$56,301 Raised in May to #SaveOldNorth

UCO’s Development Office wrapped up its #SaveOldNorth campaign in May with $56,301 raised for the renovation of the university’s iconic building, Old North. Utilizing multiple social media platforms and other methods of crowdsourcing, the university surpassed the original 30-day goal of $18,900 — in honor of the university’s founding in 1890 — in just 12 days. The #SaveOldNorth project is part of the university’s $40 million Always Central campaign. With more than $38 million raised, $3.5 million is still needed to finish the interior renovation of Old North.

UCO Welcomes Fulbright Visiting Scholars

UCO will serve as the host for the 2014 science and technology cohort for the Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program for Iraq. UCO’s selection was due to the work of Wei Chen, Ph.D., Fulbright scholar and assistant dean of the College of Mathematics and Science at UCO. The program will bring junior Iraqi scholars to Central in June for faculty development in teaching, research and leadership, as well as mentoring and cultural exchange activities. “We are very excited about this unique opportunity to work with colleagues from Iraq. This Fulbright Award to UCO will be the beginning of a long-term relationship between UCO and the visiting scholars,” said Chen, who was a Fulbright scholar in Taiwan from 2011-12.

Betz Joins Leadership of International Organization

The International Association of University Presidents (IAUP) has appointed UCO President Don Betz to the association’s executive committee for the 2014-17 term. The appointment follows Betz’s three-year term as chair of the association’s North American Council. The IAUP Executive Committee is a select group of leaders from accredited colleges and universities. Its members advise the association’s leadership on IAUP’s various programs and initiatives.

Commencement Class Sets Record

UCO celebrated the achievements of approximately 2,200 graduates during the Spring 2014 Commencement Ceremonies May 9-10 in Hamilton Field House on Central’s campus. It was the largest commencement class in Central’s history.
National Award Recognizes Student’s Passion

UCO student Elizabeth Larios is one of 197 college students nationwide to be named a Newman Civic Fellow, an award recognizing student leaders working to find solutions to community challenges. Larios, who is studying international business and French, is an advocate for women’s education and empowerment. She hopes to help women in developing countries advance their entrepreneurship skills so that they may better themselves, their families, their communities and their economies. After graduation from UCO in May 2015, she will continue to share her passion for the advancement of educational initiatives for women in Gambia as she serves as a missionary with Youth for Christ International.

Expanded Opportunities for Disabled Veterans

U.S. Paralympics, a division of the U.S. Olympic Committee, recently selected UCO to receive a $274,119 grant in support of Paralympic sport and physical activity programs for disabled veterans and disabled members of the armed forces. UCO plans to use the grant for Paralympic military sport clinics, housing and training for two military powerlifting resident athletes, an additional powerlifting coach, equipment, personal training sessions, Paralympic sport camps and to cover costs for 100 disabled military athletes who attended the June 2014 UCO Endeavor Games.

Construction Begins on Residence Hall

UCO celebrated the groundbreaking of a new residence hall with a ceremony and reception on May 1. The 440-bed hall, expected to open in August 2015, will be along Ayers Avenue and just north of the university’s College of Business building. The $28 million, 120,000-square-foot structure will bring the total number of available beds on campus to 1,900. Its design focuses on connecting students to campus and building strong communities through a pod-style housing option. UCO President Don Betz noted that the concept of the design was meant to draw on existing campus buildings, but also to look to the university’s future.

UCO Honored by Higher Learning Commission

The Higher Learning Commission recognized UCO during its annual conference for having the best paper in the category of Assessing and Improving Student Learning. The conference honors four papers each year and attracts more than 4,000 participants from its 1,000 college and university members. Central’s submission, “Using a Transformative Learning Transcript to Assess High-Impact Practices,” was the work of six university leaders. It highlighted Central’s development and use of the Student Transformative Learning Record tool, an app that Central students will be able to use on mobile devices to track their transformative learning progress.