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Otterbein University Becomes Central Ohio Community Resource for Racial Healing

Westerville, OH—As Ohio celebrates Black History Month, Otterbein University has been designated as a valuable community resource in starting conversations about race and social justice in central Ohio and changing the way community members think and talk about race-related issues.

Otterbein has been selected by the Association of American Colleges and Universities as one of 23 universities to host Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Campus Centers across the United States. Otterbein is the only institution in Ohio to receive this recognition.

As a Truth, Racial Health and Transformation Campus Center, Otterbein will work with its own campus community as well as the Columbus City and Westerville City school districts to create positive narrative change about race; promote racial healing activities; and erase structural barriers to equal treatment and opportunity. Otterbein believes a deliberate, systematic and public effort of inclusion and healing is possible when everyone works together.

Otterbein President John Comerford stated that diversity and inclusion have been strong pillars at Otterbein since its founding in 1847, but that the university recognizes that there is still work to do. “We believe that higher education should be the great equalizer in our society, so we are grateful to partner with the Association of American Colleges and Universities in this capacity,” said Comerford.

According to Angel Banks '21, an Otterbein student and president of Otterbein African American Student Union, “Healing from racial traumas is empowering and allows civil engagement with people that have real or perceived differences from you.”

Learn more about the nationwide Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Campus Centers program at www.aacu.org/trht-campus-centers.

ABOUT OTTERBEIN UNIVERSITY: Otterbein University is a private university nationally recognized for its intentional blending of liberal arts and professional studies through its renowned Integrative Studies curriculum and its commitments to experiential learning and community engagement. Otterbein is recognized by Colleges of Distinction, with additional Field of Study recognition in business, education, engineering, nursing and career development. Otterbein is a recipient of the 2015 Carnegie Community Service Classification; a finalist for the 2014 President’s Award for Economic Opportunity Community Service; and has been honored With Distinction by the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll since the list’s inception in 2006. It stands in its category’s top 20 in *U.S. News & World Report’s* guide to “America’s Best Colleges.” It also is recognized in national rankings by Forbes and The Wall

Street Journal. Otterbein has 2,400 undergraduate and 500 graduate students enrolled in its more than 70 undergraduate majors; six master's programs; and doctorate in nursing practice (DNP). Its picturesque campus is perfectly situated in Westerville, Ohio, America's fifth friendliest town (*Forbes*), just minutes from Columbus, the 14th largest city in the country. To learn more about Otterbein, visit www.otterbein.edu.

About AAC&U

AAC&U is the leading national association dedicated to advancing the vitality and public standing of liberal education by making quality and equity the foundations for excellence in undergraduate education in service to democracy. Its members are committed to extending the advantages of a liberal education to all students, regardless of academic specialization or intended career. Founded in 1915, AAC&U now comprises 1,400 member institutions—including accredited public and private colleges, community colleges, research universities, and comprehensive universities of every type and size.

AAC&U functions as a catalyst and facilitator, forging links among presidents, administrators, faculty, and staff engaged in institutional and curricular planning. Through a broad range of activities, AAC&U reinforces the collective commitment to liberal education at the national, local, and global levels. Its high-quality programs, publications, research, meetings, institutes, public outreach efforts, and campus-based projects help individual institutions ensure that the quality of student learning is central to their work as they evolve to meet new economic and social challenges. Information about AAC&U can be found at www.aacu.org.

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