

Jim Lentini Tribute

Tuesday, June 9, 2020

INTRODUCTION

- A few weeks ago, we gathered virtually to say farewell to Scott Kunselman. And now, again, we gather to say farewell to our colleague and special friend, Jim Lentini.
- Jim, congratulations on a job well done.
- I hope you can catch your breath before you begin your tenure as president at Molloy College, where your many years in higher education will shape that institution's promising future.
- You know, we are so busy and focused here that we sometimes forget that each of us has a life outside of Oakland University. For Jim, it's, of course, his wife and three sons. And, his guitar.
- His mastery of classical guitar truly is a talent to behold, and as the many accolades and artistic accomplishments prove, Jim is a world-class musician with an uncanny ability to blend notes into memorable music.
- Critics have called him an "American classical music success story," while his composition "*Scenes from Sedona*" ...has been deemed perhaps the best piece for viola and cello since Beethoven's "Eyeglasses' Duet."

- By the way, if you think your responsibilities at OU kept you from your guitar, I think your upcoming role at Molloy College might even keep you busier.
- For the music you made as provost, we are much appreciative.
- Your dedication and vision have been instrumental in fostering student success and leave an indelible mark at Oakland University.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- I know Jim wants me to be clear that these accomplishments wouldn't be possible without the collaboration of the Academic Affairs team along with the deans of our schools and college.
- Notable contributions during Jim's years at OU include:
 - Student success initiatives leading to a 14-percent increase in graduation rates (from 43% to 57%) and a doubling of the four-year graduation rate (from 15% to 31% from 2013-2019 (both are all-time highs).
 - The development of 22 new academic programs and 3 research centers, while fostering online programs to reach 22 that are fully online. New programs have generated an avg. \$5.2M annually in last five years.
 - Creation new leadership models and organizational structures for the School of Music, Theatre and Dance, Office of Research, the Graduate School, Office of Student Success, and Enrollment Management, among others.
 - Successful HLC institutional reaccreditation, and the reaccreditation of OUWB earlier this year.

- Carnegie Classification from R3 to R2 status.
- Restructuring of the Office of Research, including a Chief Research Officer position.
 - Research expenditures increased from \$14M in 2018 to an all-time high of \$18M in 2019
 - PI Academy attracted \$6.4M in external funding
 - New cluster hire initiative implemented leading to newly approved initiatives in two areas: Neuromorphic Computing and H2OU (fresh water research and environmental sustainability).
- Co-chairing OU's Master Plan (2016) and contributed key strategy to the design and planning of the construction and renovation of two academic buildings (South Foundation Hall and Wilson Hall).
- Overseeing the Office of Enrollment Management in 2015 and led the area from 2015-2020.
 - During this time, OU recruited the two largest freshman classes in OU's history in 2018 and 2019, while also achieving the highest student academic profile on record. This was accomplished despite historic declines in the number of high school graduates in Michigan.
- Implementation of the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, kicking off the effort in leading the President's Retreat in the Summer of 2018.

- Creation of the Provost Fellow for Faculty Diversity position to develop strategies that promote faculty diversity and launched new Postdoctoral Fellowships in Diversity and Equal Opportunity in Higher Education.

Personal Note

- Accomplishments are one measure of a person's impact.

Another level measure is the personal impact he or she makes on colleagues.

I, like all of you, consider Jim a dear friend.

- While Jim and I have had many conversations – including many early morning conversations – I have always admired his sense of fairness and decency. He is always a gentleman, and deeply concerned with the condition of his staff, colleagues, faculty and students.
- Jim, we have worked together, always mindful of the best interests of Oakland University. And together, we have forged a path for Oakland University that I am so proud of.
- Perhaps, it's appropriate to cue the soundtrack of Jim's official bon voyage, "Ulysses' Sail," his composition for the opening of the Elliott Carillon Tower in 2014.
- "Ulysses' Sail" pays homage to OU's motto "Seek virtue and knowledge," and in this moment, let's play the piece as homage to its creator.
- NOTE: Play "Ulysses Sail"