The Oberlin Illuminate campaign continues to advance well ahead of schedule. Our campaign total as of June 30, 2014, was $229 million—nearly 92 percent of the way to our goal.

According to Bill Barlow, vice president for development and alumni affairs, “With your generosity, whether through an annual recurring gift, endowing a scholarship, boosting our athletics and health and wellness programs, donating a musical instrument to the conservatory, or giving of your time, you have helped ensure Oberlin’s position as a leader in higher education for years to come.

“Throughout this newsletter, you will find stories about how our alumni are giving back and demonstrating their love for Oberlin, both financially and with their time and talent. I speak for the entire Oberlin community when I say thank you.”

CAMPAIGN PROGRESS

$229 million

GOAL: $250 million

Where Are We Today?

As of June 30, 2014, we have crossed the $229 million mark, nearly 92 percent of the way to our goal. “With your generosity, you have helped ensure Oberlin’s position as a leader in higher education for years to come,” says Vice President Bill Barlow.
A SAMPLING OF NOTABLE CAMPAIGN GIFTS

HEALTHY BODIES = HEALTHY MINDS

Oberlin College received an $8 million gift from the Austin E. Knowlton Foundation to create a new, multipurpose athletics complex that is positioned to be one of the finest Division III facilities in the country. The Austin E. Knowlton Athletics Complex at Oberlin College will be named in honor of the late Ohio businessman who created the foundation through his estate to support colleges and universities throughout the Midwest.

“The complex will replace the outdated football stadium with an all-weather, multipurpose field with artificial turf and lights, suitable for nearly every athletics team or club sport on campus. The complex will include a press box, new grandstands for home and visiting spectators, innovative meeting spaces available to the campus community, and a new support facility with locker rooms for all outdoor varsity teams.

“We are beyond grateful for the Knowlton Foundation’s vision and generosity,” says Natalie Winkelfoos, Delta Lodge Director of Athletics and Physical Education at Oberlin. “The complex will lend itself as a location to strengthen relationships and connect with the greater community.”

ADVANCING ENVIRONMENTAL THINKING

On June 12, 2014, the college held a groundbreaking ceremony on a state-of-the-art hotel, restaurant, and conference center that will be named in honor of Peter B. Lewis, the late philanthropist and chair of Progressive Insurance Company. The Peter B. Lewis Gateway Center will become the cornerstone of Oberlin’s Green Arts District, an ongoing development encompassing the northeast corner of North Main and East College streets. The Lewis Center project is a planned 100,000-square-foot, mixed-use development that will incorporate renewable energy systems; it is designed to meet the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED Platinum rating.

Lewis’ $5 million gift is the single largest contribution in Oberlin’s campaign for support of the Green Arts District and came in the form of a challenge that was successfully matched dollar-for-dollar by other donors. “Oberlin College is profoundly grateful and honored to be included in Peter B. Lewis’ legacy of funding groundbreaking projects,” says President Marvin Krislov. “His generosity brings us a significant step closer to fulfilling our goal of becoming a climate positive community.”

PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Oberlin’s American Roots Residency Fund was established through a $200,000 gift by actor-comedian Ed Helms ’96. This current-use fund is intended to support annual visits to Oberlin by renowned performers of various American musical styles, encouraging interaction with students through collaborations, concerts, master classes, lessons, discussions, and mentorship.

The first of these residencies began in December with a visit to campus by the Punch Brothers. Formed in 2006, the Punch Brothers boasts members who hail from all over the musical map, from bluegrass to jazz to classical, including Oberlin graduate and guitarist Chris Eldridge ’04. The residency concluded with a joint performance during Commencement/Reunion Weekend in May, bringing the discoveries of the students’ and band’s work together onstage.

“I hope that students will feel a charge from being so close to these artists, and to hear straight from the artists the sheer amount of work that goes into this kind of lifestyle,” says Helms. “It’s really a special opportunity to pick the minds of musicians like that.”

SCHOLARSHIPS

GOAL FOR $90 MILLION


Griswold served as solicitor general of the United States (1967–1973) under presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard M. Nixon. He also served as dean of Harvard Law School for 21 years. Several times he was considered for appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court. During a career that spanned more than six decades, he served as a member of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and as president of the American Bar Foundation.

