Welcome to the 171st Reunion Weekend and meeting of the Oberlin College Alumni Association! We have a wonderful tradition at Oberlin of celebrating together the Commencement of the newest class of Oberlin graduates, along with the renewal of friendships among previous generations who have experienced an Oberlin education.

I am especially pleased to welcome both the 50th reunion class of 1960 and the newest members of our Association, the class of 2010. This year, in addition to our 50th reunion, we have the classes of 1949, 1950, and 1951 celebrating a 60th cluster reunion, the classes of 1964, 1965, and 1966 celebrating their 45th cluster reunion, the classes of 1979, 1980, and 1981 celebrating their 30th cluster reunion, the class of 1985 celebrating its 25th reunion, and the classes of 1999, 2000, and 2001 celebrating their 10th cluster reunion.

All graduates and former students, currently more than 40,000, who attended the College of Arts and Sciences of Oberlin College, the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, the Oberlin College Graduate School of Theology, or the Kindergarten Primary Training School are members of the Alumni Association (hereinafter the Association). Members of the Association meet annually at the Alumni Luncheon, the day before Commencement.

The Association’s Vision:
• Provide a lifelong community for students and alumni of Oberlin College.
• Be an effective partner in supporting Oberlin’s academic and artistic excellence.
• Enhance commitment to Oberlin’s historic values of excellence, justice, and service.

The vision guides alumni activities as diverse as career services and bowling, reunions and regional book clubs, selection of six members of the Board of Trustees, and picnics for newly enrolled students. These activities and countless others help maintain our partnership with today’s Oberlin and reinforce Oberlin values in us. Association leaders commit seriously to the vision and strive to realize it through our decisions and actions.

Association committees provide an opportunity for alumni to interact with key college and conservatory administrators. The work of our Trustee
Search Committee on the identification and selection of well-qualified candidates to stand for election as Alumni-Elected Trustees is one of the most important areas of alumni involvement in policy making and we are very proud of the excellent candidates whom our process has identified and have served Oberlin on the Board of Trustees.

The Alumni Association facilitates alumni involvement in many college and conservatory activities. Each year, for instance, more than 350 alumni are actively involved in helping the Admissions Office recruit students to Oberlin, by attending college fairs, conducting interviews, and hosting informational meetings or admitted student receptions. Alumni actively support the Career Services Office, with more than 3,560 alumni registered as career mentors.

In September 2009, more than 200 alumni volunteers returned to campus for the Alumni Council Weekend. During that time the Executive Board, each of our eight committees, affiliate group steering committees, regional coordinators, class presidents, and lead class agents held meetings, learned about early results from the Oberlin Alumni Magazine survey, attended a Q&A with President Marvin Krislov, laughed with actor-comedian Ed Helms ’96 during his Convocation speech, and took a hard-hat tour of the Kohl Building construction site.

Dr. Thomas Frieden ’82 received the Distinguished Achievement Award for the exceptional and outstanding work he has done not only as Health Commissioner of New York City, but also as a Medical Officer for the World Health Organization, the Assistant Commissioner of Health and Director of the Bureau of Tuberculosis Control in New York City, and as a Supervisory Medical Officer for the Centers for Disease Control. In June 2009 Frieden began his tenure as the head of the Centers for Disease Control, after being appointed by President Obama. The award was presented to him in Atlanta on March 22, 2010.

Mary Durling ’57 was given the Distinguished Service Award in recognition of her many contributions to the Association. While living in Oberlin, Durling worked with or served on the boards of many local organizations, and served as an elected member of Oberlin City Council from 1990-1994. Diana Chapin Helper ’53 was awarded the Certificate of Appreciation for her long-standing contributions and service to Oberlin. She has served as an admissions representative for many years, is active with the Colorado regional club, and now serves as editor of the Colorado
Robert Schell Maneker ’57, a marketing and public relations executive from New York, was recognized during the 2009 Commencement Ceremony with our Alumni Medal. An active alumna, she has served on the Board of Trustees, as president of the Alumni Association, and as a member of the presidential search committee that selected Nancy Dye. She has also conducted admissions interviews and served as chair of the regional club of New York.

The Alumni Association established the Alumni in Service to Oberlin College (ASOC) program almost three decades ago to help departments, programs, and student groups bring alumni back to campus to lecture and meet with current students and other community members. While in town, alumni give speeches, lead workshops, answer questions, and participate in informal discussions with faculty, staff, and students. This year, 22 alumni were brought back to campus, including historian and author Peter Mancall ’81, opera singer Marco Antonio Labastida ’95, WE CARE Solar founder Laura Stachel ’80, visual artist Nina Sarnelle ’07, and acclaimed author John Wray ’93.

The Association has had another very busy and highly productive year of activities in Oberlin, throughout the United States and in foreign countries. Highly visible activities of the Alumni Office include Commencement/Reunion weekend, the travel program, regional club events, Oberlin Cares – Alumni Day of Service, and special reunions. Last year more than 1,000 alumni returned to campus for Commencement/Reunion Weekend.

The travel program operated three tours in the past year: Alaska’s Coastal Wilderness, Village Life in England’s Cotswolds, and The Copper Canyon and the Sea of Cortez. ObieAdventures! conducted two sea kayaking trips in the San Juan Islands. While in Europe for the England tour, alumni events were held in Oxford and Paris with President Krislov.

More than 50 alumni attended “A Crisis is a Terrible Thing to Waste: Creating a Durable Future,” a special environmental reunion hosted by the EnviroAlums and the Environmental Studies Program in October. The weekend featured a keynote address by Oberlin’s David Orr. In February, nearly 50 alumni returned to campus for the De Capo: Collegium Musicum 20th Anniversary Reunion—a weekend that culminated in a reunion concert and gala reception. And in April the Alumni Association helped coordinate a
reunion for Oberlin Computer Science alumni to celebrate the department’s 25th anniversary, when 39 alumni turned out for a weekend of talks, facility tours, and networking.

Oberlin’s regional outreach program continued to expand this past year with 95 events taking place in more than 26 cities. These events included the traditional Western New England gathering at Tanglewood Music Festival that was attended by more than 150 Obies and friends; a talk with Bernie Gersten, acclaimed executive producer, before a showing of HAIR on Broadway; a coffee tasting in Hawaii; a celebration of Oberlin alumni working in the Obama administration in Washington, D.C., which boasted an attendance of more than 475 alumni and friends; 16 summer picnics; a talk with Donald R. Longman Professor of English Anuradha Needham for the Chicago Humanities Festival; an annual baseball bash with the Oberlin men’s team in Arizona; and a host of other activities in our alumni chapters across the country. You can see when something is happening in your part of the country by visiting the alumni website.

Obies nationwide participated in the first Oberlin Cares – Alumni Day of Service on Saturday, April 17, 2010. Ten Oberlin Alumni Clubs from around the country (including Washington, D.C., Cleveland, Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York) brought alumni, students, and friends together, offering a chance to connect with each other while completing an important service project and giving back to their local community.

The Association wishes each of you a most enjoyable Commencement/Reunion Weekend. We hope that you will consider ways to maintain your contact with Oberlin in between reunions through our regional activities and many volunteer opportunities. Serving as your president is a great honor and privilege, and I must give my sincere thanks to the staff in the Alumni Office and my fellow members of the Executive Board of the Alumni Association for their exemplary service and support.

Dwan Vanderpool Robinson ’83
President, Oberlin College Alumni Association