Welcome, 2013!

We are off to the start of another exciting semester at Oakwood University!

- Our students are refreshed from their Christmas vacation.
- Our staff is back and energized.
- Our faculty is geared up to deliver learning for the Spring semester.
- Strategic planning for the next five years is rolling out.
- The new Cunningham Hall is open for business, and we are excited about the mission of Oakwood University.

As you read this PFYI, enjoy some of the more recent news and newsmakers of the past semester, and join us in looking forward to the expansion of the Oakwood University mission.

May God bless you and yours during 2013.

“. . . and remember, TODAY is a great day to be alive!”

Leslie N. Pollard, Ph.D., D.Min., MBA
President, Oakwood University
Diane Rugless, a native of Chicago, Illinois, came to Huntsville in 1971 after her parents heard about Oakwood College, “the school of the prophets.” Diane has lived here in Huntsville ever since. Diane is inspired to go the extra mile by ensuring that her office area is well decorated during the holidays. And she pays for the decorations from her own pocket.

The very artistic Diane decided that spending 10 hours a day in an area should be enjoyable and warm like the feeling of being home.

Diane’s supervisor, Vice President of Financial Affairs, Sabrina Cotton, says that Diane brings a spirit of joy to the office. “I think it has a very calming effect on the students. It’s also nice to see the staff stop by to take part in the Christmas cheer and to get snacks.” Ms. Cotton is also excited when people visit the finance office for positive reasons that are not tied to financial requests. Ms. Cotton also added that Diane also sets up a Black History theme for Black History Month. She said that vendors add to the overwhelming supply of snacks that are available for the visitors in the office. The vendors enjoy seeing the staff members delighting in their products. “Diane is a real plus to the office as she mothers the students and brings joy to the staff members who visit the Financial Affairs office.”

Next time you visit the Office of Financial Affairs, expect to experience the joy that is contagious by simply going the extra mile!
Oakwood University Associate Chaplain Ronald Pollard received the coveted Nikon Professional Certification on December 27, 2012. This status is held by approximately 10,000 people in the world, and less than 100 African-American photographers. Ron is the first Oakwood University graduate to receive this distinction.

Chaplain Pollard received his first camera at age 13. Since then, he has been using the lens to tell stories with his images. “I want my photos to tell a story that makes people feel like they are present in the experience that the photo captures,” he said.

Ron’s mission and wedding photography were instrumental in his winning portfolio. The nomination process requires that the photographer be nominated by two award-winning sponsors. The quality and stories of the African mission trip photos in particular spoke to the Nikon approval committee. In those photographs Ron’s photojournalism depicts the joy, trials, hopes, and strength of the Kenyan people.

Chaplain Pollard approaches his photographic work as a ministry. He says, “I really look to capture the glint of light in the soul of my subject. I try to do this by spending time researching their background, their life experience, and their favorites in food, music, color of clothes, and the list goes on. Actually before shooting, I have spent almost a day or two becoming familiar with my subjects so that during the photographic moment we are honored friends. Most times that means subjects meet my family, when possible, so that they realize we are in this mission together. On the front-end of any session it is more important to over-prepare photo subjects because in a photo session, whatever is within will come through in the photograph. That’s why I believe that what I do is sacred! Sacred, means to me that whether it is a little boy or girl on the mission field, or a beaming bride standing at the altar, each is God’s person and His creation that I am now capturing in a moment that lives forever.”
Leadership Academy Implements New Technology
“SES” stands for Student Enrollment Services. As Executive Director of this unit, I have direct administrative oversight of the Center for Academic Success (CAS) and the Enrollment Management offices.

However, SES’ umbrella is also represented by a consortium of other departments that directly impact student enrollment success: registration, matriculation, retention, and graduation. This consortium includes Financial Aid, Student Accounts, CAS, Enrollment Management, Registrar’s Office, Health Services, Residential Life, Career Services & Testing, Student Employment and Information Technology.

The “One Stop Shop” Cunningham Hall concept has forever changed the way we do business for our students at Oakwood University. The students come to one building comprised of three floors, whereas before the students had to navigate at least five different buildings to get the same services; one of these services, Health Services, was even housed off campus. This new Complex offers not only time-saving services for our students and parents but it portrays order, efficiency, collaboration and design excellence.

