University Council
The University Council bylaws were submitted to the Board of Trustees for review at the June 2013 Board meeting. Based upon the feedback from the Strategic Issues Committee, the bylaws were sent back to University Council, in order to make revisions that responded to the committee concerns, including:

1) Broad-based representation in the consultative decision-making process;
2) alignment of committees with vice presidential areas, at minimum;
3) a structure that provides for timely guidance and advice so the institution can be nimble and responsive; and
4) minimal overlap with the Faculty Senate and Akron AAUP.

Subsequently, the University Council established a Revision Committee to make appropriate changes to the bylaws. The bylaws were updated and approved by the University Council on November 12 and are to be reviewed by the Board of Trustees at the December meeting.

New Directions for Institute for Teaching and Learning
The Office of Academic Affairs/Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL) is redefining its mission to provide support for faculty, administrators, and staff in teaching, research, leadership and outreach through a comprehensive program of professional development activities including: Orientations; Faculty and Instructional Development; Organizational and Leadership Development; Community Building; and Scholarship and Resources. Five new programs include presentations by content area experts from within our University community and peer-to-peer learning through case studies, panel discussions, interactive vignettes and Q&A sessions. Online components provide relevant readings, ready reference to key documents and forms, and examples of best practices. For example, a new Department Chair & Director Guide provides a quick resource to administrative processes, forms, and University rules and campus resources. Assessment of these new ITL programs, described below, will inform further refinement of the office’s mission, goals and future directions.

Department Chair Development
More than 70 academic administrators began the academic year with a full day orientation and refresher session for new and returning chairs, directors, and deans. Case studies, panel discussions, and interactive theater engaged our academic leaders in problem-solving during sessions on Connecting with the Community; Managing People; Managing Budgets; Managing Space; Serving Students; Legal and Ethical Issues; and Working with Deans and Administration. Each month, there are 90-minute sessions to provide an opportunity for chairs and directors to consider key issues, such as faculty recruitment, retention, promotion and tenure; timekeeping and workload; budgeting; conflict management and disciplinary actions; succession planning; legal and ethical issues; community and alumni relations; revenue enhancement strategies; and strategic planning. The majority of chairs and directors have attended at least one of the monthly meetings and both session evaluations and the ITL advisory group have provided very positive feedback on this initiative. The information shared has been deemed valuable, as has the opportunity to build a more supportive community of colleagues among our chairs and directors.
Supporting Student Success Series
Each month, ITL provides workshops on tangible ways we can all better support the success of our students, including: Giving Feedback to Students; Weaving Diversity into the Curriculum; Embracing Undergraduates and their Learning; Setting and Maintaining High Expectations for Student Performance; Using Engaging Pedagogies; Building on Students’ Knowledge, Abilities, and Talents; Clarifying what Students Need to Do to Succeed; Making Time for Students; Holding Students Accountable for their Share of the Responsibility for their Learning.

For each Supporting Student Success Series topic, there are In the Classroom and Outside the Classroom workshops for faculty and academic support professionals. We have completed five of the twenty workshops scheduled for this academic year and the continual review of session evaluations inform future topic selection and coverage. Approximately 75 faculty and staff have attended these workshops.

Classroom Excellence Series
The academic year started with a one-day orientation for all new faculty, both part-time and full-time. A second orientation was held for graduate teaching assistants. These two orientations provided key information regarding resources for teaching and research and nearly 200 faculty and teaching assistants attended. Session evaluations were very positive, with the strongest expressed interest in the topics of technology in the classroom and technology support for faculty research. Each week, throughout the academic year, there are sessions to provide additional instruction and resources on teaching techniques, the use of technology in the classroom, and learning outcomes and assessment. During spring semester, we will add a brown bag series for faculty to come together and discuss what they can do to implement the student retention and completion action plans developed during our campus-wide retention efforts.

Workplace Wisdom
This year-long series, designed for a broad audience of faculty, contract professionals, staff and students, presents practical support for workplace issues, such as Effective Leadership; Change Management; Customer Service; Consensus Building; Safety at Work; and Technical Skills for Administrative Professionals; and Confronting Difficult Situations. The initial session on Effective Leadership had 25 registrants.

The Faculty Career
This series will begin early in 2014 to provide support for faculty at every stage of life and career. Scheduled topics include Issues for New and Pre-Tenure Faculty; Building Your Research; Aligning Teaching and Service; Supporting Mid-Career Faculty for Promotion; Work-Life Balance; and Retirement Readiness.