

“Otterbein’s Brand Story: A Model Community”

Welcome Back Celebration

President Kathy Krendl

August 19, 2013

Good Morning and welcome back. It is good to see everyone...

I extend ...

A special welcome to our newest colleagues;

My thanks to those of you who challenged us to think about the concept of a model community;

And my gratitude to all of you who were either featured in the video or who shared ideas and feedback to help guide its development.

Somehow, in just six minutes we glimpse into the passion, the commitment, and the values that make Otterbein, Otterbein.

It is not just what was said ... It is the authenticity I saw in the faces and the conviction I heard in the voices.

As I listened and watched, I couldn’t help but nod my head in agreement ...

This is what we do.

This is what we value.

This is who we are.

This video inspires me because...

It is a reminder that what happens here is special.

It is also a reminder that it is our people who make Otterbein special.

Every institution of learning contributes to transforming the lives of students. That is essentially the reason every university exists.

But the intention, the investment and the care that characterizes Otterbein in developing and guiding that transformative process—well **that is something uniquely Otterbein.**

As John Stefano accentuated in his closing point—THAT’s what we do.

And it is time we own that distinction with pride.

After re-imagining the entire curriculum and infusing the integrative studies program with new relevance for the 21st century scholar-citizen...

After standing shoulder to shoulder with prestigious peers to shape the dialogue on the full potential of experiential learning...

After years of better understanding ourselves through our service to others...

After reflecting on our mission, our guiding principles and our values to shape a vision for Otterbein's future ...

After working on a brand study that included talking with and listening to more than 350 fellow members of our Otterbein community ... through paper surveys and electronic surveys, small group discussions, and one on one interviews...we listened to you and you told us what makes Otterbein different.

Of course the story was here all along.

Faculty leaders like Beth Daughtery, Jim Gorman, John Tansey, Shelley Payne, Jackie Havercamp, David Robertson, Jeffrey Smith and Meredith Frey know very well what makes Otterbein distinctive.

Even some of our newest faculty members like Anna Young and Paul Wendel who are preparing to start their second year at Otterbein understand it.

Kate Lehman, Niraj Sharma, Elizabeth Saltzgeber, Ryan Brechbill, Annette Bose—they know it...

Our students, their parents,
our alumni and their families know it, too.

So do partners like Westerville City Schools, the City of Westerville, the Westerville Chamber of Commerce and W.A.R.M.

Now it is time we make sure the rest of the world knows it, too.

What is Otterbein's story? What makes Otterbein distinctive?

The essence of the Otterbein difference, or our brand, ultimately comes down to four pillars that I'll share with you now ...

We'll be talking about what these pillars mean and how we can exemplify them, celebrate them and communicate them in the year ahead ... But, today is all about starting the conversation ... and sharing the results of the exploration.

Otterbein offers...

Pillar ONE: The smartest way to learn.

That's a bold claim.
But I know it is true...

The American Association of Colleges and Universities has described Otterbein's Integrative Studies curriculum as the model others should emulate.

The AAC&U also invited Otterbein, along with Georgetown and Tufts, to help shape the nation's conversation about further integration of the high-impact practice of experiential learning alongside peers like Georgetown and Tufts.

Couple these facts with the ways we have always challenged our students to gain in-depth knowledge within their major discipline.

Consider, too, our innovative and intentional efforts to blend liberal arts and professional studies.

There is no question that Otterbein offers its students the smartest way to learn.

It's why Otterbein's faculty re-imagined the curriculum with a new, 21st century focus on the global scholar back in 2007.

It's why national conference after national conference asks our leaders to explain what we do and how we do it.

They want to learn from us.

Plenty of schools encourage internships or promote leadership or encourage undergraduate research...But Otterbein has taken this type of learning to a new level...Helping students build multiple competencies and values in curricular and co-curricular experiences from day one.

The Five Cardinal Experiences, coupled with the IS curriculum, constitute the core of our signature program and the foundation of our recognition as an innovator in undergraduate education.

