



AUSTIN BROWN '19

“I’ve always had a connection with Olivet Nazarene University,” says Austin Brown, Director of The Olivet Fund. “My parents met when they were traveling in a ONU music ministry group together. My aunt and uncle met here also. I’m a ONU graduate, and so is my wife, Mackenzie.”

As a student, Austin played the tuba and was a drum major with the ONU Marching Tigers for four years. “One of my favorite memories is when our marching band played in the New Year’s Day Parade in London, England,” he says. “It was during my freshman year. That was my first overseas trip, too. I enjoy remembering the experience of playing my instrument while marching in the streets of London with my friends.”

One of the best parts of the ONU educational experience for Austin was being able to explore his interests and develop new interests. A history major with minors in Spanish and legal studies, he enjoyed his work with Dr. Charles Emmerich and the Center for Law and Culture. “Dr. Emmerich truly takes an interest in his students and was an important mentor for me,” Austin says.

“I appreciate all our professors because they take time to know and relate with their students.”

Austin met his wife, Mackenzie (Mehaffey), in the legal studies program. She now serves as ONU’s Director of Recruitment. As a student, she was on the golf team and is a school record-holder. Austin has developed his golfing skills with her help, which came in handy at the 2022 Winter Golf Outing in Phoenix, Arizona.

Austin began his ONU career in the Office of Alumni Relations. “In 2021, we received the CASE Circle of Excellence Bronze Award,” he recalls. “That award recognized our Olivet Advocacy program, ‘Great People Know Great People,’ where alumni and friends connected us with 5,000 high school students.”

Today, you may see Austin, who is 6’3”, driving his red 2005 pick-up truck. In his current leadership role with ONU’s Development team, he focuses on inviting people into the spirit and culture of

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generosity at ONU.

“When people think of what our team does, they often think of the massive financial gifts,” he says. “I’m working with alumni and friends and encouraging them to start giving to ONU now. We want their participation in what’s happening at ONU. The size of their gifts isn’t the focus. Engagement on a monthly or annual basis is what we want them to develop.”

Austin leads several giving events throughout each year, including Day of Giving in April and Giving Tuesday in November. He also has many opportunities to guide and mentor students. He works with a group of 20 students at the Olivet Engagement Center as they make calls and engage with alumni and friends during the fall and spring semesters.

Building relationships with his Development team colleagues is important to Austin. “Even if I’m asking for \$50 gifts and someone else is asking for \$50,000,” Austin says, “there are still ways that our work can be mutually beneficial,”

He applauds the renewed emphasis on athletics fundraising for ONU by connecting coaches with their alumni, sharing team news and assisting coaches in raising funds they need. In the future, he would welcome the opportunity to work with faculty members and academic departments on a similar focus.

“A lot of life is open-ended,” Austin says. “I’ve learned that people, regardless of the titles they have, are executing their judgment based on their experience. We just keep doing our best, being good to others and listening more than we talk. Those basics are what really make a difference.”

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