Dr. Sherman introduced students from the Higher Education Administration program in the College of Education who were attending the Board meeting to observe and report on the energy level, passion, dynamics, verbal and non-verbal aspects. After stating that student success is obviously the University’s highest priority, Dr. Sherman said that completion is a very important component of student success, as is placement. He said that the incoming class is better this year than in previous years, aligned with the Pathways for Student Academic Success strategy. Accompanying the strategy is the fact that about 3 percent fewer incoming students are requiring remedial education in either mathematics, English or both, he said. That is a significant improvement and certainly improves their completion probabilities and will help to move them through their degree programs faster, he said.

Dr. Sherman said he was pleased to report that international undergraduate and graduate enrollment increased by 10 percent. He said the percentage of student credit hours of instruction taught by full-time faculty had been increased from about 51 to 54 percent. He said his office had worked with the department chairs, school directors, deans and the faculty in consultation to make adjustments to work loads, and those adjustments are having a positive effect, certainly improving the quality of educational and instructional experiences. He said that a really good piece of information is that the number of our degrees conferred increased by 6 percent when comparing the past academic year to the previous year. The number of degrees conferred in the STEM areas increased by 12 percent during that period, he said, adding that the University is contributing in positive ways to the state of Ohio agenda and to its own agenda as outlined in Vision 2020.

Dr. Sherman said that the College of Engineering’s annual career fair, held the previous week, was a smashing success. He said about 164 companies attended and 2,000 students interacted with those companies, spanning areas from aerospace systems to all areas in engineering as well as math, biology, computer science and physics. He said the students and the employees had a great experience. As an example, he said, the Timken vice president sent an email to Deanna Dunn which read, “I’ll try to give you a buzz next week. I appreciate your follow up. By the way, we met with 208 candidates at Akron; a lot of them will be employed.” Dr. Sherman said that is an outstanding indication of the great work the College of Engineering does on its career fairs.

He said that another college has gained distinction recently through the report of the National Jurist, which in October had designated the School of Law as one of the top-ranked schools of law in Ohio. He said the School of Law received an A-minus rating, which put it in the top 35 schools nationally based on the third-party, independent analysis. No other school of law in Ohio made the top 35; Ohio State, Cleveland State and Cincinnati all received B-plus ratings, he said. “That has us well ahead of them and, certainly, that is related to your support of the strategies that we put in place to keep our School of Law enrollment up, he said.

Dr. Sherman said he also has talked about The University of Akron being a go-to university for the Board of Regents and the University System of Ohio. He said Vice Provost Ramsier has been appointed the chair of the Ohio Means Internships and Co-ops Review Committee for the next round of applications. Dr. Ramsier worked with a large number of faculty members for the previous round of such applications, Dr. Sherman said. He reminded Trustees that the University received $1 million to increase its co-op locations by about 200 sites.