

**Saint Paul School of Theology  
July 2019 Board Meeting Minutes  
July 22 – 23, 2019  
Kansas Campus – Classroom C133**

**Monday, July 22, 2019**

**Board Meeting**

Joining via computer: <https://zoom.us/j/982638373>

Joining phone: 669.900.6833; Meeting ID: 982 638 373

**Board members present:**

Tex Sample, Michael Parmely, Susan Lindahl, Susanne Teel, Jabari Wamble, David Deckert, David Martin, Andy Bryan, Arden Borgen, Bishop Fritz Mutti, Dustin Petz, President Neil Blair

**Guests:** Staff/Faculty: Matt Mills, Jeanne Hoeft, Anne Walker, Leanna Walkowiak, Kris Kvam, Nancy Howell

Friends of Saint Paul: Jack Gregory, Linda Louderback

**Call to Order:**

Meeting officially called into session at 12:45pm by Chair Tex Sample, with condolences to Susan Lindahl and her family at the passing of her brother, concern for Margaretta Narcisse (SPST Associate Dean) underwent surgery this morning, introduction of those in attendance, followed by a devotion by Jabari Wamble including Ephesians 2:10.

**Approval of May 2019 BOT meeting minutes:**

**Motion to approve the minutes with typo on page three to be corrected was made by Andy Bryan, seconded by Dustin Petz.**

***The motion carried.***

**Board of Trustees Plenary Session introduction by President Blair:**

*Honoring our Past – Embracing the Future – Reference Meeting Materials Documents 4.1 and 4.2*

**Breakout Groups Report Back:**

Notes from: Anne Walker, Kris Kvam, Andy Bryan, and Bishop Mutti:

Goal 2 conversation

- Degree programs should be both attractive and transformational – how do we offer programs that are both accessible to 21<sup>st</sup> century students and reflect the essence of Saint Paul?
- Marketing – multiple points of entry
- Formal and informal recruitment
- Encounters between faculty and district superintendents
- Recruiting a diverse student body requires cultural and theological reflexivity

Values conversation: Christ-centered, prophetic, and evangelistic

- Saint Paul's essence includes the integration of these elements: action/reflection, social/personal, academic/practical
- We are Christ-centered in that we are a Christian seminary (not multifaith, etc.)
- Prophetic and evangelistic are part of Saint Paul's ethos

Notes from Michael Parmely's Group:

Question 2: Where are we going?

- We have not had the difficult conversations with our two major partners (OCU and Resurrection) about their desires for our partnerships and how best to serve their needs.
- What are the best opportunities derived from these partnerships? This can, in part, be answered by listening to their ideas (see A above). Example: Resurrection – might be pastoral care, training large church pastors, new church starts; OCU – nonprofit leadership, urban ministry, Wimberly School of Religion.
- Getting the word out: echoes much of what Nancy Howell said about our ineffective website but includes our being more transparent about our strengths (financial stability) and areas of improvement (enrollment).
- Sharing teaching resources through the use of educational consortia. These need not be formal MOU-based partnerships but would bring into our theological education programs broader perspectives about ethno-racial issues, economic disadvantages, and other social issues. Could also deal more effectively about the so-called "soft skills" for pastors that many seminaries ignore.

Question 3: Why?

- Top Priorities
  - Maximize current resources and strengths: financial strengths and existing two-campus partnerships.
  - Optimize communication to tell our story more effectively; clearly not yet reaching all with the "good news" of Saint Paul.
  - Build and stabilize our enrollment, our faculty and the recent successes, focusing on what is working or appears to show promise (DMin and revised MACM degrees; effective governance; empowering staff and faculty).
- Goal #2 – Shared by faculty member Dr. Nancy Howell that upon reviewing other seminary websites that a welcoming message is needed; other schools have attractive websites. How to upgrade the Saint Paul School of Theology (SPST) website – currently not sharing what all Saint Paul has to offer students. President Blair asked if Nancy would help with researching websites to update SPST.

Assessment Committee will reconvene in the fall and will close the loop. Importance of multiple points of entry to market students. How we recruit and communicate inside and outside the church – hindrance from UMC issues; how do we work around the UMC difficulties? The seminary cannot speak for what the UMC will decide but can speak for who we are at SPST; UMC does not own SPST. We are here to serve, but how do we converse with those looking at SPST – men and women who are qualified to attend are welcome – not considering whether they are conservative/liberal, left/right, but perception is a problem. Discussion of where SPST is going; get past larger public perceptions. Should SPST market as a progressive seminary?

