

2005 The Review in Review

Faith Richards
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In these times of uncertainty fueled by the burning questions ever present in the minds of Oberlin students — why is DeCafe shut on a Friday when I need my coffee? How many times do I need to poop at the Environmental Science Center to earn twenty-five free beers at the 'Sco? — we all need something to grasp onto and give us hope for the future. The outside world and the economics of reality are creeping daily closer to the average Oberlin student like the ominous thick pitch-black clouds that herald a tornado, and there's no umbrella in sight. With this in mind, the *Review* offers you a small bright spot and piece of blue sky in the form of highlights from: *The Oberlin Review Strategic Planning Document*.

The Oberlin Review enters this process of strategic planning with great strengths. The *Review* uniquely combines a premier opportunity for a school with no journalism department and with many renowned majors that emphasize writing. Our proud history manifests ambitious dedication to breaking news and artistic-

ly excellent wall-quotes (usually produced around 3 a.m.).

Those involved in this strategic planning process have worked to identify ways that the *Review* can build on its strengths to continue being, if not universally considered on par with the *New York Times*, at least more tasteful than *The Grape*.

The *Review* has long been guided by a set of principles that give specific meaning and direction to an excellent newspaper. These include a commitment to tracing the biology of the albino squirrel population, a conviction that 2 a.m. wrestling matches between sports editors are central to human existence and dependence upon each staff member as part of a living, vital, web of referrals to others for answers to problems that nobody can actually solve.

The Oberlin Review's mission is to:

- Graduate staff members who, due to many late nights filled with bad leads and even worse headlines, may be considered legally insane
- Provide the highest level of stress for ever senior editor on staff to prepare them for "real world" journalism

- Open the world of chain-smoking copy editors and emergency runs to 4th meal and the DeCafe to all students
- Help students clarify and integrate their grammatical skills and ability to identify italicized periods, social commitments and vocational interests (presumably journalism related, but hey — we'll take anything, even TIMARA).

The Oberlin Review's current strategic planning has intentionally integrated week-by-week planning with financial planning in the conviction that programmatic excellence cannot sustain itself without robust financial health. We have examined the *Review's* operating and capital expenditures and advertising revenue. We have found that if we shut the paper down completely for approximately five years, we might be able to recover from our encroaching, suffocating debt. However, due to our moral and ethical journalistic high-ground, we feel that this would be a great detriment to society, as *The Grape* would then be Oberlin's newspaper of record. Actually... maybe we could do that...

Journalism Program...

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photography in Studio Art.

Combining existing courses and some new ones into a formal program would also deepen existing interdisciplinary ties between departments. Although the College has already developed course clusters in an attempt to do so, a journalism program could be a way of sustaining those bonds in the long term. What better way to demonstrate the value of an intersectional liberal arts education than by structuring more explicitly overlapping and collaborative course work between programs and departments? Even if students don't end up going into journalism, skills along these lines are valuable and marketable for other careers.

With local news organizations struggling as national media outlets dominate in the digital age, a journalism program at Oberlin could also work to help students and local news organizations in northeast Ohio by forming innovative, mutually beneficial partnerships. Through these, students could get experience in broadcasting, writing and editing, and producing that they cannot necessarily find in a classroom while acquainting them with the importance of local news organizations. This would demonstrate to future students

that their time at Oberlin won't just be defined by grades and interactions with professors, but by participation in meaningful work experience as well. Meanwhile, news organizations in our area who partner with the College could benefit from the work of driven student-journalists. The Chronicle-Telegram has hosted students as newsroom interns in the past, including some editors at the *Review*. Working to expand and develop these opportunities in journalism, and even in other fields, would set Oberlin apart from its peer institutions in demonstrating that we can put our students in meaningful positions and further develop their work portfolios, leading to tangible jobs after graduation.

Further, Oberlin must be better at communicating the pathways that do exist for student journalists to prospective students, irrespective of creating new programs or initiatives. When parents and prospective students touring Oberlin inquire about the lack of a journalism major, we must have an answer ready, because we believe that if students work hard and craft their Oberlin education with intention, they can learn multidisciplinary journalism here. The problem, as we see it, is in part a failure to effectively relay those possibilities to prospective families, one that could be helped

by connecting prospective students with current students pursuing journalism, making it easier to craft individual majors, and creating better mentorship within the Career Center.

Oberlin has produced some stellar journalists. Our alumni have landed positions at *The Wall Street Journal*, *NPR*, *L.A. Times*, *Bloomberg*, *The New York Times*, and many other reliable, strong news institutions. These Obies have thrived and pioneered journalistic potentials and standards, creating successful shows like *Radiolab* and serving as chief White House correspondents. But many of these journalists broke through before students began reconsidering the value of a liberal arts education. If we want to be doubly futuristic — to send prepared, even innovative, journalists out into the world not just today, but 18, 50, or 100 years from now — we need to provide and structure our approach to higher education to cater to the changing nature of post-graduate life and careers.

College is supposed to be a transformative moment in young adults' lives. Let's prove to the world that we can do that for our students. But let's also prove that we can be the transformative force in revitalizing, maybe even revolutionizing, higher and liberal arts education.

1877

Trunk Packing

Josephine B. Bateham
September 27, 1876

According to Butler, the repetition of an action tends to induce perfection in the performance of it. Also there is an old proverb that "Practice makes perfect;" but it don't apply to trunk packing, nothing applies. Even if you are a Fourth Year and have performed the operation six times a year for the last three or four years, it is just as bad. You don't know how any better than at first and get into as great depths of despair over it. But you are convinced of two things. First of the statement that all matter possesses extension and impenetrability, and secondly of the utter perversity and natural depravity of all things inanimate, when they are desired to occupy as small a space as possible and not demolish their neighbors.

