that retention of first-year students from Fall 2017 to Spring 2018 included a gain of 73 students over the previous year. He said the total of 421 students, a 94.6 percent fall-to-spring retention rate, marks the highest number of first-year students on campus for the spring semester in the past 17 years.

Highlighting recent fundraising growth, President Sells said gifts for the 2017 fiscal year totaled more than \$12.3 million, an increase of almost \$5.5 million over the previous year. This year's fundraising efforts already have topped \$13 million with three months remaining in the current fiscal year.

"The progress on new programs such as nursing and increases in enrollment, retention and fundraising are further evidence that Ouachita is rising," Dr. Sells added.

Trustees elected Tabettha Bramucci as a new trustee to fill the slot vacated by the death of Millard Aud in November. Bramucci, who lives in Marion, Ark., is a member of First Baptist Church of Marion and is active in two family businesses. Her daughter, Ally, is a freshman at Ouachita.

Trustees also addressed a number of personnel issues.

Promotion was approved for:

- Dr. Bethany Hicks, from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor of History

Tenure was granted to:

- Dr. Angela Douglass, Assistant Professor of Physics
- Dr. Margarita Pintado, Assistant Professor of Spanish
- Dr. Rachel Pool, Assistant Professor of Education
- Kristi Smith, Assistant Professor, Head of Circulation/Reference
- Dr. Heather Thayer, Assistant Professor of Music

Sabbaticals were approved for:

- Dr. Patrick Houlihan, Professor of Music (Fall 2019)
- Dr. Margarita Pintado, Assistant Professor of Spanish (Fall 2019)
- Dr. Mike Reynolds, Professor of Kinesiology and Leisure Studies (Spring 2020)

Faculty/staff emeritus status was awarded to:

- Dr. Scott Holsclaw, Professor Emeritus of Theatre Arts
- Dr. Phil Rice, Professor Emeritus of Business Administration
- Sharon Cosh, Director of ESL Emerita
- Phil Hardin, Assistant to the President for Administration Emeritus