

# THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON



**LUIS M. PROENZA**  
**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**

August 24, 2010

Members of the University Community

I am pleased, Dear Colleagues . . .

. . . to forward for your information a summary of actions approved by The University of Akron's Board of Trustees at its regular meeting on August 4, 2010.

## **Presentations to the Board**

Professor of Biology Monte Turner made a presentation on "The Importance of Wetlands and Wetland Research," particularly concerning the University's work at the Panzner Wetlands Wildlife Reserve in Copley and the Dr. Paul E. Martin Center for Field Studies and Environmental Education in the Bath Nature Preserve.

Dr. William M. "Mike" Sherman, senior vice president and provost/chief operating officer, also made a presentation that elaborated on his June report about aligning University operations with academics to implement our emerging strategic plan, a practice that will continue at future Board meetings. His remarks are summarized in the Notes section, Item 2, on page 7 of this memorandum.

## **Finance, Fiscal Policy, and Investment Committee**

### 1. Miscellaneous Fees/Parking Fees

When miscellaneous fees were approved at the April Board meeting, one element of parking fees was omitted inadvertently. Trustees approved the adjustment of the Graduate Assistant Parking Permit fee to parallel the new parking fees that were acted upon in April.

The Board also approved parking fee plan for InfoCision Stadium events, the result of recent planning between Athletics and Parking Services. Current University of Akron students will continue to be able to park for free in General Pay lots, while other patrons will pay \$5 to park there. In Credentialed lots and Tailgating lots, patrons will be charged \$10 to park.

2. Personnel Actions

The personnel transactions approved by Trustees as amended are posted online at <http://www.uakron.edu/president/docs/Personnel-transactions-August2010.pdf>.

**Educational Policy/Student Affairs Committee**

1. Tentative Graduation List for Summer 2010

The Board approved the granting of 1,203 degrees for commencement ceremonies on August 14, 2010, pending the completion of requirements by degree candidates. The breakdown of degrees is as follows: 59 doctoral, 420 master's and 724 undergraduate.

2. Research Grants and Sponsored Programs Report, July 2009-June 2010

For July 2009-June 2010, funding for externally funded research and other sponsored programs was \$48.4 million for 456 projects. For July 2008-June 2009, funding was \$48.3 million for 443 projects. For July 2009-June 2010, eight patents were issued, 26 patent applications were filed, and 38 disclosures were submitted. For July 2008-June 2009, eight patents were issued, 20 patent applications were filed, and 58 disclosures were submitted.

**Facilities Planning and Oversight Committee**

1. Administrative Services Building Phase III B

The Board approved contracts totaling \$962,223 for renovating 8,465 square feet of vacant space in the former Goodwill Building for use by Institutional Marketing, as well as envelope repairs including a new roof, windows and masonry repair for the facility. Contracts were awarded to low-bidders DSV Builder Inc. (\$784,853 for general trades), D & A Plumbing & Heating, Inc. (\$80,370 for plumbing, fire protection and HVAC) and Speelman Electric, Inc. (\$97,000 for electrical).

**External Affairs Committee**

1. Cumulative Gift and Grant Income Report, July 2009-June 2010

For July 2009-June 2010, total giving was \$41 million, 7 percent less than the \$44 million received for FY2009 and 25 percent more than the five-year average of \$32.8 million. The number of gifts increased, from 19,342 for July 2008-June 2009 to 21,911 gifts for FY2010.

**New Business**

1. Expression of Appreciation to Kenneth Stapleton

Trustees passed a resolution honoring Kenneth Stapleton, the first executive director of the University Park Alliance, who left the University at the end of June.

2. Trusteeship Committee

The Board approved establishing a Trusteeship Committee with the initial charge of considering and making recommendations to the Board pertaining to—the organization of the Board and the individual involvement and fiduciary and legal role of Trustees; the bylaws regarding the operation of the Board and its committees; the Board’s operation and matters related to Board and Trustee evaluation, Trustee selection and Trustee orientation; the expectation of Trustees’ comportment within the Board, and with the president and internal and external constituencies; the avoidance of conflict of interest or commitment or the appearance of same; and other matters assigned by the Board or the Chair of the Board.