The first thing done is to empty every thing from trunk, closet and bureau into the middle of the floor, so as to have every thing handy and know what you have got to get into that one trunk. Then you begin cheerfully by placing in the bottom of the trunk everything you are sure to want before you start or the first thing when you reach your destination.

You believe in doing things methodically and cast a glance of superiority at your room-mate, who has tumbled everything into her trunk heterogeneously, compressed them by a war-dance of triumph on the trunk lid and then thrown herself on the bed to recover from her arduous labors with a sense of duty performed.

Every thing goes on well for a time until you suddenly make the discovery that the trunk is almost full, while that awful mountain is hardly diminished.

Then begins the compressing process. Presently, in a tone of conviction, "Maria Jane, these things never can all get into this trunk." "Leave 'em out then," is the comforting suggestion from the bed. This not meeting with approbation, the next is, "Make them into a bundle and carry them." "A bundle, indeed!" Haven't you got to carry a basket and satchel and umbrella and parasol and shawl strap already? "Well, put them into the trunk then," which probably you had not thought of before. And then the squeezing and mashing process goes on, intermixed with exasperated groans and interjectory remarks addressed to the refractory perfumery bottles, books and shoes which refuse to condense. Room-mate assists by informing you that your back hair is coming down, and so much color in your face is not becoming. Finally you complete the whole by depositing yourself on top, in the dim expectation that it will immediately sink down so that you can close the lid. There is a slight giving way underneath, with a suspicious crackling sound that causes you to get off again with sudden alacrity and utter an ejaculation not expressive of intense satisfaction, "That blacking bottle!" As you fish out the remains and survey the black rivulets meandering through your ruffles, you are seized with a sudden envy of German girls, who can say what they like to relieve themselves, but which must be meekly translated "indeed" in English.

"I want to be an angel" is drawled soothingly from the bed with an accompaniment on the head-board.

"Maria Jane, if you can't do any thing else you might at least keep still or I shall lose my senses," and only replying to the suggestion that it would be a small loss, by a stray slipper sent in that direction, you make one last effort to close that trunk. But it remains obstinate and in desperation you get off your dignity and pant out, "Maria Jane, if you had any heart at all, you would come and stand on this trunk till I can lock." Which pathetic appeal brings one hundred and thirty pounds over the foot board onto the trunk lid before you can get your fingers out of the crack.

When your intense gratitude for this sudden assistance has somewhat subsided, the contest begins again. Tug here, pull there, press and pound, with Maria Jane executing an original Spanish fandango on the lid.

Perhaps, after jerking the straps off you succeed finally in getting it locked; but more likely you don't and it is left for some masculine creature who comes in and says, "Here, out of the way," puts one knee on top and snap goes that lock in a twinkling.

You conclude you don't care any thing about woman's suffrage yet awhile, and watch that trunk off on the omnibus with feelings of relief, though mixed with visions of smashed perfumery bottles, the dictionary reposing on your best hat, and the ink bottle uncorked among your laces.

2018

Community Should Reflect Upon History of College Spaces

Kameron Dunbar
Columnist
March 9, 2018

Editor's Note: This article contains mentions of sexual assault.

I walk into North Hall every day. Most days, I forget that the official building name is "Langston Hall," in honor of John Mercer Langston. That name may not be familiar to many, but this one may be: James Mercer Langston Hughes.

Yes, that Langston Hughes. Langston Hughes was the grandson of Charles Henry Langston. Charles Henry Langston and his brother Gideon were the first two

Black students admitted to Oberlin College. Charles and Gideon were John's older brothers. John Mercer Langston was Langston Hughes' great uncle.

While John Mercer Langston's name may not carry much global recognition, his life is a vital piece of Oberlin College's story. His time at Oberlin and in Ohio was spent fighting for a better nation — particularly a nation stripped of slavery's chains. Langston served as the president of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society — which was founded in part by Charles Grandison Finney (Finney Chapel's namesake). One of his most notable feats was his presence in the life of Edmonia Lew-

is, a Black student who faced frequent harassment on the basis of race and gender during her time at Oberlin. Lewis later became a famed sculptor.

Lewis lived in the home of Rev. John Keep — a member of the Keep family that the co-op is named after. One night, after being accused of poisoning her two white housemates, Lewis was abducted, beaten, and likely raped. After that traumatic experience, Lewis was then charged with poisoning the two women by local authorities. It was John Mercer Langston who represented Edmonia Lewis during the trial that resulted in her acquittal.

Langston's work didn't stop in

Oberlin. He went on to serve as the founder of the law school at Howard University, one of today's most recognizable and prestigious historically-Black universities. President Rutherford B. Hayes appointed him as the U.S. Minister to Haiti. He was also a legislator, serving as the first Black person elected to Congress from Virginia.

I regret every time I walk into Langston Hall without taking just a second to acknowledge its history. Black History Month may be over, but it's always timely to recognize, respect, and admire the sacrifices that Black Obies made during Oberlin's earliest and most fragile periods. Like many Black students, I stand in the leg-

acy and memory of John Mercer Langston, Mary Jane Patterson, Edmonia Lewis, George Vashon, and others like them. These Black visionaries willingly placed themselves in a community that was not ready to accept them for all of who and what they were.

Names matter. It would benefit all students to take a moment out of our busy lives to think about the names and stories written on the spaces we frequent. Who were they, and what did they contribute to Oberlin? What stories are we missing?

Oberlin history is American history. Sometimes I wonder, what kind of history are we making today?