Friends of Saint Paul (FOSP) shared there are two conversations – Fresh Expressions. How to reconnect? Dr. Casey Sigmon is a leader in the area of new expressions of the church (dinner church) vision to make SPST a center for leading those types of churches. The Conference made a large commitment for "Fresh Expressions" for just one year.

Discussion of what comprises diversity in the world today. SPST Faculty members are predominately Euro-American. How do you make a seminary education attractive to everyone? Competency-based experience is different in different places. FTE works in micro communities to identify young people

of color to nurture them in culturally specific ways to grow a passion for ministry; possibly consider partnership with FTE and others.

Ideas:

- FTE Partnership
- Fresh Expressions – Casey Sigmon
- More Attractive Website
- Environmental Scanning
- Western Baptist Bible College
- Diversify Board/Faculty
- SPST Relationship to GC 2019
- UMC Next Principles
- Faculty Configuration
- Stability
- COR/OCU Listening
- Consortiums

The Board is reviewing/interviewing potential new trustees.

Discussion of Goals:

- Number of students in 5 years
- Optima number of students
- How to accommodate
- 15 – 20 students in class
- 125 – 150 students in the seminary
- Could be accomplished without being stretched regarding other resources
- What type of students
- Discussion where/online, OK, KS, does it matter?
- Key is to develop academic qualities of programming with slow and steady growth built on solid infrastructure

The current board and institution have not had a serious discussion with our partners about what it means to be at Oklahoma City University (OCU) and at Church of the Resurrection (Resurrection); characterized as more listening to our partners. Concern for difficult conversations that did not accomplish goals; what are the best opportunities for SPST operating within those partnerships? Best ideas from the ground up with high passion; needs to be proven before the church will back financially; takes humility and leadership.

SPST is still not very good at getting the word out. Review other websites in terms of the candor they contain about their institution. Do they have a financial and enrollment page? A very smart tactic is transparency and sharing evidence. SPST should consider degrees facilitated through consortiums due to small faculty and staff. Mentor to minority groups, collaborations with other universities, churches, but not with other seminaries. Historical note: in 2011 pursued consortium with Central Baptist, Community of Christ Seminary, Nazarene, etc. Relevant for graduates to know biblical and theological foundations for ministry to lead staff/leadership, develop/finances – practical components in a variety of contexts.

The faculty has maintained rigor in the curriculum but has struggled with how to assess the quality of their work in teaching students about practice. Effective ways to have a student doing something – working hard to perfect value. Issues of reputation – online not seen as valuable or effective. SPST has an effective education and diverse delivery options; evaluate how well students are learning in each of those delivery

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modes. Recommended to rewrite rigor, praxis, and delivery; value of integrating some polarities about action and reflections; social and personal elements – pastoral leadership/theology to academic and practical.

Dr. Nancy Howell and Dr. Anne Walker to draft or rewrite goals and send to Leanna Walkowiak to be reviewed and submitted to the Strategic Planning Committee. Review of the Mission Statement for possible revision. Do practices align with values? SPST to work on why it relates to what the seminary is to become in the next five years; what is most important for the seminary.

Brief conversation about the Church Health Center in Memphis, Tennessee and potential for partnership.

Key Points from today's discussion for SPST to work on to improve:

- Stability – cycles of these systems to know if they are working; stable but fragile
- Maximize current resources/strengths:
  - OCU/Resurrection partners
  - Optimize communication around our story (internally has been better, but not externally)
  - Build/stabilize
  - Will recruit new faculty over the next 10 years/BOT involved how it changes identify/values/ partners/ cost/how to relate to enrollment stability
- Need to update/improve website
- Still have classroom capacity of 125/150
- Campus specific challenges

If opted for billboard signage what would be its compelling message?

Chair Tex Sample's review:

Innovation  
Nimble/agile  
Communication – broader conversations with outside partners OCU/Resurrection  
Enrollment – partner academic programming  
Image  
Valuable conversation  
Future-oriented  
Collaborative  
Productive  
Inspirationally looking ahead  
Valuable  
Committee reports will be shared at tomorrow's meeting

**Adjournment at 5:03pm**

**Tuesday, July 23, 2019**

Joining via computer: <https://zoom.us/j/788200566>

Joining via phone: 669.900.6833; Meeting ID: 788 200 566

**Board Members Present:**

In-person: Tex Sample, Michael Parmely, Susan Lindahl, Susanne Teel, David Deckert, David Martin, Dustin Petz, Arden Borgen, Andy Bryan, President Neil Blair

Via Zoom: Derrek Belase, Mark Ferguson (phone)

**Guests:** Staff/Faculty: Matt Mills, Jeanne Hoeft, Leanna Walkowiak, Kris Kvam, Nancy Howell

Friends of Saint Paul: Linda Louderback

**Via Zoom:** Guest: Melissa Pearce

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Meeting officially called into session at 8am by Chair Sample with an opening prayer. President Blair offered March 30 – 31, 2020 for the spring Board meeting. Chair Sample thanked the BOT for the work that was accomplished yesterday.

