

College of Arts and Sciences
All-College Assembly Meeting November 27, 2018
Minutes

Dean Corcoran called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

1. Marian Wilson Award Winner

Sherry Ton was present from the committee to make the announcement of the winner of the Marian Wilson Award 2018. The 2018 winner is Fabia Battistuzzi in Biology for her paper titled "Comparative Analysis of Low Complexity Regions in Plasmodia."

2. Dean's Special Award

Dean Corcoran bestowed a special Meritorious Emeritus Award upon Professor Charlie Lindemann for his continued exceptional work and participation in the OU community through his publishing and tutoring following his retirement.

3. President Ora Pescovitz

Dean Corcoran welcomed President Pescovitz to the All-College Assembly. She said she was happy to recognize so many people at the meeting and thanked everyone for the warm welcome that she had received since her arrival at Oakland University last year. She said she wanted to share her philosophy about what a liberal arts education is because she is a firm believer in a liberal arts education and that the College of Arts and Sciences represents this. The purpose of a liberal arts education is to introduce students to things they have not known before. She stated that she has made diversity a fourth goal of the Strategic Goals document, and she noted that the word implies not only diversity of race, but also diversity of thought. She said we want students to blossom while they are at OU and to be introduced to new ideas, people and geographies. She wants them to be unafraid to take courses outside what they already know because sometimes the result is that students may shift in a new direction. She emphasized that students learn transferable skills in the CAS. She applauded the diverse and unique nature of the CAS.

She enumerated various strengths of Oakland University and said that the only area in which she believes OU falls short is in the area of financial resources from the State and philanthropic support. She stressed the necessity of getting more resources in order to meet the four stated strategic goals of the university. She said there is a gap between Underrepresented Minorities (URM) graduation rates and majority graduation rates, which is a problem that needs to be addressed. She stated as a goal that we need to have a higher four-year graduation rate than we presently have, and she wants to double the number of students from international countries on our campus. She said she would like to see every OU student have an international experience.

She talked about research as an area that distinguishes a university from a community college. She noted that the CAS is responsible for two thirds of grants that are awarded at OU, but she said that as an institution we need to do more to be competitive. She emphasized the importance of thinking strategically about how to increase research through innovative ways, such as collaboration between departments and individuals.

She stressed the importance of engagement and congratulated Dean Corcoran for leading the charge in community engagement, of which she cited the Pontiac initiative as an example. She said that the university contributes millions of dollars to the local community, so we should be engaged there. She said her dream would be for every student to solve a real-world problem, noting that such problems

exist in every field. She said that students should work with faculty and people in the community, which would be something that would distinguish us from other universities. She observed that this would better prepare students for the real world following graduation, which would make OU the university of choice for students.

She stated that there are gaps with women and minorities in terms of the numbers of faculty members, and she emphasized the importance of improving our diversity in these areas. She said that OU needs to be a leader and there should be no obstacles to this. She re-iterated that the only thing that we do not have enough of at Oakland University is money—and therefore we need to figure out ways to increase funding.

She summed up her remarks by saying that she feels privileged to be at Oakland University, and said that she welcomes the challenges ahead.

President Pescovitz then invited questions and the following are some of the issues that were brought up during the Q/A part of this meeting:

Mr. Garfinkle observed that one impediment to student success can be financial difficulties of students, so we should try to give students more financial help. Provost Lentini explained that many students graduate with too many credits, and this can cause them to run out of financial aid. Mr. Lentini added that there may be teaching methodologies that can be improved to lead to greater student success.

Ms. Van Til said that there are high levels of anxiety and well-being issues among students, but there is an eight-week waiting list at Graham Health Center. She said that she believes this is a critical issue for which we need to provide more support. President Pescovitz pointed out that if a student has a chronic health problem, it is also important for them to be seen by an outside provider.

Ms. Berven said that one way to save students money and reduce financial anxiety was through the use of Open Education Resources and affordable textbooks.

Mr. Campo-Cubillo brought up the possibilities and advantages of interdepartmental collaborations and said that we can help each other by working with faculty members from other departments.

President Pescovitz said that she wants to stimulate creativity among students, and she is interested in the science of creativity. She said that she is interested to know if there is a way to stimulate creativity or a shortcut to creativity. She noted that the answer to this question could lie in interdisciplinary activity, which is why she wants to encourage and support such collaborations.

Mr. Roth noted that there are fewer graduate students than there used to be and it is becoming more difficult to recruit. He believes this problem needs to be addressed.

Dean Corcoran thanked President Pescovitz for her participation in the meeting, and the members thanked her with a warm round of applause.

4. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dikka Berven (secretary)