

Athletics department provides reasoning for OAC placement



Photo by Elissa Collopy

Even though the University of Mount Union is about twice the size of Marietta College, MC remains in the Ohio Athletic Conference because of its high value of academics.

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Over the years, people have come to question why Marietta College is still in the Ohio Athletic Conference rather than switching to another conference more comparative to our academic goals and school size.

The OAC was formed in 1902 with a major focus on the well-being of the student athlete and competes in the National Collegiate Athletic Association's Division III.

"The OAC is comprised of schools similar in make-up to Marietta in terms of enrollment, academic profile and commitment to athletics," Assistant Athletic Director Jeff Schaly said. "In the OAC, athletic competition is viewed as an extension of the educational programs."

Of the 10 schools in the OAC, the enrollments range from 1,100 to 4,500, MC being on the lowest end. Schools such as Otterbein, Baldwin Wallace, Ohio Northern and John Carroll are twice as large as MC.

All of the schools currently in

the OAC were founded in the 19th century and have long and outstanding academic reputations.

"The OAC is one of the most recognized and historical division III athletic conferences in the country," head football coach Andy Waddle said. "Being a member of the OAC allows our athletes to compete against some of the best student-athletes in the country. That is part of what drew me to Marietta as well as many of our student-athletes."

In addition to the national recognition, the OAC is also one of the most competitive. The OAC is a tough conference in terms of athletics, head soccer coach Joe Bergin said. However, even with this tough conference, many of MC's sports are excelling, such as baseball, softball and both basketball programs.

"There are a lot of people that think we should leave the OAC because some of our teams have struggled against the higher level of competition," Schaly said. "There is no question that building a championship caliber program is tougher

to do in the OAC than in the other surrounding Division III conferences, but look what we have done in men's basketball recently. It can be done."

MC joined the OAC in 1926 and the advantages of being a part of the OAC are the geography, like-minded schools, and being a tough conference for MC's athletics, Bergin said.

"I think the OAC is the best route for us," Bergin said.

MC continues to be one of the longest-standing members to the OAC, and while maintaining these high academic standards, OAC athletic teams and athletes have consistently had a great deal of success on a regional and national level.

"If we can turn MC into a winner in the OAC our program will be one of the best in the country," Waddle said.



Recap: Campus honors King

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Last week, Marietta College honored activist Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with a week of activities centered on social justice, equality, and civil rights. The events were coordinated by the Office of Civic Engagement, in collaboration with the Department of Gender & Sexuality Studies, Department of Political Science, Office of Alumni Relations, Office of Campus Involvement and Office of Diversity & Inclusion.

The week kicked off on Monday with Listen Up!, during which students could stop by the OCE to watch film loops and read transcripts of speeches delivered by civil rights leaders. Later, students, faculty, and staff gather in Thomas for a brown bag lunch discussion on civil rights led by Dr. McKinzie Craig.

On Monday evening, storyteller Al Letson spoke on the life of Bayard Rustin, who worked alongside Dr. King to organize the March on Washington and promote nonviolent resistance. The audience engaged in a lively question-and-answer session with Letson after his address.

Wednesday evening, the OCE and the Political Science department sponsored a Pizza and Politics on civil rights versus civil liberties. Dr. Craig

and Dr. Tager explained the difference between both terms and responded to student questions about civil rights today.

Students, faculty and staff came together on Thursday night in the McDonough auditorium for an honorary reading of the speech that Dr. King delivered when he visited Marietta College in 1967. Afterward, those present enjoyed one another's company at a small reception.

A small group of students honored the life and work of South African revolutionary Nelson Mandela on Friday evening with a candlelight ceremony. Though the MLK Week Super Saturday of Service was cancelled due to inclement weather, students were still encouraged to write letters to support civil rights at a discussion on modern-day civil rights movements in the McDonough Auditorium this past Tuesday, led by Dr. Alex Perry and Dr. Jamie Moshin.

MLK Week was the first event in a series of social justice events coordinated by the Office of Civic Engagement this semester. Upcoming events include the "I Have a Dream" writing contest (February 8), Alternative Spring Break in Marietta (March 8-16), a March on the Mall (March 28), and Community Service Day (April 5).

Cline breaks track record in New York

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Senior Aimee Cline had a standout performance in New York City when the Pioneer track and field team competed in the Ramapo College Indoor Select Meet Jan. 18.

"New York was really exciting for me, because I have never been [there]," Cline said. "The meet itself was really amazing. I have never been to a nicer facility in my life, and I felt really blessed to be there."

However, Cline said she "had been struggling" in practices leading up to the trip. Because of this, she took a different approach to the meet.

"I went in with the mentality to have fun," she said. "Marks were going to be what they were and competition was going to be hard. Instead of putting pressure on myself, I needed to have fun and be me. Seeing the other teams at first was intimidating, but then I knew I had to just relax."

This approach paid off. Cline, who previously held the school record

in weight throw, broke it again when she finished third in the event with a toss that went 15.83 meters. The throw ranks 12th in the nation in Division III so far this season. Cline also placed fifth in shot put with a throw that went 11.54 meters. She claimed athlete of the week honors as well.

"I think the meet was a great opportunity to compete against top of the

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to have fun."
- Cline**

line competition that we don't get to see every meet," Cline said.

Emily Lorek, a senior on the MC track team, also spoke of the value of competing in New York.

"I can't think of any schools in the OAC that have an opportunity quite like that," she said.

Lorek described Cline as a major asset to the team dynamic.

"She puts a lot of effort forth in competition and it shows," Lorek said.

According to head coach George Evans, Cline has grown exponentially and has improved more each year she's been here.

"She works hard at everything she does and does everything right," Evans said. "She is very coachable and does what she's told, as well as having the internal motivation to just get better. From where she started at as a freshman to where she is not is amazing."

Cline has worked very hard throughout her career at Marietta to get where she is.

"Growing from my freshman year is something that I feel like I have done a little bit every year, whether it's improving on technique or getting stronger," Cline said. "This year Coach Smith pushed me beyond limits that I had ever imagined for myself. We have set goals and together she will push me until I have reached them."