Well, hello there, wonderful Class of 2010!

I hope this letter finds you all well. I’ve been racking my brain, trying to figure out what to say in this annual letter to you all. I always find it to be a very reflective exercise, giving me the chance to pause and consider the time that has passed since we were all last together. How have we changed, what challenges have risen and what accomplishments have we achieved. This year has been particularly challenging to synthesize but if there is one thing I can say with certainty it is that life has certainly been exciting since graduating from Oberlin College. Armed with a degree and a sense of possibility, the past couple of years have flown by in a whirlwind of new experiences. It has certainly been scary and stressful and uncertain and everything in between but overall inspiring. Yet, like every high, one must eventually come down. Now, almost four years out of college, things seem to be settling down. Living in one place for more than a year or so, having a sense of career trajectory; with all of these things it’s as if the path we are traveling down is becoming increasingly clear. I hope for each and every one of you that it feels like the right path, but even when it is, the fact that it is so defined is frankly terrifying. I know that we’ve all been told we can do anything when we grow up, and this year, I realized that there is a slight possibility that I’ve grown up. Recently, I even exchanged business cards with a fellow Obie. Business cards, for goodness sakes! If that’s not the sign of being an adult, I do not know what is. But in all seriousness, we have made choices, some opportunities to pursue and other possibilities to let go and each has led us a step further down the road. The future promises to be exciting, just as the past couple of years have been, but for some reason, I’m currently finding it lonely in a strange way.

Perhaps it is because we Obies have such a strong community. We are a bunch of dreamers and doers and Oberlin was and is so supportive to our ambitions, when the rest of the world isn’t always so optimistic. It doesn’t matter the major, the friend group, college, conservatory, or even, as I’ve come to discover, graduation year – we share a certain basic appreciation of and for one another’s fierce dedication to be forces of good. The longer I have been out of college the more I realize the importance of staying connected to Oberlin – as I hope you all feel too. Staying grounded and active in the Oberlin community helps to keep me inspired to fulfill my potential and be true to who I am, especially at a time when I am starting to feel so far away from those glorious days on Wilder Bowl. And not a moment too soon, for in only a few months we will all have the opportunity to relive those wonder years at our 5th REUNION (May 23-26, 2014 – expect registration materials in early spring).

So in the spirit of helping you all stay connected with Oberlin, here is a bit of what has been going on recently:

- Hopefully you will recognize most of your friends at reunion, but there is a chance you may not recognize the town of Oberlin! It has really blossomed since we left. There are numerous new restaurants to dine at, two hip coffee shops to study at and there is even going to be a new Oberlin Inn in the near future!

(over, please)
Oberlin is continuing to send prestigious grads to be forces of change throughout the world, including 16 Fulbright Scholarships awarded to students in the 2012-2013 year, a winner of the Luce Scholars award, and the naming of Oberlin’s ninth alumnus to win a MacArthur Genius Grant. Way to represent!

The school has stepped up to the plate in response to the bias incidents on campus last spring and begun instituting changes to strengthen the sense of inclusion for all that Oberlin’s rich history is founded on. While the coalition of students, faculty and staff is continuing to work on long-term actions to promote diversity on campus through curricular changes and staff recruitment, there have already been ideas implemented. These include increased access to counseling services and the establishment of a new position in the conservatory for an assistant dean/musicology professor specializing in African American Music, enhancing the MRC budget, the creation of a full-service fitness location on south campus, and many more.

It has probably been a while since a lot of people have had a homework assignment, so humor me for nostalgia’s sake. Your assignment is to reach out to someone who you were friends with at Oberlin, but haven’t talked to in a while. Even if it has been years! Send them a quick email, saying hi. Let them know what you are up to. You don’t have to wait for reunion to reconnect! (A list of “lost” classmates is included with this letter. Help us reconnect with them, by sending along any contact information you have, to me or alumni@oberlin.edu.) Hopefully this reconnection will also inspire you to become an active part of the Alumni Association if you aren’t already. Oberlin is only as amazing as we make it! Here are a few ways you can help keep Oberlin awesome:

- Do you know a cool agency that works with underrepresented high school students? Put them in contact with Admissions (college.admissions@oberlin.edu);
- Spread the word! Wear your Oberlin shirts; put a bumper sticker on your car. You’ll be surprised at the other alumni you will meet;
- Attend regional alumni events. When you’re excited about Oberlin, other people will be too, which means more volunteers. This keeps Oberlin traditions like hosting a student for Winter Term or connecting students with potential employers alive;
- Apply for LaunchU – a program through Creativity and Leadership designed to accelerate the development and launch of Oberlin entrepreneurs. More info here: http://oberlin.edu/launchu/;
- MOST IMPORTANTLY! Make sure your OBIEWeb profile is up to date – that way you can make sure you are receiving information about REUNION 2014!
  - Registering is a quick and easy process:
    - 1. Go to the www.oberlin.edu/alumni
    - 2. Go to the MyOBIEweb box and click on “Register for MyOBIEweb”
    - 3. Follow the simple instructions.

As always, I love hearing from all of you as well so if you feel so inspired, send me a hello! I cannot wait to reconnect with, reinvest in and rejuvenate the Oberlin love at reunion this year. Also, if you want to help plan the reunion, please contact me. Mark your calendar now, for May 23-26, 2014, because it is an event not to be missed! (Join us on Facebook at “Oberlin College Alumni: Class of ’08, ’09, ’10.”)

Lots of love,

Taylor Soderborg
2010 Class President