3. Naming of Facilities

The Board approved recognition of several generous donors through the naming of—the weight room in InfoCision Stadium as the Benjamin and Nancy Suarez Family Weight Room, the area alongside the University’s Student Recreation Building as the H. Peter Burg Memorial Garden, the bermed seating in the grass area of the soccer stadium in honor of the Dr. Thomas L. Nash Family, and the team meeting room for members of the football’s offense as the Louis and Freda Stile Athletics Field House as the Ford A. Dickerhoff Offense Team Room.

4. Public-Private Partnership

Trustees authorized the University’s administration to proceed with negotiations with the Signet Development Group, which was selected through the university’s Request for Proposal purchasing process, with the goal of reaching a tentative agreement for construction of a student residence facility on the corner of Wheeler and Grant Streets with possible future phases located on Grant between Wheeler and Exchange Streets, contingent upon and subject to express approval of such agreement by the Board of Trustees and all other necessary governmental approvals.

5. Office of Academic Affairs

The Board authorized the Senior Vice President and Provost and Chief Operating Officer, with the approval of the President, to establish an Office of Academic Affairs, with an organizational structure and related changes in titles, reporting relationships and other modifications necessary to have the Office of Academic Affairs operational before the start of the fall 2010 academic semester. As proposed, the creation of the Office of Academic Affairs shall be accomplished through the internal reallocation of funds.

6. Ratification of F.O.P. Contract with the University

Members of the Board unanimously ratified the Collective Bargaining Agreement presented by The University of Akron’s negotiating committee and containing all of the tentative agreements and memoranda of understanding reached between the respective negotiating committees of The University of Akron and The Fraternal Order of Police, Ohio Labor Council, Inc. for a three-year term ending on June 30, 2013.

7. Real Estate Purchase

The purchase of 103 Price Place in Akron for \$74,000 was approved.

Notes

1. President's Report

I began my report by congratulating the Board for its selection of the officers and said that I look forward to working with all of the Trustees and predicted that, with our Chair's leadership, significant advances will be made. I welcomed Mr. Ralph J. Palmisano, whose formal appointment to the Board would be forthcoming, expressing my confidence in his role as a Trustee and noting his long association with the University and his previous work on behalf of the Civic Theatre.

I then extended my thanks to the University's new Senior Vice President, Provost and Chief Operating Officer, Dr. Mike Sherman, for his dynamic, enterprising, innovative and thorough plan of work, which is being very well received.

I noted that, for the past several months, I have been taking this opportunity to address three vital and interlocked themes, with the University's strategic plan as the evolution of these themes:

- The first is the ever-shifting context in which higher education functions today, which I believe is part of a historic paradigm shift for our industry that will continue;
- Second is the tremendous, positive momentum and trajectory that The University of Akron has established during this, the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century; and,
- Third is the imperative for us and higher education in general to be innovative in addressing challenges aggressively and seizing the inherent opportunities through a continued cycle of strategic planning, action, measurement and refinement. That is the key to sustaining our momentum and enhancing our relevance and value in the long term.

Obviously, after over a year of brainstorming, discussing, debating, drafting and redrafting, and consulting with individuals and groups across the institution and the community, we are poised to move quickly toward implementation. The timing coincides very well with the recent arrivals of Dr. Sherman and our new Trustee, as well as with the involvement of Vice Chair Pogue and Trustee Bond in state-wide matters, so that all of us can be better engaged in the Board's desire to be involved in, and indeed absorb, the critical issues that define the role of Trustees in ensuring the success of this institution, and through it, our state.

