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Ouachita trustees approve three new faculty, honor Jim and Sally Dann as emeriti faculty

By Trennis Henderson, OBU Vice President for Communications

June 16, 2014

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208.

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. -- Ouachita Baptist University's Board of Trustees approved three new faculty members and honored two retiring faculty members during the board's June 12 meeting on Ouachita's Arkadelphia campus.

New faculty members include Drew Hampton, assistant professor of theatre arts in the School of Fine Arts; Justin Keeler, instructor of finance in the Hickingbotham School of Business; and Dr. Brandon O'Brien, assistant professor of Christian theology in the Pruet School of Christian Studies. O'Brien also was named director of the new Ouachita Baptist University at New Life Church program in Conway.

Retiring faculty members recognized with emeriti status are Jim Dann and his wife, Sally, both of whom have served as assistant professors of kinesiology and leisure studies.

In other personnel-related actions, board members approved Steven Bostick's new position as men's and women's head swimming and diving coach and appointed Dr. Jon Secrest to the endowed Addie Mae Maddox Chair in Music.

Among the new faculty members, Drew Hampton holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in theatre performance from the University of Texas at Arlington and a Master of Fine Arts in acting from Western Illinois University. A professional actor for more than 10 years, he has served as the head of theatre at Ridgewater College in Willmar, Minn., and as an adjunct instructor at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Va.

Justin Keeler holds a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting from the University of Central Oklahoma and a Master of Business Administration from Southern Methodist University. He is pursuing a Ph.D. in business administration from Oklahoma State University. Keeler currently is a special project contractor and senior accountant for the Hertz Corporation in Oklahoma City. He previously has served as a corporate controller or accountant for various corporations in Colorado, Oklahoma and Texas. He also has served as CFO and partner in Keeler Investment Group. He and his wife, Gloria, are the parents of two daughters.

Brandon O'Brien is a 2004 Ouachita graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Biblical studies and English literature. He also holds a Master of Arts in religion in American life from Wheaton College and a Ph.D. in historical theology from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. O'Brien, a former adjunct professor in Christian studies at Ouachita, has served as a senior editor for *Leadership Journal* and as an acquisitions editor for Moody Publishers. He is the author of *The Strategically Small Church* and is coauthor of *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes* with former Ouachita professor Randy Richards. O'Brien and his wife, Amy, a 2005 Ouachita graduate, have one son, Jamie.

Jim Dann, who retired in May, was named assistant professor emeritus of kinesiology and leisure studies. Dann, who taught at Ouachita since 1982, holds a Master of Science in Education degree from Ouachita and a bachelor's degree from the University of Florida. From 1981 to 2008, he served as head coach of men's and women's swimming and diving. Under his leadership, OBU swim teams were ranked in the Top 10 nationally 16 times for the men's swim team and three times for the women's team. Over the years he coached 175 All-America swimmers, 15 national champions and two Olympic trial qualifiers. He earned NAIA national coaching awards and was named conference coach of the year several times. He also served as director of the Sturgis Physical Education Center and formed the City of Arkadelphia Swim Team (COAST) in the late 1990s for students in K-12.

Sally Dann, who also retired in May, was named assistant professor emerita of kinesiology and leisure studies. Serving at Ouachita since 2000, she holds degrees from the University of Florida, Nova University and the University of Central Arkansas. Dann came to Ouachita as a lecturer in physical education. She became an instructor of kinesiology and leisure studies in 2005 and was promoted to assistant professor in 2013. She also had served since 2007 as athletic academic coordinator. The Danns are relocating to Florida this summer.

Steven Bostick was announced earlier as the new head coach of Ouachita's men's and women's swimming and diving teams. Bostick, a 2008 OBU graduate and four-year letterman, began his duties in his new role in April. He previously was the swimming and diving head coach at Buchholz High School in Gainesville, Fla. He also was owner and head coach of High Tide Aquatics in Gainesville.

Dr. Jon Secrest, named to the Addie Mae Maddox Chair of Music, has taught at Ouachita since 1994. He succeeds Dr. Ouida Keck, who retired in May, as the holder of the endowed chair. Secrest holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Friends University in Wichita, Kan.; a Master of Music degree from Kansas State University; and a Doctor of Music Arts degree from Arizona State University. He serves as chair of the Applied Music Department, coordinator of the vocal studies program, co-director of OBU Opera Theatre and musical director for Ouachita musical theatre productions.

In other board actions, trustees adopted the university's proposed operating budget for 2014-2015, a 2.5 percent increase over the previous budget year.

President Rex Horne shared updates about new academic programs, including the launch of classes in August for the Ouachita at New Life Church Associate of Arts program in Conway and Ouachita's online degree programs in business and Christian studies slated to begin in October.

He also cited several campus construction projects, including Cliff Harris Stadium which is scheduled to be completed in time for the fall 2014 football season. A groundbreaking ceremony was held in conjunction with the board meeting for the new Ben M. Elrod Center for Family and Community with construction set to begin next month. Renovation is under way for the Rosemary Adams Department of Art and Design in Moses-Provine Hall.

Trustees also heard brief updates from the deans of Ouachita's seven academic schools as well as members of the OBU Administrative Council.

Ouachita Baptist University, a private Christian liberal arts university in Arkadelphia, is ranked among "Best National Liberal Arts Colleges" by *U.S. News & World Report* and among "America's Top Colleges" by *Forbes* magazine. Serving since 1886 as a Christ-centered learning community, Ouachita educates more than 1,500 students from 30 states and 30 nations.