The fact that we ask students to document their experiences and to reflect on them and that we discuss the importance of the students' experiences with them—makes it an integral, intentional part of our students' preparation.

The faculty scholars and administrative leaders of Otterbein will never stop challenging themselves to develop the most dynamic, relevant and meaningful ways to help our students learn.

It means we will never stand still—because we know there will always be room to grow, to change and to develop new ways of educating.

It's what we've always done.

It's what we will always do.

It's why Otterbein offers the smartest way to learn.

Pillar TWO: A place to belong.

If you are ready to learn ...

If you are ready to make a difference ...

If you are ready to be accepted, recognized and valued for who you are and what you alone have to offer...

Then you belong at Otterbein.

Otterbein has served as a welcome place to the dreams, the abilities, and the goals of anyone who answered YES to any of those questions.

When the rest of the world saw only black or white, male or female, affluent or disadvantaged, American or *foreigner*—all that Otterbein has ever looked for is a bright mind, a compassionate heart and skilled hands ready to go to work and to make good.

The packaging didn't matter—it was what was inside those individuals that interested Otterbein. That's what being a college of opportunity meant.

We have been the ultimate talent scouts from the moment our doors opened in 1847.

When you combine the warmth, welcome and regard of genuinely caring and good people with an inherent moral compass that makes inclusiveness and equality its true North—you describe this place known as Otterbein.

If you believe this, you belong at Otterbein.

Pillar THREE: The opportunity to realize one's personal best.

More than 15 years ago—long before my path would join with Otterbein's—a friend shared a story at a high school reunion about his two sons and how their respective had universities shaped them.

The one son was a born achiever. Confident. Knew exactly what he wanted to do. He went on to a professional school and did quite well.

The other son, my friend explained, was less sure of his path. He was a wonderful young man—but lacked confidence and the knowledge of what path he wanted to pursue.

He told me that this son went on to attend a small school named Otterbein and when he graduated, he was an entirely different person.

He became confident. Self-assured. He knew exactly what he wanted to do with his life.

His values were founded and grounded in what happened at this school and he went on to be a unique, successful and confident individual. He became a leader. As my friend said, “He became my great surprise, and I attribute his success to Otterbein.”

That's more than a story of transformation...It's the kind of self-realization of one's potential that is the essence of what happens at Otterbein.

One of the things Otterbein does best is help students find their way to realize their potential.

Because we have so much emphasis on the individual, because faculty work so closely with individuals, because faculty and staff work together to find the unique opportunities that best fit that individual...It creates an increasingly, and amazingly supportive infrastructure of support for each student.

It builds their confidence. It helps them take risks in a safe environment. And it helps them sometimes surprise themselves in terms of what they're able to achieve.

We take students from where they are—to where they want to be and often to places they never imagined they could be.

Much as an athlete trains with the goal of continuously improving upon his or her own best time—we, too, are aware of those milestones—in our students, in our colleagues and in our alumni and donors.

We don't compete against each other at Otterbein...We challenge one another to compete within ourselves ... and the added incentive is the benefit of a whole community cheering for us each time we achieve something better than the last time.

And finally Pillar FOUR: The values to serve the common good.

Otterbein is a very values-centered institution. And those values are not unique to today's Otterbein. They are values that carry us back to 1847.

From the beginning, the people of Otterbein have asked, how does what we do enrich and improve the quality of life for our immediate community?

We still ask ourselves the same question today—but now we cast a net that includes our beloved Westerville and reaches well beyond.

Wendell Berry once noted that a proper community... “is a commonwealth: a place, a resource, an economy. It answers the needs, practical as well as social and spiritual of its members—among them the need to need one another.”

One of the phrases so many of us associate with Otterbein is our commitment to educating our students in the context of humane values.

This is how Otterbein meets Berry's definition...When you are a part of the Otterbein community you understand what it means to value the need to need one another.

