Minutes of the October 22 Meeting

I. President DiBiasio called the meeting to order at 11:02 AM.

II. Invocation was offered by Paul Nutter.

III. Minutes from September 23, 2013 were approved as submitted.

IV. Unfinished Business: None.

V. Report from University Council: Jeff Allison announced that council will meet next Tuesday to discuss changes associated with the Northern Promise.

VI. Reports from Constitutional Committees:
   a. Budget and Appropriations: No report.
   b. Academic Affairs: No report.
   c. Student Affairs: No report.
   d. Personnel: Michele Govekar announced that the committee will be meeting this afternoon to review exit surveys for retiring/resigning faculty, and a revision draft of appendix 14 of the faculty handbook (department chairs). In addition, the committee will discuss ground rules for assessing the eight sabbatical applications that were received.

VII. Reports from Operational Committees:
   a. Athletic Events: No report.
   b. Cultural Events: Laurie Bell announced that the committee is working on programming for the upcoming year. This past weekend, Homecoming, the Disney concert was sponsored in part with funds from the Committee on Cultural and Special Events (CASE).
   c. International Affairs: No report.
   d. Religious Affairs: Chaplain David MacDonald stated that the committee met on September 11th and were considering applications for new student religious life groups. If anyone is interested in “Get Connected,” let him know. He also welcomed everyone to midweek prayer on Wednesdays at noon and 4:30 PM.
   a. Information Technology: Jeff Rieman announced that the committee has been meeting virtually to discuss the new learning management system policies in regards to user roles and classroom standards.

VIII. Questions for the President: President DiBiasio announced that Saturday will mark the first marriage for one of his children. He then made a few additional comments before opening the floor to questions.
   a. Principal action items from the October Board of Trustees meeting included implementing the Northern Promise and setting tuition for next year. The Northern Promise was made public on October 10th, and has generated a lot of activity and media attention. The university is also continuing to pursue potential refinancing options with the USDA. This program assists organizations in rural communities and ONU qualifies based on our zip code. The university is moving forward with the pre-application process and will present the application to the
board at the December 7th meeting. If approved by the board, the university will continue with the submission process. This program could be beneficial for the university by restructuring debt and making funds available for capital projects.

b. There will be two fall forums in November. On November 18th, discussions will focus on enrollment issues. On November 21st, discussions will focus on financial issues. For those that cannot attend, a written communication distributed to the university community will contain the core messages.

c. John Lomax asked what the board decided about this year’s budget and if there was an update on the Inn. Bill Ballard responded that the board approved the budget with third tier cuts. These cutbacks are temporary, did not involve personnel, and will be revisited during next year’s budget cycle. President DiBiasio responded that the remediation of the Inn is almost complete. The Inn reopened on October 1st and the Board of Trustees meeting was held there on October 4th and 5th. The walk-in restaurant business has been eliminated but the Inn is still available for catered meetings and walk-in pub service. The pub is open from 2:30 – 9:30 PM daily.

d. Chris North expressed concern about an image that had been incorrectly edited and distributed by the university. The image involved an African-American student who was photo shopped into a graduation picture over a Caucasian student. She also expressed concern that the correction was buried in the bottom of an email. She wanted to know how it was that this picture was altered and published and how the university will ensure that it doesn’t happen again. President DiBiasio responded that shortcuts had been taken in an effort to distribute a lot of material for the Northern Promise. This event revealed the need for a university policy with respect to image editing that is not currently in place. The individuals involved have received apologies from the university.

e. Forrest Clingerman asked about a portion of the Northern Promise involving high impact practices. He acknowledged that all faculty members are likely in favor of high impact practices, but expressed some concern that the university does not provide the necessary faculty development to back up these claims. How will we assess that these practices are, in fact, high impact? President DiBiasio responded that the Northern Promise involves first making others aware of the valuable things we’ve been doing here at ONU. Forrest Clingerman asked about the availability of resources for faculty development. President DiBiasio responded that resources are available now and can potentially be increased through budgetary processes. Ray Person noted that the university often touts student research and presentations at professional meetings yet there is an inequality among departments in regards to the funding that is available for these trips.

f. Lisa Robeson commented that we do a lot of high impact experiential learning well. However, writing is also a high impact practice that we have not done as
well. There is no systematic way to guarantee that the high impact practices will happen for every student. Forrest Clingerman noted that assessment is necessary to demonstrate high impact practices at a systematic level. President DiBiasio responded that we are trying to make prospective students and the public aware of the possibilities they have at ONU.

g. Lisa Robeson noted that it takes a lot of work to implement experiential learning into courses. The university will need to commit resources.

h. John Lomax suggested that the Academic Affairs committee come up with a list of high impact learning opportunities that we offer. This does not mean that every student will take advantage of those opportunities.

i. Rob Waters noted that many discussions involve establishing a center for university teaching. He noted that we are already very good at teaching but could improve more in research. The President responded that the strategic plan includes investigating the possibility of a center for university teaching.

j. Rob Alexander asked about the current student reaction to the Northern Promise and pointed out that it is important that the faculty speak with a consistent voice. He noted that he has responded to students by letting them know that we were already doing these things – the Northern Promise just makes it more explicit. President DiBiasio added that the cost is not going up for current students. As for consistency, the website will provide some information; additional information will be distributed to faculty for advising purposes. In general, the students seem positive about it. Since the announcement of the Northern Promise, attendance at campus recruiting events has increased (compared to last year), the website has seen a lot of activity and media outlets have been interested in the story. The best metric for the success of the Northern Promise will be whether there is an increase in the number of applications.

k. Ellen Wilson asked if we could have access to minutes from the meetings of the working groups. President DiBiasio responded that the minutes are available on the website. She suggested that these reports might be something to include in the agenda of our monthly meetings.

IX. Questions for the Provost: David Crago made a few announcements before opening the floor to questions.

a. Colleges have submitted requests for faculty searches. Some of these requests have been put on hold. The deans are aware of these decisions.

b. The website includes a list of programs that are part of the Northern Promise and those that are not. Students will not have an opportunity to sign up until later, but, as departments, continue to look at those lists.

c. Michael Loughlin sought some explanation regarding the availability of funds for next year. Provost Crago responded that carryover funds will not be guaranteed for next year. Lisa Robeson asked when budgeting decisions will be made.
Provost Crago responded that decisions will be made in the spring. Lisa Robeson noted that many departments struggle to fund events. If carryover funds are not available, major resources that contribute to our visibility as a liberal arts university are affected. Ray Person suggested that there should be a multiyear budgeting system. Provost Crago and President DiBiasio responded that the university is moving in that direction.

d. Melissa Eddings pointed out that subcommittees on CASE have to plan in advance to bring in quality speakers, artists and performers. Provost Crago agreed, but emphasized that difficult decisions have to be made when funds are already committed. For this year, avoid carryover funds if at all possible.

e. Karen Kier commented that the professional colleges use the cultural aspects of the university to recruit students. It is important to many prospective students that they can major in one field but also participate in the arts. Provost Crago acknowledged that these were all valid points. Lisa Robeson wanted a dedicated line item to invite artists or poets to campus next year and offered to help with the budgeting process.

f. Ellen Wilson inquired about the new positions on campus. President DiBiasio was not aware of any new positions that had been created but would look into it.

X. Other Reports: None.

XI. New Business: None.

XII. Announcements:

a. Ray Schuck expressed his appreciation for the building and grounds crew. The campus looks amazing.

b. Lisa Robeson announced that Tess Mellas, a fiction writer who has won the Puschart Prize, will be reading at the Elzay Gallery on October 24th. The reception begins at 7 PM with the reading to follow at 7:30 PM. The event is sponsored by the English Department and CASE.

XIII. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 12:08 PM.

Submitted by,

Leslie A. Riley
Secretary