



## **FACULTY, STAFF AND ALUMNI**

Faculty organizations at ORU have always included all full-time faculty. The original Faculty Senate was led by high-ranking professors, and enjoyed stature, influence and cohesion. The president often attended meetings. This waned as attention shifted to the new graduate programs. From low ebb in the early 1980s, the Senate rebounded under leadership teams guided by newly appointed Associate Dean Ralph Fagin. Lasting achievements from that period include the annual faculty retreat, a weekly dedicated hour for faculty meetings (Mondays at 11:00 a.m.), and a focus on effective teaching. These and related efforts positively impacted faculty morale. (Concern for meaningful faculty involvement and morale was the inspiration for a 1987 paper titled “Enduring Values: A Role For Faculty,” by Senate President Nathan Meleen.)

In 1991 the Senate concept was reorganized into a University Faculty Assembly, with individual Senates in each school. As implied by its name, the new organization placed more emphasis on disseminating information and less on governance. This is reflected in the fact that the original Senate had elected officers whereas the new one has elected representatives who follow a rotating system of officers.

In the past, the tenured faculty has had little influence at ORU. Energized by recent events, this group is now struggling to organize into an effective body, which in turn has created some tension with non-tenured faculty and administration. There is much interest in just what “shared governance” means and how that will affect both tenured and non-tenured faculty.

The staff has played a large part in the success of ORU. Many have been faithful for many years, choosing to stay at ORU rather than seek employment elsewhere at a higher rate of pay. Despite less-competitive compensation packages and infrequent raises (one in the last five years), ORU has nonetheless been blessed with a significant group of highly committed individuals—along with many new staff, as turnover has been high. The staff is looking for leadership from the new president that will acknowledge their contributions to ORU and encourage them to continue on.

The alumni of ORU include about 22,000 graduates and 14,000 associates. They are served by the Office of Alumni Relations, which was established in 1980. Through the years this group has observed their alma mater’s ups and downs, and has exhibited limited trust in the university—due in large part to questions concerning governance and financial accountability. The Alumni Office has had mixed success in reaching out to disengaged alumni. As a result, ORU has not enjoyed the type of positive spokespersonship and financial support from alumni that is characteristic of older, more established colleges and universities.