Members of the Otterbein community understand why it is important to think, to work, and to act in a way that benefits the common good.

In fact, we serve the common good in ways that are too numerous to count...

Not to mention the fact that Otterbein has historically been too humble and too noble to attempt to quantify what we have always understood our responsibility and obligation to be ... to support one another, to care about one another, to do unto others as we would have them do unto us...

Whether that comes in the form of inspirational educators to lead our classrooms;

Savvy business minds to lead the board room;

Curious researchers to lead exploration and discovery;

Compassionate nurses to lead quality care;

Talented artists, musicians and thespians to lead our appreciation of beauty;

Or, engaged citizens who lead with their awareness and service in caring about their neighbors across the street as much as they do their sisters and brothers across the world.

An alumna shared her belief that Otterbein's value structure makes it possible to distinguish our graduates. She explained that it came down to this simple truth...

"If there's an obligation to be met or a promise to be kept; Otterbein people do it. They are good to their word."

And so these four pillars—

The smartest way to learn;

A place to belong;

The opportunity to realize one's personal best;

And, the values that guide serving the common good...

They point us to an important outcome...And that is this...

Living and learning in Otterbein's model community prepares us to lead a life of purpose.

As Beth Daugherty reminded us, our students leave here with more than a career—they leave here with a calling—something they believe in.

There is a reason this happens...

Of course, it happens in part because of the potential and talent that exists within each student.

Knowledge, service, friendship, life-changing experiences—they all contribute to discovering that calling, too...

But it is also because of you.

It is the way you teach, mentor, challenge and inspire.

For faculty, it is the way your own scholarly pursuits never end. You are still learning and searching for the truth so you can share it with your students.

For staff, it is the way you care—about one another and about our students,

For all of us, it is the way we engage with our community and with the world beyond.

As members of the Otterbein community, we work to model professionalism, compassion, engagement, integrity.

We have all found more than a career here.

Your individual calling, the way you lead a life of purpose, is by serving as Otterbein teachers, leaders, dreamers, thinkers and doers.

With every newscast I watch.

With every statistic I read that sobers me.

I am reminded that the world needs now more than ever what Otterbein is uniquely able to offer through its graduates, its community and its service.

Your life's work serves an important purpose.

Your efforts support each student's ability to truly become an individual in his or her own right. While they're here you help them build on their talents as they build on their values and as they build on their experiences.

And as a result, they will go out into the world prepared to go to work and be successful not only in their professions, not only in their families, and not only in their communities but in terms of how they value and are prepared to serve the common good....

For years we have sung a beautiful Love Song—and I'll remind you that is a statement about Otterbein, too... We don't just have an Alma Mater—we have a LOVE SONG here...and in this Love Song we sing about the quiet, peaceful village we hold dear.

There is an easy grace offered in this pastoral setting.

We live, work and serve surrounded by this picturesque campus. It is peppered with elegant collegiate brick buildings and is bordered by the very best of neighbors.

Without question Otterbein offers comfort, respite and support to all who seek it.

But I want to make one distinction about this village clear.

We may be quiet.
And we may be peaceful.
But make no mistake--we are bold and our purpose is important.
Quiet shouldn't be confused with complacent.
When you're doing what is right, what is innovative, what is meaningful—
you don't have to shout it out.
You simply roll up your sleeves, gather the smartest, most creative and
caring people you can and attempt to solve the challenges that are before
you.

It's why the Rev. Lewis Davis wouldn't be still.

He had a purpose—something to say and do.
Something he believed would make a difference and make a positive impact
on the quality of life for his Church, his community and those who depended
upon or benefited from both.

That is why Otterbein has quietly but honorably set the pace as a leader in
higher education since its founding.

And that is also the essence of our vision. Otterbein's values coupled with a
commitment to social innovation will enable us to continue to drive ahead in
defining what a model community of educators, learners and leaders in the
21st century can and should be.