Griswold earned a BA (Phi Beta Kappa) in mathematics and an MA in political science at Oberlin. He held several trustee positions throughout his career, but in none did he serve longer than as a trustee of Oberlin College. He was elected in 1956, retired in 1980, and remained active as an honorary trustee until his death in 1994.

From his office in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and during visits to campus spanning more than 60 years, Griswold maintained an intimate involvement with Oberlin—administratively, financially, academically, and socially. He served on numerous committees of the board and was instrumental in securing the appointments of presidents William Stevenson and Robert Carr in 1945 and 1959.

Griswold established The James H. and Hope E. Griswold fund, the Oberlin College Library’s largest endowed acquisitions fund, in memory of his parents. He died on November 19, 1994, at 90 years of age.
support his family.

Hymes finished his deliveries at 6:15 a.m., which gave him just enough time to get to orchestra practice at 7:30. When his bike five miles to reach the delivery neighborhood and to rising every morning around 3:30 a.m., he rode his paper. To help cover these expenses, he got a job delivering the local chores, and paid for his voice and piano lessons.

The college-bound Hymes brought that work ethic with him to Oberlin. As a conservatory student in the mid-1970s, he worked two jobs—in the dining hall and with campus financial aid, making an Oberlin education possible for those who otherwise could not afford it. A little help from a lot of people can go a long way toward making this possible. The following testimonials are from young alumni who are consecutive-year donors to the Oberlin Annual Fund. These donors are making a difference in the lives of our current students, and we are grateful for their continuing support.

W HY W E GIVE

The college-bound Hymes brought that ethic with him to Oberlin. As a conservative student in the mid-1970s, he worked two jobs—in the dining hall and with campus security—to make ends meet and to continue sending money home.

At home in the summers, he worked 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at a pharmaceutical company, grabbed a few hours’ sleep, and then worked the graveyard shift at Hewlett-Packard, finishing just in time to start the routine all over again.

Although he is justifiably proud of his early efforts, when asked what made his college education financially feasible, Hymes credits Oberlin.

“It was important for me to understand that Oberlin’s entire financial aid platform is what made it work,” says Hymes, who received substantial scholarship and loan support in addition to his campus jobs. “That essentially made all of it possible.”

In 2004, Hymes and his wife created the endowed Victor ‘79 and Kathy Hymes Scholarship, which is just one of the ways he is working to repay Oberlin’s favor.

—Victor Hymes ’79, adapted from an article by Richard Bader
Volunteering: Building Community
In Oberlin and Beyond

It’s no surprise that two of Oberlin’s most active Washington, D.C., alumni were drawn to Oberlin’s strong sense of community. That aspect of campus life—the closeness and diversity and how they worked together—struck Clyde Owan ’79. For Dixie Sommers ’70, it was the smaller, more intimate bonds, as compared to larger state colleges, that made Oberlin feel like home away from home.

Owan recalls, “The more I read about Oberlin, the more I realized that going there was more than just getting a degree: it was a cause.” For the government major, college was something of a mystery. Thanks to the G.I. Bill, Owan’s father went to Ohio State after World War II; Owan would be just the second generation of his family to attend college.

Because of my deep affection for Oberlin, I have been a volunteer since I graduated,” he says. He recognizes that Oberlin opened doors and paths for him and provided more opportunities than he might have had elsewhere.

Growing up on a farm in west central Ohio, for Sommers “I had a great time as a student and made such dear friends. I hope these efforts inspire Obies to help each other, promote Oberlin values in their lives and work, and make a generous financial gift to the college each year,” Owan says. Sommers agrees. “It’s important for those of us who got a lot of help from Oberlin to be able to give back so students have that advantage.”

Find out more at http://campaign.oberlin.edu.

“Think about what Oberlin means to you—that’s why you should want others to have that experience.”

Volunteering: Building Community
In Oberlin and Beyond

J Keirn-Swanson
CAMPAIGN UPDATE: SUMMER 2014