Spring 2013 Registration in the new Cunningham Complex was well planned and flawless in execution. All students were able to enter the building when the doors opened for service and were professionally directed by staff of the Registrar’s Office and Human Resources. There were no lines, as every student was suitably placed in a holding room with proper signage, until called.

One of the first things Dr. Pollard said on his arrival as President, is that we cannot rest until registration at Oakwood University “becomes an utterly forgettable experience.” This spring registration at Cunningham was the assurance we are on our way. Not one process complaint reached my office.

Many thanks to the visioning of the President and the President’s Council for showing, in this “One Stop Shop” that at Oakwood University, we truly put our “STUDENTS FIRST.”

There’s an app for that
James Butler, Director of the Administrative Software System, uses a smartphone to demonstrate Oakwood’s mobile registration app, to students at the entrance of Students Accounts (now located in Cunningham Hall). Starting this Spring semester, all Oakwood students can use this technology to register online.
Oakwood’s Legacy of Accreditation

A conversation with Jan Newborn, Director of Institutional Effectiveness

PFYI: Having been here during the last accreditation preparation process in 2000, what was different this time?

JN: We functioned with a different set of criteria. The criteria in 2000 were very prescriptive and detailed. The Principles of Accreditation followed in 2012 were more general in nature. The hidden danger was in the temptation to answer more generally and not provide adequate “evidence.” In 2000, we had a large steering committee, with varying assignments. In 2012, we had a smaller leadership team and the sections were mainly written by people with expertise in the specific area of the requirement, for example, finances, library, student services, institutional effectiveness, etc.

PFYI: During the SACS team visit in March, what were some of their stated impressions of Oakwood?

JN: They were particularly impressed with the size and beauty of our campus and also how well prepared we were. Dr. John Russell, President of McMurry University and SACS chair of the 10-member site-visit team, said that the presentation of our evidence was, “Inspiring!”

PFYI: Finally, what initiatives will we embark upon to ready ourselves for the next ten-year visit?

It is critical to maintain compliance at all times so that we are not put at a disadvantage at any time we wish to expand programs and/or methods of delivery. Also, we face a midterm report in five years, which requires that we demonstrate compliance at that time.
On January 3, 2013, six Oakwood University students, (Raechelle English, Jewell George, Bernude Jesucat, Sherrydon Pringle, Ro-Jay Reid, and Oshaine Wynter), and their chaperones Dr. Benson Prigg, and Ms. Barbara Stovall joined Dr. Jonathan Thompson (Director for the Ellen G. White Estate Oakwood University Branch) in attending the Ellen G. White Estate Consultation XXV meeting held at Kent Island, Maryland. On Sabbath, January 5, the students had the distinct privilege to present Project Re-Connect 2013 to the Ellen G. White Board of Directors. This project was orchestrated by Dr. Thompson who engaged Oakwood students in the study of Single Parent Homes and Resulting Disparities in African-American communities. Each student presented in his and her own way findings from a research initiative addressing today’s issues in light of the Everlasting Gospel.
The students’ presentations began during Sabbath School. Each student presented their findings, which included the problems within African-American communities, along with various statistics that supported these findings, and God’s Word concerning these issues. Approximately 40 people were in attendance. The students also had the opportunity to meet and mingle with various board members hours before the Sabbath began. Oshaine Wynter, a Theology major at Oakwood, was able to speak with and have prayer with Elder Charles D. Brooks in order to prepare for the Divine Sabbath message. Mr. Wynter delivered a powerful message entitled, “The Challenge of Reaching the Postmodern Mind with God’s Solution to Family Dysfunction.”

On Sabbath afternoon, the group discussed strategies for implementing God’s solution. The audience broke out into six groups of 6-7 people, led by Oakwood students. The sessions concluded with each selected group leader presenting their group’s strategies to the audience. Dr. Thompson has gathered the information presented from the group sessions for further use. We have received several complimentary comments from various individuals who were in attendance about the excellent work Oakwood University students presented for their presentation.
It was the most Wonderful time of the year.
OU 2012 Christmas party