This is the conversation I invite you to join in the coming months. This is the
work we do best. This is what distinguishes us.

I have listened carefully to what you've shared as a part of the coffee
conversations we've had over the past year.

I've listened to what you're passionate about...and I'm looking to enact your
challenges in ways that will have meaning, purpose and value for you...

I heard you--many of you--when you told me you wanted more opportunities to feel proud and to celebrate your university.

There are many ways we can do this...I'll be asking all of you as leaders and contributing members of our Otterbein community to take initiative and help build these ideas and suggestions into meaningful, visible programs, practices, and behaviors.

One of your suggestions that came up repeatedly was that we establish "Cardinal Pride Days." Many of you said you want to see red—a sea of Cardinal Red as it were--with plenty of Otterbein spirit apparel.

Fall is a great time to start such a tradition --we're starting a new year, and our fall sports will bring us together to cheer on our Cardinals! So I proposed we start with Homecoming Weekend. On Friday, September 20, let's show up for work in Cardinal Red, and we'll build from there. I'll be calling on some of you to organize how we can demonstrate our Cardinal Pride throughout the year, but Homecoming will be a good time to start.

We'll also build Cardinal pride by getting to know more about one another.

You'll notice posters across campus that re-enforce our new brand pillars discussed today. There are nine locations across campus.

These posters will highlight the pillars through the ideas, values and accomplishments of the members of this community.

You can look for our first slate today—which features Education Professor Emeritus Marlene Deringer, Athletic Director Dawn Stewart, and Senior Theatre major John Carter.

Also, the brand advisory committee will continue to help guide the ways we celebrate, promote and live our brand. As our pillars become part of Otterbein's messaging, the committee will explore the use of a possible tag line and consider themes for possible future campaigns to promote the University.

I also heard many of you say that you want more opportunities to come together—to enjoy the company of your colleagues.

So the Otterbein Holiday Party will return to the President's House this year. Many of you told me you thought this practice was more personal and special—and that's part of who we are, so on December 11 from 4-7 I will see you at the President's House, and, yes, there will be something to help you bond with one another beyond punch and Christmas cookies.

Also, together with Bon Appetit, and a small group of colleagues from Student Affairs, Marketing, and Archives we are freshening up the 1847 Room.

The décor may be new with new chairs, lighting and paint, but the treasured spirit of community that you value will get its rightful place in this new space. You'll notice in the new 1847 Room that we'll have a wall that invites you to share ideas and **“Join the Conversation”** on topics that will change each month.

Through our coffees I heard a lot about communication...You want to hear more, share more, learn more, understand each other better.

One way I would like to suggest we do that--while also building pride and strengthening our community -- will be to launch an on-going lunch conversation series.

We should showcase the talents of our community and discuss the topics that matter to you.

To get it started, I will host the first lunch conversation on Wednesday, September 25th, at noon, in the 1847 Room to continue the conversation we're starting about what it means to be a model community...As you heard today there are many ways to consider this vision. We've only just started to think about how Otterbein will bring this idea to fruition.

We have an entire community full of brilliant, interesting, thoughtful people...You give us many good reasons to be proud—and we have much we can learn from one another.

I'm eager to hear more about what you want these lunch conversations to become... Who you would like to hear from and what would you like to discuss?

If you have an idea--I invite you to send an email to greatideas@otterbein.edu. It's a virtual suggestion box, another suggestion from the recent coffee conversations. Let me know what topics you're interested in exploring.

The 1847 Room will also feature an in-room chef special each month. And, you'll also see a new archives exhibition each season to share more of our Otterbein history.

I also hope you'll simply take advantage of a new offering that lets you purchase 10 lunches for \$60, and you'll get one lunch free... Which means Otterbein is proving there is such a thing as a free lunch—or that we have figured out a way to reduce the cost of lunch to only \$5.45!

I hope you take the time--or make the time--to reconnect with your colleagues in this space... Whether it is an organized program or you just decide to invite a colleague to join you for lunch.

