Oakwood University Hosts 2014 Spring Board Meeting
by George Johnson Jr., director of integrated marketing and public relations

On April 21, members of the Oakwood University Board of Trustees met to discuss and receive reports concerning the growth of the 118-year-old educational institution at its spring Board Meeting. Chaired by Dan Jackson, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America, the board meets twice per year and includes leadership from the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s World Headquarters, local conferences, unions as well as lay members.

During the meeting, Leslie N. Pollard, Ph.D., president of Oakwood University, presented a report to the board members.
concerning a few major initiatives of the University. Highlights include:

**Industry Recovery**
Priority number six of Oakwood University's Strategic Plan specifically outlines fiscal growth, responsible management, and long-term stability of Oakwood University. According to the action plan, "the Division of Financial Administration will secure the fiscal health of Oakwood University by the creation of non-tuition revenue by managing internal financial resources in harmony with the strategic mission of the institution, and by decreasing dependence on governmental sources of income through the recovery of industries appropriate for the 21st century." This priority, proposed by President Leslie Pollard in his first University address on January 25, 2011, challenged the financial reality of Oakwood University's budget - a budget dependent on 60% tuition and fees.

Oakwood operated a number of industries across the years: a laundry that serviced the Huntsville community and the Redstone Arsenal, a dairy with cows that produced milk for the Huntsville community, a bakery, horseshoeing and other industries. One of the new businesses that Oakwood will be involved with includes purchasing a retail business that is mission compatible. Oakwood has been in recent conversations with the national Edible Arrangements® Corporate Office and have decided to purchase an Edible Arrangements® franchise. Edible Arrangements® is one of most effective and growing franchises in America.

**Oakwood Online University**
The Spring 2014 Semester marked the official rollout of the first fully-online program offered by Oakwood University. Last fall, the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools (SACS) approved Oakwood's application to offer the Organizational Management (OM) degree completion program completely online through the LEAP (Leadership Education for the Adult Professional) program, as part of the academic offerings for Oakwood's School of Business and Adult and Continuing Education.

The SACS decision followed a grueling process involving extensive research and planning to make sure this initiative was properly aligned with the University's Strategic Plan. For the past year, Hyacinth Burton, dean of the School of Business and Adult and Continuing Education, and chair of the Oakwood Online University Committee, has worked painstakingly with a team of committee members to ensure the successful rollout of Oakwood Online University.

Click here to see a list of classes being offered this summer.

**Philanthropy**
During the 2014 Alumni Weekend Celebration, Dr. Leslie N. Pollard received a pledged gift from Leroy and Lois Peters for the construction of Oakwood University's Media Center. This gift, in the amount of $1.2M, will help to finish the construction of the Center scheduled for completion at the end of 2014. Dr.
Pollard has led in a challenge to find more major gift donors - at least $1M a year.

During the meeting, Dr. Keith Burton, director for The Center for Adventist-Muslim Relations, received official reaffirmation of his ministry by vote from the Oakwood University Board of Trustees. Surrounded by his wife, Hyacinth Burton, dean of the School of Business and Adult and Continuing Education; Charles Bradford, retired North American Division president; Dr. Ted Wilson, General Conference president, Dr. Harold Lee, retired president of the Columbia Union Conference; Dr. Leslie Pollard, president of Oakwood University; Dr. Mervyn Warren, dean of the Oakwood School of Religion; Elder James Melancon, retired professor of New Testament; and Elder Dan Jackson, North American Division president, Dr. Burton was complimented and prayed over by his spiritual fathers and supporters in the ministry. Dr. Burton officially resigned employment in 2004 from teaching ministry at Oakwood University because of a theological difference concerning the Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Belief #3. Since that time, Dr. Burton has reaffirmed his unwavering belief in and support for Fundamental Belief #3. This restoration ceremony, growing out of Galatians 6:1, closed a door on a 10-year journey for the Burton family. Dr. Burton is also the author of this quarter's Sabbath School Lesson Study Guide.

At the conclusion of the reports, Dr. Calvin B. Rock, a former Oakwood University president (serving 1971-1985) gave accolades to Dr. Pollard and his administrative council for their leadership.

A portrait of unending influence: OU Board Members who are former students of Dr. Calvin B. Rock, board member emeritus.
About Oakwood
Oakwood University, a historically black, Seventh-day Adventist institution in Huntsville, Alabama, has as its mission to transform students through biblically-based education for service to God and humanity.

- Michele Solomon contributed to this report.