Senior Vice President & Provost/COO Remarks
The University of Akron Board of Trustees
June 10, 2015

You will recall that at our last meeting I identified those faculty and staff colleagues who were nominated by their colleagues and reviewed and selected by previous recipients to receive recognition for their contributions to the success of the institution in various ways.

For today’s presentation, I have asked two of those recipients to describe their passion for their work and their passion for the success of students, the community and the university that was clearly noticed by and determined to be worthy of recognition by their colleagues.

First, you will hear from Dr. Robert Veillette, associate professor of electrical and computer engineering in the College of Engineering, recipient of the Outstanding Teacher Award. This recognition builds upon receipt of the College of Engineering Chemstress Outstanding Teacher Award in 1999 and the Honors College Advising Award in 2014. He has a laser-focus on helping students succeed and he “brings to life” a topic that could be very, very boring. A student commented, “There are educators who teach because it is a job, and then there are educators who teach because it is their calling. After being his student and advisee for half a decade, I can say with absolute confidence that Dr. Veillette’s passion is education-as a calling.”

After Dr. Veillette, we will hear from Dr. Janice Troutman, professor in the Myers School of Art who received the Excellence in Community Engagement Award. This is the inaugural year for this award created to recognize UA’s designation as a Community Engaged Institution by the Carnegie Foundation, one of roughly 200 designated as such in the Country. She has been the creative director of the “Design by Nine” program for 19 years, again another experiential learning opportunity where student work has benefited the Akron Art Museum, Warther Companies, Harris Stanton Galleries, and the Akron Roundtable, among others. For the past two years, she has incorporated “Pay it Forward,” student-led philanthropic service learning projects in her Advanced Graphics Design course. The student work that resulted from mini-grants supported by the Summit County United Way has had an economic impact of about $40,000. She has received several silver and gold ADDYs from the Advertising Federation of Greater Akron.

The past academic year was a success by many measures. By one important measure, graduation, we continue to make progress.

- In the 2009-10 year we graduated 4,113 across all degree categories. In the 2014-15 academic year we project 5,366 graduates across all degree categories.
  - This is a 30% increase in the number of graduates this year compared to 2009-10.

- Impressively, since 2009-10, there have been an increased number of graduates across all degree categories each year.

This is not only great from a performance-based funding perspective; it is impressive that this occurred over a time when enrollment has either been flat or declining.
The University of Akron is connected with the needs of business and industry in various ways. One recently publicized example reported by Crain’s Cleveland Business, and consistent with The University of Akron as Ohio’s Polytechnic University, is the article about our Supply Chain Management degree offered by our College of Business Administration.

It was noted that:
- The program has doubled in size to 100 from 2012
- Nearly 100% are employed upon graduation with an average salary about $52,000

It is important to note that a special internship program was developed in 2013 with Goodyear, collaborating with their vice president of global supply chain and logistics, to produce a “pipe-line” of employable expertise in this area.

This is such an integral operational issue for any major corporation as indicated by the fact that because the supply chain issues could not be corrected, Target closed 133 stores in Canada. This clearly represents an opportunity for growth and is a component of the College’s strategic plan.

Who knows, maybe our graduates will be involved in what was recently patented by Amazon, “anticipatory delivery.” That is, items show up on your doorstep before you order them because logistics have determined your need for the items. This is somewhat “Twilight Zone-like” notwithstanding the fact that Drones are likely to make the delivery.

Students are not only attracted to the University because of rankings; rankings also enhance the “value” of a UA degree. You heard the president earlier mention the success of our School of Law in the “Above the Law Top 50 Law School Rankings.” I would only add that three Schools were in the top 50 in the “mid-west” region including UA at 50, OSU at 29 and the University of Michigan at 12. How about that Mr. Pogue, an University of Michigan School of Law graduate. I too would like to thank you and commend you for the work you have done and what has been accomplished during your time on the Board and as its Chair. I might also add that TaxProfBlog said, the biggest over performer was UA with this 50th ranking and a 127th ranking by USNWR. We will be pleased to over perform every day in any way.

As you know, we are requesting your endorsement via the consent agenda of the formal creation of the Biomimicry Research Center. This coming year we will have 15 industry Fellows where industry provides $25,000 per year for five years for the Fellow to work with their scientists, bringing the notion of Biomimicry to create solutions to problems. In addition, several faculty members just published research related to “structural color” such as that in the feathers of birds, as opposed to the use of pigments. Imagine the use of this knowledge to produce colorful surfaces that never fade – imagine never having to wash a car.

You heard earlier from two faculty members recognized for their outstanding contributions to the success of the University of Akron. While they received special recognition, every faculty and staff member could be recognized by some measure for doing so as well.