



Board Notes

August 2018

A Model of Stewardship

Neil Blair, President

Melvin and Mona Winger are extraordinary people of faith. To be in farming and ranching for over 70 years in western Kansas, you must be people of faith.

I have been privileged to know the Wingers for approximately 30 years. I've watched them share their lives in a generous manner, even in great times of personal loss.

They have been faithful United Methodists since childhood. On Sundays you will find them in Sunday school and church at the First United Methodist Church in Johnson, KS. When out of town they are busy finding the nearest United Methodist Church to attend.

The Wingers have been leaders throughout their lives. They have promoted and completed the effort to build a new public school in Johnson, Melvin served as county commissioner for 40 years, they started or partnered in over 30 new business ventures, leading the building effort to double the size of the United Methodist Church with a multimillion-dollar addition and gave the lead gift. Their philanthropy dots the landscape of Kansas and far beyond.

Melvin and Mona became acquainted with Saint Paul School of Theology at a luncheon in Liberal Kansas. President Lovett Weems was speaking. Melvin and Mona were invited to join as members of the Saint Paul Council, a collection of individuals, families or businesses who would give a \$1,000 or more to the seminary for annual program & scholarship support.

They said yes and have never looked back.

The Wingers passion to educate men and women called to ministry has been underscored by their participation in the life of the seminary in all three biblical categories—time, talent and treasure.

Melvin served faithfully as a trustee on the Saint Paul board for over 20 years and was named a life member. To say the Wingers have been generous would be an understatement. They have been major donors every year since their time with Saint Paul and have given large six-figure and seven-figure gifts in four seminary capital campaigns since the early 90's.

Saint Paul has been enormously blessed most recently with their leadership gift of \$500,000 for the major renewal and renovation of the new campus located at Church of the Resurrection East Building.

I have been blessed to know them as dear friends through good times and challenging times in our lives. Their Christian faithfulness and strength of an encouraging loving spirit inspire me and have blessed so many students, alumni and our seminary community now for over three decades.

I write this with deep affection and appreciation for Melvin and Mona Winger.

Celebrating our Accomplishments

At their August board meeting, trustees joined faculty, staff and friends to celebrate some of the accomplishments of the seminary over the past two years while on HLC probation. Some of the highlights include the following:

- Consolidated all Kansas operations at the Church of the Resurrection, which involved renovation of approximately 19,000 square feet of teaching, library, office and gathering space.
- Secured over 75% of the funding for the project costs during the silent portion of a capital campaign
- Implemented a new online scheduling function known as FLEX, which will make degree programs more accessible
- Installed Zoom videoconferencing classrooms at both our Kansas and Oklahoma sites
- Improved our website to be more inviting and inform others about the goings-on at Saint Paul
- Formalized the use of dashboard reporting of key performance indicators to allow data-informed decision-making and resource allocation tied to our Strategic Plan

- Adopted a multi-year budget with a projected 4% drawdown on the endowment investment pool
- Implemented a new staffing model and leadership team
- Enhanced fundraising by increasing in the number of donors giving more than \$1000 to the Annual Fund by 40%, resulting in an increase of the Annual Fund by 27% overall this year
- Instituted a new Comprehensive Development Plan to guide fundraising strategies
- Witnessed a fundraising effort that collected \$100,000 per month for the past two years
- Maintained accreditation through the Association of Theological Schools

A Focus on Innovation

It was exciting to hold our first board meeting in the newly renovated facilities at Church of the Resurrection, which left many of us dreaming about similar facility improvements on the OCU campus in Oklahoma City.

As part of our work in August, the board approved the designation of a task force for creating and implementing innovative new educational initiatives. These initiatives are to address enrollment and institutional growth built upon trusting relationships with internal and external constituents. Members of the task force are:

*Andy Bryan (Trustee, alum, UMC pastor) whose broad fine arts knowledge and experience informs a creative approach to graduate theological education, continuing education, and community engagement

*Shannon Hancock (Director of Admissions and Communications, alumna, AMEZ elder) who brings extensive experience mentoring youth and working with social media platforms

*Derrek Belase (Oklahoma Conference staff member, alum, UMC elder), who has broad budgeting and organizational management experience at the conference level

*Hal Knight (Faculty member, UMC elder), who brings a history of broad ecumenical relationships

*Greg Henson (President of Sioux Fall Seminary), who has consulted extensively with Saint Paul around developing trends in theological education

*Angela Sims (Vice President of Institutional Advancement, faculty member), who works for Saint Paul on the development of external relationships

The Board granted the team broad authority, noting that their timely implementation of new initiatives should not be limited by the approval by faculty or board committees. It is anticipated that such action will be reviewed by the board for implementation early in 2019.

Wise Stewards Seek Trustee Assistance

The Saint Paul Board of Trustees is enrolled in a mentored board development program sponsored by In Trust, called the Wise Stewards Initiative (see the July 2018 edition of *Board Notes* for more information). During the month of September, members of the Board of Trustees will be asked to complete an online survey that will help develop foundational data on the governance practices of our board. This information will be aggregated with that of the nine other free-standing seminaries who are participating in this project and will provide guidance on areas of improved structure, policies, operations and actions by the Saint Paul Board of Trustees.

Once you trustees are notified, please make every effort to complete the survey by the end of September.

We are excited that our Wise Stewards board development mentor is Dr. Amy Kardash, President of In Trust. She will join us at our October 22-23 board meeting to explain the initiative and guide us in adopting best governance practices.

Hold These Dates

September 10-12: Higher Learning Commission site visit

October 22-23: Fall Board Meeting on the Kansas campus

May 2-3, 2019: Spring Board Meeting on the Oklahoma campus