**President's Report: President Neil Blair**

Full written report is available on Moodle. Susanne Teel and Mark Ferguson have been asked to committee BOT donations.

**Academic Committee – David Martin, Chair**

Meeting Documents 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3

The committee met on 6/28/19 and reviewed activities that the faculty and the BOT has been pursuing – no recommendations at this time.

Accomplishments:

- Faculty – transition plan to move MACM to fewer hours
- Nancy Howell, Chairperson of Faculty Personnel and Steering Committee
- Faculty nominated several students for awards/honors
- Dr. Casey Sigmon was hired as Assistant Professor in Preaching and Worship/Director of Contextual Education
- Priorities set for upcoming year:
  - Strengthen relationship with BOT
  - Ideas in motion for involvement in presidential search
  - Develop clarity of SPST identity
  - Revisions to MDiv, MACM
  - Examine FLEX
  - Review course delivery and methodologies best for future
- Student learning outcome achievements – five faculty members met and will continue to assess SLO in various courses
- Revisions to curriculum
- Faculty effort
- Reviewed Master of Theology Study – no cost change to remove program – will stay as a contributor to SPST
- Recruitment/Enrollment Reports – reviewed in line with expectations
- New endeavor: Quality Matters (national group Internationally directing assistance to professors in online teaching – shows ways to improve quality of teaching
- Specific Strategic Goals:

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- #2 enrollment goal and reviewing progress towards that goal – not quite where we want to be but will continue to see how best to proceed
- #8 – focusing on partnership – efforts to reach out to primarily churches in Kansas and Oklahoma to begin conversations in how to develop and identified several areas to work on in the future
- Admission KPI will be added to BOT Moodle site

Chair Sample stated that the meeting will move into Executive Session at 10:45am this morning.

**Governance Committee – Derrek Belase, Chair**

Meeting Document 7.1

Refer to the Governance Dashboard Report; pending motion will be shared in executive session. One nomination to the board, David Wiggs, needs to complete information paperwork.

**Resource Committee – Susan Lindahl, Chair, and Matt Mills, CFO/COO**

Meeting Document 8.1

The Seminary is light years ahead of where we were a year ago. Interim financial statements, key performance indicators, predictable/reliable reporting, and balanced budgets are evidence of progress and success. HLC recognized the progress and quickly removed the various financial sanctions. Linking budget to SPST is another strength as every piece of the budget is linked to a specific strategic goal and strategic direction. The preliminary numbers (pre-audit) show a 3.77% drawdown for fiscal year 2018 – 2019 (better than the budgeted 4%) and a slightly higher than 4% is approved for next year. SPST has no long-term external debt. The strength of the balance sheet is clear with many ratios detailing not only balance sheet strength, but income statement and cash flow strength as well. The two-week audit begins September 16 and will be completed in October. This final step will confirm and close the books for fiscal year 2018 – 2019. It was a successful one. Thanks to everyone who follows those processes; SPST link to Budget/success and adjustment-free audit.

The writeup tells the story of SPST in numbers. SPST is very transparent about the good work that has been accomplished. Kudos was given to the Resource Committee Team and their close work with the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee.

A transparency financial health tab is to be added to the website; currently an update/audit will be uploaded. The new tab will provide clarity and understanding. A Funnel Report will also be added to the website. Open communication is happening on a monthly basis and the seminary is on very strong footing for the future.

Life-member Michael Parmely talked about the two ATS restrictions that the seminary is currently under. Vice President/Dean Jeanne Hoeft shared that the report is due on November 1<sup>st</sup> to the ATS Executive team. Conversation with Debbie Kramer, ATS liaison, indicated that it should be enough to submit a very short report and data with strategic plan. ATS reaffirmed the notations before SPST went on probation, but they have not seen the same reports as the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). We are confident that the 11/1 report will provide sufficient information and the notations will be removed. ATS self-study will begin this fall; process is different than the HLC processes. It requires a 2-year process and visit will be in Fall of 2021. VP Hoeft and CFO/COO Mills will attend workshop and bring to the October 2019 Board meeting what the process will look like. Hopefully, ATS will see the same progress that HLC saw and will be able to remove notations. Ms. Kramer shared that last time they were almost overwhelmed, but that it was very positive that HLC removed notations. Working with Ms. Kramer prior to the assessment.

