Accrediting agency OKs launch of "Oakwood Online University"
"A game changer," predicts OU president, Dr. Leslie N. Pollard

The Atlanta-based Southern Association of Colleges and Schools has approved Oakwood University providing adult learners a business degree completion online, it was announced yesterday.

"Oakwood Online University," a concept first spelled out by then-new Oakwood president, Dr. Leslie N. Pollard, in "Vision 20/20," his first address as its 11th president on January 25, 2011, will start in January 2014, as Organizational Management, one of its five LEAP adult degree completion programs, will be offered both as fully online and continued as its on-site track.

"Through our LEAP program, Oakwood Online University will be able to reach adult learners all over the world, who have been wanting to complete a lifelong dream: to finish their college degrees and improve their standards of living and the quality of life for themselves and their families," summarized Mrs. Hyacinth Burton, Dean of the OU School of Business & Adult and Continuing Education. Additionally, she continued,
OOU achieves one of the primary visions of our university strategic plans for academic offerings, enrollment and more diverse learners.

In his initial "Vision 20/20 Statement" 2011 address, Pollard forecasted, "By 2020, OOU is launched: Oakwood Online University. . . . The lower-cost revenue from Oakwood Online University helps grow the amount of institutional aid to needy students in our residential program."

More recently and in his annual presidential address at the school's First Chapel program on Thursday, August 22, President Pollard announced several of what he called "game changers":

- "Recovering a base of industry at Oakwood University . . . that will employ our students and bring in non-tuition revenue . . .";

- Breaking ground for the 11,700 sq. ft. Media Center and the Oakwood University Broadcasting Network, "to produce our own products - our own talk shows, our own dramas, our own editorials and religious news casts - and market them on our own terms, in our own voice" - which occurred on Wednesday, October 9; and

- OOU, as "we (the President's Council) voted to fast-track OOU's development process by buying into the HBCU Online Consortium, supported by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. This means we will immediately save hundreds of course-development hours by acquiring access to collaboratively-developed course content. Oakwood Online University will be a game changer. We will no longer be bounded by local geography, but can make Oakwood University accessible to students around the world."

For more information on Oakwood Online University and its program offerings, contact Mrs. Hyacinth Burton, OU School of Business, 256-726-7081.
**2013 OU College Days: no shutdowns and no ceilings!**

Unlike the federal government, enthusiasm and attendance over Oakwood's annual College Days showed no signs of shutdown or ceilings! An estimated 717 prospective Oakwoodites and their chaperones and supporters spent as many as five days touring the campus sites, attending classroom presentations and connecting with "future roommates" from across the US and foreign territories.
OU presents renowned pianist Leon Bates -
Musician/avid body builder to offer master class, recital

OU Music Department will present internationally acclaimed pianist Leon Bates on Wednesday and Thursday, October 23 and 24. Bates will offer a master class at the campus' Peters Hall (music building) on Wednesday, October 23, 1:00 p.m., and a recital on Thursday, October 24, 8:00 p.m., at the Oakwood University Church.

According to department chairman Dr. Wayne Bucknor, "Bates has performed on five continents and in virtually every state in the United States. Often, he is seen performing with orchestras, and has soloed with the Alabama Symphony as well as Philadelphia, New York, Boston and many other symphonies."
"His program at Oakwood will include works by Beethoven, Ravel, R. Nathaniel Dett and George Walker, the latter being the first African-American Pulitzer Prize winner."

A Renaissance man, Bates enjoys all the arts, including architecture, dance, theater and music. He is a sports enthusiast and a disciplined body builder, which he feels aids his concentration and maintains his strength for the rigors of a performance career.

Lately he has begun composing and finds great satisfaction in this creative aspect of music. One venture is composing for beginning students employing a new, progressive teaching method. He has written pieces in, collaboration with Janet Vogt, for a method book entitled Piano Discoveries (Heritage Music Press). Bates has recorded on the Orion label, Performance Records and Naxos, and on his own self-produced label.

In the latest Southern Tidings.

Oakwood's Police Chief Lewis Eakins, and how he has helped pioneer the OUPD, is featured in the October 2013 issue of the Southern Tidings magazine.

"Sing to the Rafters": A Recap and Recommitment

by Jyremy Reid, student photojournalist and Aeolian
Oakwood University had the privilege of hosting a GIA music workshop on Friday, October 11. Dr. James Abbington, Associate Professor of Church Music and Worship, was the guest clinician.

