



OAKWOOD UNIVERSITY

GOD FIRST!

January 21, 2024

To our Oakwood Family, Friends, and Supporters from the Board of Trustees of Oakwood University,

The Board of Trustees of Oakwood University is unwavering in its support of Dr. Leslie Pollard as President of the University, as well as all Oakwood University administrators, faculty, and staff. Many universities, and especially HBCUs like Oakwood University, face challenges in this current environment. The Board is firmly committed to its current leadership team as they navigate toward thoughtful solutions. We are blessed to have a talented and deeply skilled University leadership team. They understand how to implement our goals for one of God's vital schools.

At the end of the day, setting and enforcing governance guidelines is imperative. The Board sets and implements overall goals, standards, and procedures and ensures accountability and adherence to them. This Board has and continues to meet that responsibility.

Since our last meeting in the fall, we have reviewed the operations, examined the University's financial reports, and actively listened to members of our constituencies. In October, we put a plan in place – in collaboration with University leaders, to move this institution forward and address the challenges and opportunities ahead. Later this month, we will share more details of that strategic plan.

As a sign of the strength and stability of Oakwood University, on December 6, 2023, the 77 members of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC Board of Directors, on behalf of the US Department of Education voted the full 10-year institutional accreditation to the University through to 2032.

Each Oakwood University Trustee is passionate and committed to the success of our students and our institution. We ask all to keep us in your prayers.

Oakwood Comes to You

We recognize the need to enhance our connection and relationship with the Oakwood University community. To help meet that goal, The Board of Trustees has announced "Oakwood Comes to You," a series of events open to alumni and the Oakwood Community from across the country and around the world.

Here is the schedule for these events:

Spring Semester "Oakwood Comes To You!"

January 20, 2024—New York—Abraham Jules, Coordinator

January 26-28, 2024—Bermuda, Kenneth Manders, Coordinator

March 9, 2024—Atlanta, Calvin Preston, Coordinator

March 17, 2024—International ZOOM TownHall-- 2:00 - 4:00 pm EST, Leslie Pollard, Coordinator

March 29-30, 2024—Oakwood University Alumni Weekend

April 13, 2024—Allegheny West—Columbus, Marvin Brown, Coordinator

These events will provide an opportunity for a meaningful conversation.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Oakwood University Success

Oakwood University, founded in 1896, stands as a distinguished historically black university with a rich legacy of achievements in various domains. Notably, the Nursing Department achieved a remarkable 100% pass rate on the National Council Licensure Examination, signaling a triumphant resurgence for the program. In the last ten years, the university has experienced significant growth in diversity, witnessing a remarkable 150% increase in the Latino student population and over 500% rise in Continental African students in the last five years. Renowned for its musical excellence, Oakwood's Aeolians choir is set to benefit from department renovations funded by external sources. The university's musical legacy extends to numerous alumni nominated for Grammy Awards, including legends like Little Richard and 10-time Grammy winners Take 6.

Beyond accolades, Oakwood actively supports students through scholarships, with more than 60 awarded at the Honors Convocation 2022. Securing substantial grants, including a \$1 million award from the United Negro College Fund and nearly \$1 million from the Lilly Endowment, Oakwood University continues to enhance enrollment processes and fund unique academic programs.

Additionally, the university's inclusion in the Second Chance Pell Experiment demonstrates its commitment to providing educational opportunities for incarcerated individuals. Oakwood Live 2023 attracted a record 950 registrants, including 700 high school students, while faculty retention remains high at 96%. This snapshot highlights Oakwood University's dynamic growth, academic excellence, and commitment to diversity and social impact over the past decade.

Fundraising

Oakwood University's fundraising efforts are yielding positive results. Despite the national trend of flat or declining levels of philanthropic support for non-profit organizations (Giving USA, May 2023), the Office of University Advancement reports that in the calendar year 2023, we raised - \$2,432,606 (which is a 32% increase over 2022) from 1616 donors (which is a 33% increase over 2022.) As we head into the remainder of the academic and fiscal year, we plan to build on that increase, especially as it relates to supporting student scholarships.

Communications

The Board of Trustees is committed to increasing communication with the Oakwood community more widely. Oakwood University's Integrated Marketing and Public Relations communications typically occur on a variety of platforms, including in-person, online, and through Adventist publications. Here is the latest news about Oakwood University: <https://oakwood.edu/newsroom/>. Below are our social media platforms.

- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/oakwoodu/>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/oakwooduniversity>
- Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/oakwooduniversity>
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/school/oakwoodu/>



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Conclusion

Now is the time to lift up God's school. As we know, "Success Has an Address," is the slogan used by Oakwood University. The Board of Trustees knows success flows from God's blessings and the results of the efforts of many people working toward a common goal. Our goal rests in our mission statement. The mission of Oakwood University, a Seventh-day Adventist HBCU institution, is to transform students through biblically-based education for service to God and humanity. We ask all to lift Oakwood University up and recommit to this mission.

Respectfully submitted,

Members of the Board

G. Alexander Bryant, *Chairman of the Board and President, North American Division*

Roger Bernard, *Officer, President, Central States Conference*

Ralph Reid, *Vice Chair Layperson, Businessman, Kansas City, MO*

Ronald C. Smith, *Vice Chair President, Southern Union Conference*

Calvin Watkins, *Vice Chair, VP, Regional Liaison, North American Division of SDA*

Kyoshin Ahn, *Secretariat, North American Division*

Meki Bracken, *Layperson, Young Alumnus, Midland, MI*

Marvin Brown, *President, Allegheny West Conference*

Carlton Byrd, *President, Southwest Region Conference*

Virgil Childs, *Director, Regional Affairs, Pacific Union Conference*

Laura Davis, *Layperson, Orthodontist, Jonesboro, GA*

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Byron Dulan, *Vice President, Regional Ministries, North Pacific Union Conference*

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Benjamin Jones, *President, South Central Conference*

Abraham Jules, *President, Northeastern Conference*

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Brad Newton, *President, Pacific Union Conference*

Arne Nielsen, *Vice President, Education, North American Division*

Robert Norwood, *Pastor, Berean SDA, Houston, TX*

Pierre Omeler, *President, Atlantic Union Conference*

Michael Owusu, *President, Southeastern Conference*

Calvin Preston, *President, South Atlantic Conference*

Witford Reid, *Layperson, Anesthesiologist, Sebring, FL*



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Members of the Board Continued

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Sergio Romero, *Multicultural and Church Growth Dir. for Allegheny West*
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Ed Zinke, *Retired, Theologian/Businessman, Silver Spring, MD*

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