



## Board Notes

February, 2018

### **News from Governance Committee**

The recruitment of new trustees has been temporarily suspended pending completion of our HLC accreditation site visit.

Many thanks to those trustees who recently completed the Board self-evaluation survey. We had a 70% response rate. The results will be presented at the March 16 Executive Committee meeting and will be summarized in the March issue of *Board Notes*. It is our goal that the results of the survey will guide further improvement in board engagement, governance policies and oversight practices.

### **Saint Paul Launches the FLEX Approach to Theological Education**

*Jeanne Hoeft, Ph.D.*

*Vice President for Academic Affairs and Academic Dean*

In Fall 2018 Saint Paul will launch a new approach to course offerings that emphasizes Flexible Learning Experiences (FLEX). Most students come to seminary education with many other commitments already demanding their time, energy and money. They are not able or willing to drop everything and go off to seminary, even when they have a sense that God is calling them in that direction. Many travel several hours from the rural areas in our six-state area to come to school and many are already serving as pastors to churches in those areas.

The FLEX plan means that students can adapt the way they go to school to fit their own life situation. They may take only on-line courses one semester and on-campus courses the next. They may mix on-line, hybrid and on-campus courses in one semester or across all semesters. If students who enter the Master of Divinity (MDIV) program next Fall follow a prescribed degree completion plan, they can complete their MDIV in three years while coming to campus only one week each

term. We are committed to making it possible for those called into ministry or seeking vocational purpose to access theological education at Saint Paul. An expanded array of course delivery options and flexible scheduling is one way to increase accessibility.

Many students are clear that they do best in a traditional weekly on-campus experience. A consolidated on-campus schedule will continue to provide courses on-campus, either in Oklahoma or Kansas, linked via video conferencing. Two-thirds of the MDIV courses will also be offered on-line, some asynchronously so students have maximum flexibility for when they "go to class," and some synchronously, where students will join a virtual classroom at a particular time but from anywhere they have a computer and internet connection. The other third of MDIV courses will be offered as hybrid classes. Saint Paul's other masters degrees share courses with the MDIV making it possible for Master of Arts in Christian Ministry (MACM) and Master of Arts in Theological Studies (MATS) students also to benefit from this new FLEX schedule. Our Doctor of Ministry program has already been offered in a hybrid format for many years.

A central feature of this new approach is the FOCUS week which will be a time to build connection among students, staff and faculty in an on-campus intensive week. Students will attend the on-campus part of their hybrid course, being in class for most of the day each day of the week. A Spiritual Formation Retreat, three of which are required for the MDIV, will be held on one day that week. On another day students can choose to take one of several offered practica. Practica are short courses narrowly focused on a particular aspect of ministry, such as organizing capital campaigns, officiating at weddings, or ministry with the homeless. In between classes students will worship together, share meals, and participate in other communal activities. Each Fall and Spring term will have one FOCUS week and the summers will have two.

Improved technology and new classrooms will make these expanded offerings possible. We will be able to increase our "reach" while maintaining our commitment to "the integration of academic excellence and faithful practice; the creation of community in the challenges of emergent contemporary contexts; the promotion of peace and justice through theological dialogue, and the use of multiple platforms and approaches in academic life" as stated in Saint Paul's Strategic Plan.

## **Each One, Reach One!**

*Deana Brink*

*Interim Director of Admissions and Student Recruitment*

What would it be like if each one of us would encourage someone to think about attending Saint Paul? The Admissions Office is sponsoring an Each One, Reach One recruitment challenge for the Saint Paul Community including board members, donors, and alumni.

To refer someone simply visit our web site, [www.spst.edu/refer-a-friend](http://www.spst.edu/refer-a-friend) or email the name and contact information of the referral to [deana.brink@spst.edu](mailto:deana.brink@spst.edu). You can also stop by the campus office for a printed referral card to fill out and leave there.

Encourage friends in the discernment process to schedule an individual visit with us or join you for chapel or community meal. There will be "Explore Saint Paul" event on Tuesday, March 13 from 11:00-2:00 during which prospective students will have an opportunity to visit with faculty and students, experience chapel, and observe a class first-hand. To register, [www.spst.edu/campusvisit](http://www.spst.edu/campusvisit).

Feel free to call Deana Brink, Interim Director of Admissions at: 913-253-5042 if you have questions.