Funnel report – seven withdrawals how to interpret. Two conversion rate – lead to app is much higher than other schools and expected; app to start – tracking where we need to be tracking. Pretty high commitment if fee is paid – will attend (not approved in committee, financial, or personal issue) about 78%. President Blair noted an increase in trend for multiple applications for seminary education. Goal is to get information to the student as soon as possible. There is no application fee. The Board approved in the May meeting a 3-year budget 2019 – 2022 and this will continue to be updated annually.

**Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee – Susanne Teel Chair**

Meeting Document 9.1

Most information has already been shared, but the Committee appreciates hearing again and again about Goals 2 and 8. Every Committee meeting a discussion is held about continuing with Innovation Task Force about reduction of the hours and move to a two-year program. Will continue to monitor admissions and student enrollment, which is very important. Annual Planning Cycle starts in August. Committee has been waiting to meet following outcome of the Ad Hoc Committee with regards to continuing with current goals or expanding. Committee worked with the Resource Committee regarding the new position created in Oklahoma.

Was asked what the next steps are following the Ad Hoc committee meeting, which was commissioned to bring a presentation to the Board. Susan Lindahl recommended to bring back to the Strategic Planning committee. President Blair – 4 initiatives from May Board meeting to take top priority in addition to what was determined yesterday. Rich conversation yesterday. End of May minutes – charge was to consider strategies for translating one or more of goals into action plans/to present to the full Board to what can be accomplished at OCU/lead board.

Ad Hoc in response to Bill Riley’s consultation – unallocated funds 4.5% to SP.

**Executive Committee – Tex Sample**

Meeting Document 10.1

The Committee met on May 24<sup>th</sup> to work on the Ad Hoc group – group members were selected, and looked at 2, 4, 8 options for intensified work/concern for Oklahoma; lead full Board in planning session/convene Governance Committee for timeline/prioritize goals.

**Move to Executive Session:**

**MOTION** approved in executive session:

- 1) Appoint a Search Committee comprised of representatives from the following constituencies:
  - a. Member of the Faculty – named by the Faculty Council
  - b. Seminary’s CFO/COO
  - c. Student Representative – named by the Student Council
  - d. 5 Trustees – named by the Executive Committee of the Board
  - e. Senior Pastor of Church of the Resurrection or designee (designee, if needed, named by Adam Hamilton)
  - f. President of OCU or designee (designee, if needed, named by Martha Burger)
  - g. SPST VP for Academic Affairs and Dean
  - h. Representative of Friends of Saint Paul – named by that group
  - i. Chair of the SPST Board of Trustees

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- j. Chair of the SPST Board of Trustees Governance Committee (will chair the Search Committee)
- 2) Empower the Search Committee to determine whether a professional firm will be utilized to assist in the search.
- 3) Empower the Search Committee to develop a budget for a firm and other needs. This request will be made to the Resource Committee via its chair.
- 4) Call the first Search Committee meeting before August 15, 2019 for the development of a timeline, which will be reported to the full Board at the fall (October) meeting.
- 5) Complete the Search Profile for public posting and advertising by September 15, 2019.

**Return to Board Meeting:**

**Motion by Andy Bryan**

The Board of Trustees of Saint Paul School of Theology affirms the four commitments of UMCNext.

- 1) We long to be passionate followers of Jesus Christ, committed to a Wesleyan vision of Christianity, anchored in scripture and informed by tradition, experience and reason as we live a life of personal piety and social holiness.
- 2) We commit to resist evil, injustice and oppression in all forms and toward all people and build a church which affirms the full participation of all ages, nations, races, classes, cultures, gender identities, sexual orientations, and abilities.
- 3) We reject the Traditional Plan approved at General Conference 2019 as inconsistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ and will resist its implementation.
- 4) We will work to eliminate discriminatory language and the restrictions and penalties in the Discipline regarding LGBTQ persons. We affirm the sacred worth of LGBTQ persons, celebrate their gifts, and commit to being in ministry together. ([www.umcnext.com](http://www.umcnext.com))

The Board remains committed to the formation of people for innovative, creative work in emerging expressions of ministry. In a season of discernment and change in the United Methodist Church, the Saint Paul School of Theology Board of Trustees senses the movement of the Holy Spirit, and we are hopeful, trusting that God's grace will do abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine.

***Unanimously approved.***

**Adjourned at 12:31pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

Leanna Walkowiak  
Director of Operations/Equity Compliance & Title IX Officer

Executive Session provided by: Derrek Belase, Board Secretary