Abbington serves as the executive editor of the African American Church Music Series by GIA Publications, Inc. (Chicago). He has also served as the national director of music for both the Progressive Baptist Convention and the NAACP. Today, he currently works at Candler School of Theology, Emory University in Atlanta.

Abbington taught us 118 choristers from Aeolians and University Choirs, OU and First SDA Churches' Chorales and other attendees about the history of hymns and how they were later re-arranged by African-American musicians; he also had us sing different published hymn arrangements and original compositions from such Oakwoodites as Dr. Lloyd Mallory, Jr., Jason Max Ferdinand, Roberto Burton and fellow SDAs Mrs. Gail Jones Murphy and Andrew Marshall.

Abbington, a Negro spirituals expert, emphasized five points about hymns, namely, that they must be: 1) **formative**, in that they should form and define our faith. "What we sing, is what we really are"; 2) **transformative**, by leading individuals from interest to belonging and finally to commitment. 3) **cognitive**, as the sacred secret message should be unlocked; 4) **educational** - they should teach us something we didn't know before! And 5) **inspirational**, by leading all the hopeless out of the depths of despair and into hope and joy.

"Music isn't based on denomination, but by the abilities of the composer. There should be something in church music that separates it from the world. As Christians, we have the greatest gift in the world, and we're trading it for much less than what the world is giving us," he pined. Colossians 3:16 says, "Let the word of God dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

Dr. Abbington quoted St. Augustine by saying that "When we sing, we pray twice. When the praise is of God, something happens to the song of the praiser. Singing is a complete spiritual experience. The words sung become completely resonant throughout the body."

The GIA workshop was a momentous experience for all present. Dr. Abbington was more than pleased by the outcome of the whole
evening, and Oakwood was more than appreciative for his services. His parting words? "When those things hit your life and those circumstances come your way, if you have not suffered as Christ suffered, then you have not died and you'll never know you can rise again. And this is the faith that we sing, and it shapes us whether we know it or not.

"Many of you, regardless of what style or genre of music that you sing, don't realize how much you are really learning. But one thing that we have concluded is that all of the music that belongs to the world isn't bad. Unfortunately, sometimes it makes better commentaries on the situation than the music in the church. Unfortunately, what the music of the world does not do is resolve the issue. It can identify. But it doesn't tell you that there is a Jesus who can straighten it out."

**OU's Chief Fundraiser serves as 'expert' on local station**

WAAY-TV anchorwoman Meredith Wood (right) interviews Miss Kisha Norris, Executive Director of Advancement and Development, as Oakwood's subject matter expert for "Ask the Experts," the midmorning segment on WAAY-TV Channel 31.

Miss Norris' "The ABCs of Fundraising" will air on October 22, November 5 and 19 on Huntsville's ABC affiliate station.
From one of our readers:

Thanks for this and other E-Mails of information about OU you have sent. I welcome them any time.

I love Oakwood University. I graduated from the school when it was Oakwood College.
I live in Los Angeles, but I watch the church service every Sabbath before I go to my church.[...] I enjoy [Dr. Wayne Bucknor's] playing very much especially when he plays for the Aeolians.

Thanks very much,

Carrie Leverett
Students on the campus of Oakwood University, Huntsville, Alabama, pay the highest of compliments to Chief Lewis Eakins when they say to his officers, “You aren’t like other police I’ve encountered.” That is good news to Eakins. “We don’t want to be like other police,” says Eakins. “Even though we are an officially recognized police department, and we treat individuals with dignity and respect, we also want to help a student in difficulty turn their situation around.”

The Lure of a Law Enforcement Career

Eakins once was an Oakwood student himself. “I’d planned to study physical education, but when a money shortage kept me from staying at Oakwood, I was disappointed.” Not to be deterred and eager to continue their education, Eakins and a friend decided to take a course at a public college. “The only class that still had open seats was introduction to law enforcement,” says Eakins. “This caught my attention and I decided to enroll. That led me to pursue an associate degree in police science.”

During the time he was studying for his bachelor of science in criminal justice/business administration, Eakins also worked as a security officer at Oakwood. While he was a reserve officer on the Huntsville police force, Eakins was offered the job of assistant chief of police at Texas Southern University (TSU). “I was 24 years old and the youngest command level officer in Houston,” says Eakins. “The chief became my mentor and modeled what being an officer entailed.”

