

SAINT PAUL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY BOARD NOTES
MAY 2019

This has been truly an extraordinary year for Saint Paul School of Theology. Under the leadership of President Neil Blair and Board of Trustees chair Michael Parmely the school has made major steps toward a new and bright future. The movement of Fox Hill offices to the Church of the Resurrection, the state-of-the-art renovation of the classrooms, offices, library, and lounge at COR, the setting of the budget of the school at a sustainable and conservative level, a striking achievement in development and funding, being removed from probation by the Higher Learning Commission, the development of new programs of study, new uses of media that provide greater accessibility, the expanded offering of classes and degrees, and the hiring and employment of what may be the best staff in the history of the school. All of these constitute a short list.

We say a sad farewell to Vice President and Professor Angela Sims who leaves the school July 1 to become President of the Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School in Rochester, New York. We send her with Godspeed as we thank her for her splendid gifts to us in the classroom and in administration. May she be especially blessed in her new work.

The Board of Trustees has four committees: Academic Committee, Governance Committee, Resource Committee, and Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee. I have asked the chair of each of these committees to write a one-paragraph summary of their work this past year. Here are their comments.

Academic Committee

David Martin, Incoming Chair, Tex Sample, Interim chair

The Academic Committee oversees academic affairs at Saint Paul and the work of the faculty. This past year the faculty has given serious attention to student assessment, that is, how do we evaluate the learning of students in terms of their competency, best practices, and capacities for ministry? During the past year the faculty also developed a new Doctor of Ministry program focus designated as "Spiritual Leadership for Unsettled

Times." We have great confidence that this new DMin focus will not only draw candidates but offer a desperately needed academic direction for ministry today. In addition, the faculty has engaged in a review of its various degree programs, the Master of Arts in Christian Ministry, the Master of Divinity, and so on. This is important work in which the faculty, with the oversight and support of the Academic Committee, attempts to provide a strong academic response to the vocational call of students seeking theological training. It is a daunting and desperately important work. Finally, the faculty instituted the FLEX initiative this year and has continued to develop class offerings on campus, in hybrid forms, and online. These approaches help to make theological education more accessible and affordable for our students and meet the expressed needs of potential students. Additionally, we are pleased to announce the hiring of Dr. Casey Sigmon as Assistant Professor of Preaching and Worship and as Director of Contextual Education.

Governance Committee

Derrek D. Belase, incoming chair, and Glenn Grove, Outgoing chair

The Governance Committee presented numerous motions at the May board meeting regarding election of officers, committee chairs and a new life member to the board. We are pleased to welcome Dr. Michael Parmely to that position. He will have voice on the board but no vote, as all of our life members enjoy. If you haven't heard his speech at the Kansas City commencement, you should look that up. He did a great job! There was also a motion out of the board's executive session dealing with presidential succession planning which will be discussed by the Governance Committee in late June. The Committee is preparing a motion for the July 22-23 board meeting to meet the requirements of this motion. The Committee will also be conducting an in-depth review of our articles of incorporation, especially as developments in the United Methodist Church warrant that.

Resource Committee

Susan Lindahl, Chair

SPST remains in a strong position financially. The financial foundation established over the last year has given confidence that we are positioned to maintain resources well into the future. The reporting structure and

documentation provided by the CFO-COO to the committee on a monthly/quarterly basis enables confidence that we can adjust in short manner and we will be apprised if those adjustments are needed. Contingency planning and flexibility remain key in this uncertain time for our denomination and higher education. For fiscal years 2019-2020 through 2021-2022 the Board unanimously approved (05-2-19) a conservative budget framework.

The Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee

Susanne Teel, Chair

On approval by the Trustees the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee (SPEC) selected two goals as priorities for the 2018-19 year from the Strategic Plan. Goal 2 from that plan calls for a carefully recruited and diverse student body. Goal 8 requires that Saint Paul identify and cultivate collaborations and partnerships with seminaries, colleges, universities, churches and other organizations. At the May Board meeting the SPEC reported to the Trustees the new and ongoing programs and/or data to support as evidence the accomplishments to date. We launched the newly redesigned DMin program focus, "Spiritual Leadership in Unsettled Times," a focus in collaboration with the Church of the Resurrection's Leadership Institute and with the nation-wide Gamaliel community organizing effort. The school also reconfigured the Master of Arts in Christian Ministry so that it is now a 38-hour program rather than the previous 54. Recently we instituted the FLEX initiative (Flexible Learning Experience) with online courses, hybrid courses (that combine on campus and online student/faculty participation), and on-campus courses, so as to be more accessible to students. It is showing good progress. We are also addressing the new realities of technology and online learning by researching programs, designers, consultants, and educational technologists who can assist us with this work. In enrollment the school is tracking admissions in three-year increments in accordance with the Association of Theologic School's data and practice. Further, we have hired a Director of the SPST Oklahoma Campus as part of a larger effort of the school to strengthen the work there. And, finally, the May 3, 2019 Board meeting identified key issues we will focus on at our next meeting such as innovation, identity, enrollment, program, and the implications for Saint Paul of the recent General Conference of the United Methodist.