In the coming weeks, Dr. Sherman and I will work with Board Chair Brennan to identify the optimum way in which to involve the Board in a thorough policy-level review and refinement of our institutional mission, vision, goals, objectives, strategies and metrics. Currently, we have draft statements of mission and vision, as well as possible values, and we have the following penultimate draft of goals:

1. "Student Success: Commit to Inclusive Excellence" . . . we will add value by providing a diverse and comprehensive set of activities that lead to graduation and to post-graduation

success. I am particularly proud that The University of Akron was the only institution to suggest to Chancellor Fingerhut that we propose a center of excellence in inclusive excellence.

2. “Global Relevance: Develop Dynamic and Globally Relevant Programs” . . . we will achieve national recognition for programs in which innovation, entrepreneurship and global competencies are embedded in our academic core. The University’s work in China and its international partnership in the corrosion field are cases in point.
3. “Distinction: Facilitate Faculty Development and Success by Expanding Clusters of Interdisciplinary Teaching and Research” . . . we will create a culture that spawns socially relevant cross-disciplinary academic clusters that transcend traditional paradigms, for example, the University’s partnership in the Austen BioInnovation Institute.
4. “Engagement: Build and Sustain Vital Relationships and Partnerships” . . . we will expand our capacity to partner with all sectors to advance education, research, civic learning, and economic development. The BioInnovation Institute and The University of Akron Research Foundation are examples that have gained national as well as international recognition.
5. “Community: Promote a Vibrant and Engaging Landscape” . . . we will be a magnet for cultural activities and provide an environment that stimulates academic excellence and enhancement of human potential and well being. Our New Landscape for Learning and, through the University Park Alliance, the New Landscape for Living are cases in point. In addition, E. J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall, The Myers School of Art and the School of Music are among the University’s resources of cultural enrichment to our community.
6. “Integrated Planning: Achieve Measurable Success” . . . we will be strategic, efficient and effective in what we do because we will pursue objective and measurable results, and we will be guided and judged by hard data. The University’s Innovation Alliance with Lorain County Community College is a clear example and articulation of what we are calling the New Gold Standard of University Performance, UA/Au.

These goals represent the refinement and articulation of our ongoing leadership agenda. The next step is to refine the language of our institutional mission and vision, and those goals, objectives, strategies and metrics that I characterized broadly in the preceding six examples. Then, our colleges and other academic support units will create and align their strategies and action steps, along with identifying metrics, resources and responsible parties.

We will be moving forward will be done from the perspective of the “three Rs” I have been reciting for some time: Retention and student success; Revenue enhancement, increasing efficiencies and sharing services; and Reorganization/Restructuring, both administrative and academic.

I am confident, optimistic and enthusiastic that we are extremely well positioned and poised to meet the challenges of the day and to excel, because we are viewed nationally and within the state as doing just that. As evidence, I read the following letter, which I received several days before the Board meeting:

“Our son will be a junior in the Honors College of The University of Akron this fall. Frankly, when he first announced his decision to attend Akron, my husband and I reluctantly agreed. When friends would say, ‘Our Tom is going to Harvard or Susie to the University of ... where’s Bobby going?’ I would mutter, ‘to The University of Akron,’ and then bellow, ‘Honors College!’ After two years there, not only is our son extremely happy and doing very well academically, but also we are delighted with his choice. It could not have been a better fit. Although he did very well throughout high school, he was never motivated or took any real interest in his courses. His experience at The University of Akron has changed all that. Bob has truly enjoyed his classes, and his attitude is no longer one of just going through the motions. We look forward to his continued success and possibly graduate school in Akron. When now asked where Bob attends college, we proudly announce, ‘The University of Akron.’ We thank you for the outstanding job and what the institution reflects.”

I noted the following other recent highlights:

- Our University once again has been named by the Princeton Review as one of the best colleges and universities in the Midwest, ranking us among the top 25 percent nationally.
- Our College of Education recently announced its continuing accreditation by the prestigious National Council for Accreditation in Teacher Education.
- Congressman Tim Ryan has obtained a \$5 million appropriation for the BioInnovation Institute. He and other members of the Ohio delegation have been very successful in bringing additional federal dollars to our community and to our university.
- The University will be represented at a high-level White House event on industry clusters being co-hosted with the Brookings Institute in Washington, D. C. in September, and similarly at the Global Metro Summit in Chicago, also co-hosted with Brookings and held in partnership with three communities that Brookings is working with including the Northeast Ohio Fund for Our Economic Future.

