



Board Notes

March, 2018

News from the Executive Committee of the Board

Michael Parmely

Chair, Board of Trustees

At its March 16, 2018 meeting the Executive Committee took several actions on behalf of the Board that were necessary to meet our timeline for remodeling of the East Wing of the Church of the Resurrection and our move from the Fox Hill Offices. The following actions were approved:

- Notification of the Fox Hill lease management of our intent to terminate our lease with payment of a termination fee in the amount of \$246,183. Our lease at Fox Hill will end in September 30, 2018.
- Approval of a Letter of Intent with Church of the Resurrection outlining conditions for remodeling and leasing educational and office space in the East Wing. Next steps include drafting of a MOU/lease agreement.
- Approval of the Leawood campus plan and timeline of remodeling and occupancy.
- Approval of Strickland Construction Company for remodeling of the East Wing on the Church of the Resurrection campus. Construction will begin in June and is expected to cost approximately \$450,000.
- Approval of a revised policy for regular presidential review.
- Approval of a capital campaign dedicated to offsetting the one-time expenses associated with remodeling the East Wing, terminating our Fox Hill lease, upgrading our IT infrastructure and moving the offices from Fox Hill to Church of the Resurrection.

Board Self-Assessment Survey

Board member Susan Lindahl presented to the Executive Committee the results of the board self-assessment survey conducted in February. Together with some recommended future actions, her report will be presented at the April board meeting. Despite much progress in many areas, trustees still desire:

- More data and key performance indicators that would enable informed decisions and planning
- Better communication by the board with our stakeholders
- More consideration for financial aspects of the actions we take
- Presidential development and succession plans
- More opportunities for student input
- Attention to developing greater trust in the board of trustees by stakeholders

Susan also noted the high frequency of "neutral" responses to the survey statements, which may indicate the need for more board education about the issues contained in the survey.

Toward a Holistic and Systemic Plan for Saint Paul School of Theology: The Work of the Response Team

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Chair, Response Team and Board Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee

At its April 17, 2017 meeting the Board of Trustees authorized the Saint Paul Response Team to "work in an integrated way on revising and updating the strategic plan, increase board engagement, assess organizational design and culture, and review educational programs.... This will be an integrated, rather than a silo model, with budget, strategic plan and the response to HLC [Higher Learning Commission] all worked on by the same team."

The basic idea behind the authorization of a Response Team was to develop a more representative planning group made up of trustees, administration, faculty, and staff in order to provide a more integrated and holistic view of the various functions of the school. This approach recognizes that each action we take in the institution affects every other action, so that these various operational moves must reciprocally take each other into account. Most importantly, they need to be integrated into a holistic body of policies and processes that serve the purpose, mission, vision, and values of Saint Paul School of Theology. On February 5, 2018, the Response Team began meeting jointly with the Board of Trustees Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee to assure even greater Trustee involvement.

It is important to understand here that the probationary status that Saint Paul received from the HLC never had to do with academic quality. The school is sound there and continues to be so. The correctives required by HLC had more to do with the lack of holistic and integrated planning, making decisions and engaging in planning based on the analysis of evidence and following data-informed policies and processes to achieve our stated purpose, mission, vision, and values articulated in the 2017-2025 Strategic Plan. These are the primary areas where the Response Team has spent its energy.

An example of this process can be found in the consolidation of educational facilities on the Leawood Church of the Resurrection campus. Providing effective learning environments requires attention to classroom availability and size, necessary technology, and appropriate pedagogy. Of course, these require financial support and fiscal projections for the future. These considerations are central to sustaining academic programs, curricular offerings, faculty specializations, faculty development and faculty size. All of these issues raise the question of staff support and necessary administrative positions, etc., and so it goes. The point is that this planning must be holistic, taking into account all of these factors and more; and, at the same time integrating them so that they move forward in concert with the purpose, mission, vision, and values of the school. It is the Response Team that has been charged by the Board of Trustees with reviewing this quite sizable and complicated process. The HLC Assurance Argument—the document that reports the progress the school has made to address the correctives required by HLC—will be submitted in June.

Potential Change in Our Summer Board Meeting Date

Delaying the summer board meeting until August would allow trustees to participate in the fall Convocation ceremony and witness the excitement associated with a new class entering remodeled facilities on the Leawood campus. It would also permit us to prepare for the mid-September HLC site visit at a date more proximal to that visit. Please hold August 20-21, 2018 as a potential date of the summer board meeting, which we will discuss at our April meeting.