The TSU campus was in an urban setting and 8,000 students strong. “We dealt with a multitude of challenges on campus. Robbery, kidnappings, and general crime, as well as small riots and several large demonstrations kept us on alert. During this period we started major initiatives in security cameras and access control on the university campus,” says Eakins. “Much of what I learned during my time at TSU gave me the foundation for other positions I have held throughout my career.”

Following his time at TSU, Eakins became bureau commander of patrol operations, support services, and investigations divisions with the METRO Transit Police in Houston, Texas. “When I began, our officers were non-sworn, and we were a staff of four,” says Eakins. “We made a change to sworn officers, and our department eventually grew to 200 officers.”
Moving Out on His Own

In 1986, Eakins decided he wanted to move into business for himself and opened Eakins Consulting Services, a private investigations and security firm. “Our work included providing employment backgrounds and corporate due diligence, as well as security consulting services to religious organizations, business entities, and private clients,” says Eakins. Familiar names among his client list included the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), the U.S. Small Business Administration, and Enron.

Today, Eakins also serves as the chairperson for the American Society for Industrial Security International North Alabama chapter.

“I’d been in business for 22 years when officials from Oakwood contacted me about a vacancy in the University’s Campus Safety Department,” says Eakins. Intrigued with the idea of returning to the campus he had once patrolled while a college student, Eakins made the move.

Coming Full Circle

His arrival also brought changes within the department. “We needed to employ a more professional model,” says Eakins. “At that time our non-sworn officers only had first aid training and nothing else.”

With his background, Eakins understood the value a law enforcement status would bring to the University’s Public Safety Department. “We don’t have a crime problem at the University,” says Eakins. “Our move to law enforcement status was proactive.”

In July 2008, the University made the decision to follow Eakins’ recommendation. Eakins was tasked with gathering support from the local police chief, sheriff, and district attorney. The first step in the process was to obtain backing at the state legislative level. Eakins contacted Senator Tom Butler (D) of the Alabama House of Representatives. “Butler sponsored a bill to amend the existing legislation to give Oakwood’s president the authority to ‘employ and appoint police officers’ that have full arrest powers.” The bill passed, the department obtained an agency number, and was officially designated as the Oakwood University Police Department on July 30, 2009, making it the first Seventh-day Adventist institution in the North American Division to have a police department.

A police force dovetails with emergency operations plans. “This allows us to have an increased level of preparedness and enforcement for events such as fire, earthquake, tornado, active shooter situations, etc.,” says Eakins. “It also gives us the authority to conduct search and seizures, make arrests, and protect the campus from external forces.”

The status also allows the department to apply for various state and federal grants for funding purposes, as well as enhancing the professional training of officers with mandated police academy training.

“We can now share and receive information with other law enforcement agencies,” says Eakins. “When the General Conference held the Spring Council meeting on our campus, our department was able to determine whether there were any credible threats of which we needed to be aware. We worked with the FBI, Alabama state troopers, and the City of Huntsville police.”

We Take Care of Our Own

The emotional health of his officers is important to Eakins also. “In my career I had two officers who committed suicide,” says Eakins. “I understand the need to have a chaplain on staff. This allows the officers to have someone whom they can talk to confidentially.”

Eakins works closely with his officers, and is now mentoring them to fill administrative roles. “I have them attend various community meetings, where the department has to be represented. Before they attend, I brief them on various aspects, such as the personalities in the room, the issues that will impact the University, etc.”

As Eakins walks the 1,100 acres on Oakwood’s campus, he reflects on his career in law enforcement and his current role at Oakwood. “It’s amazing to me to be back here at Oakwood, where my interest in law enforcement first took hold. I understand the culture of Oakwood, and this helps me as the chief of the department,” says Eakins. “My officers are here to not only protect the students and faculty, they are here to make a difference in individual lives.”

Eakins says that the officers often go out of their way to help a student who is struggling. “One day a student was involved in an incident in the cafeteria and wasn’t able to get a meal,” says Eakins. “One of the officers who responded offered to take the student to Burger King. It gave the student time to cool down and the officer was able to connect with him. It was a positive outcome for all involved.”

“When I first began working as a police officer, I committed to not having to work on Sabbath. This was a stand I had to take for myself,” says Eakins. “The opportunities that I have had were not my doing. God has taken me and my talents and worked through me.”

Deena Bartel-Wagner, editor, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries.