

Definition of University Advancement: The strategic, university-wide integration and coordination of alumni relations, communications and marketing, and development functions to foster positive relationships with students, alumni and other key audiences, provide multiple opportunities for engagement, and generate involvement with and support for the mission of The Ohio State University.

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The past few months have been extraordinarily productive for us at the Alumni Association.

As I reported in my last message, the Association reached agreement with the university on a more formalized partnership that closely aligns our organization with partners in University Communications and University Development. In April, we asked our membership to approve constitutional amendments that grew out of this agreement. Our members approved the amendments by roughly a 10 to 1 margin.

One of these amendments approved my new university title as Senior Vice President for Alumni Relations. It was a truly energizing moment for me because it means that for the first time, the Alumni Association will be represented at the university president's senior leadership table. I welcome the chance to serve as your voice, and I am thrilled to assist President Gee in helping him achieve our ambitious goals.

The other amendment approved the addition of two university-appointed members to our Board of Directors. Those members are Herb Asher, professor emeritus in Ohio State's Department of Political Science, and Jeff Kaplan, Ohio State's senior vice president for administration and planning and special assistant to the president. I know both Herb and Jeff well, and I welcome their insight on our Board. Herb has worked closely with our Advocates program through the years, and I've known Jeff since my undergraduate days. Their addition will undoubtedly help our Association engage alumni in increasingly meaningful ways.

With the amendments approved, we've now gotten down to the business of advancing Ohio State. Advancement of Ohio State is the goal of this newly aligned partnership. The thought here is that we need a more cohesive and collaborative partnership to achieve the goals President Gee outlined in his strategic plan. Although the Alumni Association, Development, and Communications are different organizations with their own staffs and projects, our audience sees us as one. To alumni and friends, we are all, simply, Ohio State. To that end, we are working more closely now on approaches to communicate with and engage alumni and friends in a more coordinated way.

Work is already well under way in regards to enhancing this coordination. Members of our staff (including club and society leaders Kimberly Lowe and Craig Little, respectively) are participating in university workgroups that are looking to identify better ways of doing business. These cross-departmental teams have produced some compelling discussions and I expect that the fruits of these talks will be positive and beneficial for alumni and the university.

One focus is expanded regional engagement and that is an area we've already explored through extensive visits with alumni around the country. I've traveled with my staff and partners in University

Development and have visited with 15 different alumni groups in seven states since April. These trips have reinforced in my mind the great strength of our alumni base, and it affirms my belief that our alumni are going to play a critical role in helping Ohio State achieve its ambitious goals.

In the coming months our plans for advancement will become even more concrete. Beginning in September, and in every Board of Trustees meeting thereafter, the serious work of advancement will be overseen the Advancement Committee of the Ohio State BOT. This nine-member committee includes two representatives from our Board of Directors, and will provide a guiding hand as we move into a new era of engagement.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge the efforts of my staff at the Alumni Association. I know that the past few months have been challenging for our group. Change is never easy, even when it comes along with great positives and the potential for career growth. But our team has never wavered. They've persevered and remained focused on serving Ohio State's accomplished alumni. That is something that I know is never going to change.