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### Ouachita sets fundraising record

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For Immediate Release

## **Ouachita sets fundraising record**

August 13, 2018

For more information, contact Keldon Henley, chief of staff, in the Office of the President at [henleyk@obu.edu](mailto:henleyk@obu.edu) or (870) 245-5405



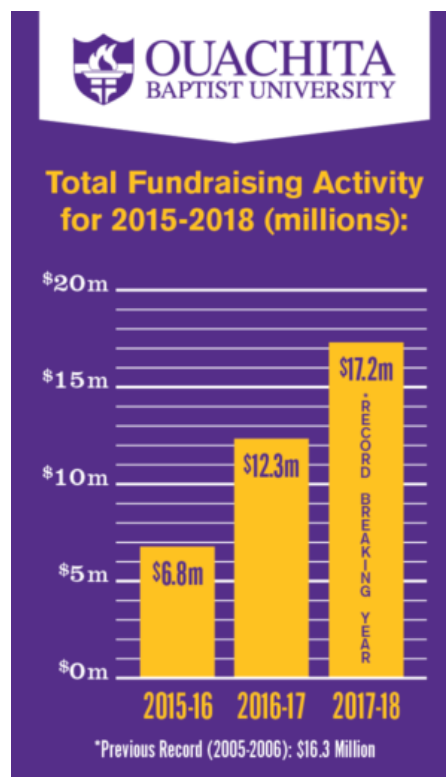
ARKADELPHIA, Ark. – Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia has received a record \$17.2 million in private support in academic year 2017-2018. The fundraising total surpasses the previous record set in 2005-2006 by almost \$1 million.

“We are fortunate to work with alumni, friends and churches who believe in, and give so generously in support of, the mission and vision of Ouachita,” said Dr. Ben Sells, president. “Our donors appreciate our success in developing leaders in so many walks of life and extend our impact around the world.”

Of the \$17.2 million given, 58% is in the form of cash and pledges. The remaining 42% is in realized estate bequests. The bulk of the funds, approximately \$12 million, will be applied to annual and endowed student scholarships. The remainder is earmarked for programs, facilities and strategic initiatives.

In the previous academic year, 2016-2017, total fundraising was \$12.3 million.

“We are proud of the fact that most of our giving comes from individuals and Arkansas Baptist churches,” said Terry Griffin Peeples, Ouachita vice president for development. “But alumni support is vital. We want our alumni to be engaged and participate no matter what amount they are able to give.”



Ouachita’s success runs counter to national trends in higher education, which has experienced a 25-year decline in the percentage of annual alumni giving. At Ouachita, alumni giving slightly increased last year to 19.75%. The university has approximately 12,700 alumni.

The median alumni giving percentage for private universities in 2017 was 17%. For public universities, that number was 4.8%.

“We believe that our donors are responding favorably to the momentum we are enjoying here,” Dr. Sells said. “Last fall, we experienced a significant increase in freshmen, were recognized for the highest graduation rate in the state and achieved a high placement rate for graduates. Our alumni, students and friends are excited to see Ouachita on the rise, and we are poised for continued growth.”

Last December, Ouachita's Board of Trustees adopted a five-year plan that includes six strategic directions:

- Sustain Christ-Centered Identity
- Advance Faculty/Staff Support
- Ensure Transformative Learning
- Grow Residential Learning
- Diversify Educational Offerings
- Strengthen Key Partnerships

Ouachita Baptist University, a private liberal arts university in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, is in its 132<sup>nd</sup> year as a Christ-centered learning community. It is consistently ranked among the “Best National Liberal Arts Colleges” by *U.S. News*. The university has an average student/faculty ratio of 13:1. Its seven academic schools include business, Christian studies, education, fine arts, humanities, natural sciences and social sciences. Additionally, Ouachita offers more than 20 study abroad opportunities with partner institutions around the world. [www.obu.edu](http://www.obu.edu)

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