Finally, as you leave today—we have a small gift for you.

Alumni and Staff volunteers will be passing out a coffee mug with a simple reminder printed on the side. You are a member of this community... And, with that membership are privileges... One small perk we wanted to offer is to provide you with opportunities to bump into colleagues more regularly...

For the rest of August and September, if you bring this mug into the Roost or the OtterBean you'll get a cup of coffee for free. Starting in October, if you bring this mug in—it will cost you only \$1 to fill your mug. Now, this doesn't include Starbucks specialty drinks—but a good, strong cup of coffee to start your day seemed like a nice way to say welcome back and invite you to join the conversation.

I'll be announcing dates in the Monday Tweet and through other social media to invite you to join me for informal get-togethers around campus. If

you bring your mug--the coffee will be my treat! Let's see what the other Cabinet members might want to do...I know Bob likes to meet at Graeter's!

In your mug, you'll also find a wallet card that states the University's new mission, vision, values and guiding principles as well as the brand statement we've discussed today. I hope you might carry this card with you or put it someplace visible—to remember this is the community, the pride and the work we share.

You'll also find an Ottebein lapel pin in your mug...It's a way to outwardly share your pride as a part of the education, discovery and purpose that Otterbein represents. I hope you will wear this pin with pride or pass it along to someone who exemplifies the values we hold dear. Should you need an extra, call my office.

Remember, each one of you stands as the best, most impressive pillars of Otterbein's brand. Your truths, your actions, your commitments are what others consider Otterbein to represent. I hope you'll be as proud to tell our story as I am.

In closing, I want to briefly offer the highlights at the outset of this new academic yearA detailed summary will be added to My Ozone this week as will a link to the video we watched in case you want to share it with those who couldn't join us today.

This fall, we'll launch a search for a Vice President for Academic Affairs. I am proud and grateful that we have Dr. Prindle's leadership and her willingness to serve during this process.

We'll welcome a new class of Cardinals later this week. While we won't have final numbers for a few weeks--our class is strong. We're making progress toward meeting our strategic enrollment goals with meaningful gains in academic preparedness, male enrollment and out-of-state enrollment.

You'll discover greater bandwidth and an increase in the number of access points in our wireless network throughout campus.

The grounds improvements I hope you're noticing across campus and the renovations happening in the Library are beginning phases of the implementation of the Campus Master Plan. At Homecoming, we'll explore what it might feel like to have a "GROVE" pedestrian walkway and park as the Master Plan also envisioned as we close off Grover Street between Main Street and the Campus Center. We will all begin to feel what such a new addition to the campus might feel like.

We'll be discussing and beginning implementation of the results of the Male Experience Report led by Student Affairs, and we'll be eager to be informed about the work of the Governance Review Commission that began its deliberations over the summer.

We'll also be working to establish an on-campus Counseling Center.

Finally, in late fall, you'll be hearing about the plan to launch the public phase of a comprehensive campaign.

Please also look for important news through the monthly University Updates. Mark your date for the Fall Semester Summit, which is scheduled for Thursday, October 31st.

I appreciate your attendance today and I thank you for your contributions and your hard work. I appreciate all that you do in the name of Otterbein.

I also want to thank Gina Calcamuggio and her colleagues for her efforts in planning today's kick-off and for conducting all of the interviews and facilitating the conversations that resulted in today's video and the identification of the Four Pillars.

Could I ask Gina and the members of the Brand Advisory Committee to stand and be recognized for their good work.

I encourage you to "Join the Conversation" and continue to build upon and enrich the development of our model community.

Welcome back. Let's have a great year and let's start it by singing the *Otterbein Love Song* which will be led by Matthew D'Oyly. You can find the words on the back of your program.

Our program will conclude after the Love Song...But another great year at Otterbein is only beginning!

Don't forget to get your gift on the way out and I hope you'll join the conversation.