I then gave Trustees some relevant literature noting the involvement of our institution in some key economic development leadership with the Council on Competitiveness and with the Urban Serving Universities Coalition.

In closing, I congratulated three members of our faculty and announced a new key hire.

- Assistant Professor of Polymer Engineering Hendrik Heinz has received a \$430,000 CAREER Award from the National Science Foundation. The award will fund Dr. Heinz and his student research team on molecular mechanisms of biomineralization over a period of five years.
- In recognition of their talent and accomplishments, Dr. Robert Liang in Civil Engineering and Dr. Darrell Reneker in Polymer Science have been designated as Distinguished Professors.
- Dr. Eric Johnson was selected as the new Executive Director of the University Park Alliance and that began work the previous week. He brings to Akron more than 18 years of urban revitalization and economic development experience in cities such as Pompano Beach, Fla. and Charlotte, N.C., as well as Cleveland.

2. Provost's Report

After expressing his thanks for the warm welcome that he and his family have received, Dr. Sherman updated the Board briefly on the action taken by three recently formed working groups. These groups were formed as a result of and following his presentation to the Board on June 16.

The **Institutional Effectiveness, including Talent Development, Working Group** has been focusing on the future, primarily from the perspective of developing strategies for investment in our academic priorities, taking into consideration the anticipated future of state funding and considering avenues of revenue generation. This might also include opportunities for distance education with our emerging international partnerships, our Medina County University Center and Midpoint, and other collaborations that might emerge from our relationships with Lorain County Community College and Stark State, according to Dr. Sherman. He said that we realize, in the near term, that investing in academics will require internal reallocation, and we are beginning to work with the vice presidents and the deans from that perspective.

From the perspective of the **Student Success and Retention Committee**, the provost reported that we have enjoyed a lot of substantive and informative dialog and collaboration in evaluating and discussing activities that directly affect student success, in particular, retention. He noted initiatives through Summit College and Student Affairs that are focused on retaining individuals who have been admitted to the University on a probationary status. He also said that we have taken a step further by improving our student-to-advisor ratio and are working to develop wrap-around and intrusive student advising as appropriate and as warranted. Specifically, internal resources have been reallocated in order to hire an additional 12 full-time-equivalent academic advisors to be distributed across Summit College, University College, Honors College, Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Creative and Professional Arts, and adult learning.

Finally, on the **Working Group for the Environment for Teaching, Learning and Research**, Dr. Sherman noted that last year about six weeks prior to the start of fall semester, we were looking for rooms in which to locate 122 classes. This year, we had yet to assign rooms for only some 15 classes. He reiterated our stated commitment to have a place for every class that we have obligated ourselves to offer for the freshmen we have admitted to this campus. We are focused on becoming the leader in the state on space utilization effectiveness and efficiency, he said, and the next avenue for opportunity through this working group is evaluating the effectiveness of use of laboratory and research laboratory space. To achieve the research agenda of the University and the president, we need to have research lab space available and ready to use. Dr. Sherman will begin a walk-through of every research facility on campus, from the perspective of all space belonging to the University, to evaluate the space utilization, including such considerations as whether a lab is active or inactive and its present stage of funding. The findings will be applied to effectively plan with Dr. Newkome a research agenda for which we will be able to provide the research space needed.

In closing, Dr. Sherman said that we pledge to undertake these activities in the context of best practices and benchmarks, to continue taking such actions, and to be judged by those actions and their results.

- Next Regular Meeting

The Board's next regularly scheduled meeting will occur on Wednesday, September 8, 2010, in the Student Union, Board Room 339, with an executive session to begin at 7:30 a.m. and the public session to begin no earlier than 10 a.m.

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