

Saint Paul School of Theology
Board Notes
May 2020

Saint Paul and the Coronavirus

As you might imagine, this has been a very busy time for Saint Paul School of Theology. Not only is it the end of the school year and all that involves, but the Coronavirus pandemic has brought major challenges to our work. You will be pleased to know that because of the school's versatility in online class work and its technological capacities, our work went on with amazing responsiveness and efficiency. Thanks to the hard work of our faculty, staff, and administration, the school made the transition to more safe forms of education almost immediately. Students, faculty, and staff made creative adjustments to classroom and community experiences. Everyone moved to working remotely and the school carried on at the normal high level of performance. Dedication and commitment to Saint Paul's mission has been evident every day during these unusual times.

Student COVID-19 Financial Support

The COVID-19 SPST Student Emergency Fund has been established to provide temporary financial assistance to current Saint Paul students who might be experiencing unusual financial strain as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Students with a financial need as a result of the pandemic are eligible to apply for temporary emergency assistance. Funds can be used for food/food delivery, housing, childcare, gas, mental health, medical care, or other specified need. Students may apply multiple times with applications being fulfilled based upon funds available through June 26, 2020 (from Moodle).

Welcome Bishop James D. Tindall

I am also excited to announce the election of a new Trustee, Bishop James D. Tindall. Having served as Pastor of the Metropolitan Spiritual Church of Christ from 1976 to 2017, Bishop Tindall has had an extraordinary record in both ecclesial, community, and state-wide service and beyond. He has been a Missouri State Representative to the Missouri Assembly and served on two occasions as a Jackson County Legislator (1982 – 1996, 2007 – 2014), where he was Chairman of the Legislature for six continuous years. In 1996 he was elevated to the Office of Bishop and continues in that capacity for the Metropolitan Spiritual Church of Christ.

Bishop Tindall is also the Founder/Convener of the Urban Summit of Kansas City, a non-profit organization whose mission is that of advocacy and the development of initiatives to foster community relations, enhance economic growth, and improve the quality of life in the Urban Core. In 2009 the Bishop was elected International Presiding Prelate of the Metropolitan Spiritual Churches of Christ, Inc., which consists of dozens of churches and thousands of members from all over the United States, Ghana, Liberia, and Jamaica. Since 2014 he has served as Director of the Housing Resources Commission for Jackson County's Homeless Assistance Fund, which was formed in 1991. Created to assist the homeless in Jackson County, the fund offers emergency assistance, case management, and housing assistance.

Among his other leadership roles Bishop Tindall has served as the Executive Vice President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Greater Kansas City and as the Chairman of the Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday celebration in Kansas City for 15 years. For eight years he was President of Freedom, Inc., the premier African American political organization in Kansas City, Missouri. In his ministry he has been an effective agent of community and legislative action such as increased financial support for community-based healthcare centers, livable wage legislation, and other issues of importance to the Africa-American community.

Personally, I have participated in the Urban Summit for nearly eight years and can testify that Bishop Tindall has an open leadership style. He is one who seeks input and works collaboratively with others, and I can affirm his comment, "I put God first in all that I do and encourage others to acknowledge the presence of God in our successes and the will of God in our failures. I believe in having a results-oriented approach with a strong value for education, diversity, and self-awareness." Evidence of the contribution and impact of his work can be found in the fact that he has received more than 160 awards and recognitions for his ministry and community leadership. We warmly welcome Bishop Tindall to the work of the SPST Board of Trustees.

Welcome Dr. Jay Simmons

It is a further privilege to welcome Dr. Jay Keith Simmons as Vice President of Institutional Advancement at Saint Paul. A Phi Beta Kappa B.A. graduate of Birmingham-Southern, he received an M.A. and a Ph.D. from the University of Alabama in Political Science. LaGrange College further honored him with the L.H.D. in Humane Letters. Included in his career most recently he was the President of Simpson College, where he served from 2013 to 2019. Since then, he has remained with Simpson as Advisor to the Board of Trustees and Administration. Prior to that, he was President of Iowa Wesleyan College; an Academic Dean and Professor at LaGrange College, and, before these assignments, he had been a Dean and a Professor and did work in statistical analyses of market and public opinion data and recommended strategies for sales and political campaigns based on survey data. Further, Simmons served as President of the National Association of Schools and Colleges of the United Methodist Church (NASCUMC) in 2012 – 2013.

Dr. Simmons' work is especially noteworthy in development and fund-raising. Two examples include:

- Completed the *Transforming Our Future* Campaign, a \$35 million comprehensive campaign that raised funds for capital projects, scholarships, and other endowed funds. Despite the economic downturn that struck in the middle of the campaign, the effort concluded on time and exceeded its target.
- Raised more than \$1.9 million for restricted and unrestricted purposes during the 2010 – 2011 fiscal year, Iowa Wesleyan's first full budget year following the *Transforming Our Future* Campaign. For the 2011 – 2012 fiscal year, total giving exceeded \$2 million.

We look forward to his time with Saint Paul. A strong institution financially, our school is about to become even stronger.

Finances

You will be pleased to know that our Finance Office prudently managed Saint Paul's endowment by increasing its cash position while the market continued to hit all-time highs in January. This increased cash position has ensured SPST has sufficient liquidity to continue to pursue, and achieve, its mission over the coming years. SPST continues to operate with no debt, a balanced budget, a large endowment compared to its expenses, and a significant cash position to manage through unpredictable times. We are grateful to the Resource Committee, to Linda Shipman, Chair, and to Matt Mills, COO/CFO, for this timely and prudent action. The school is in a very good place with regard to our financial base.

Recruitment and Enrollment

Since Shannon Hancock's arrival as the Director of Admissions and Communications, we have experienced double-digit percentage growth of new students in each semester. This accomplishment speaks to her amazing work as a part of the Institutional Advancement Team. Most recently, as a result of COVID-19, Shannon has been navigating through the rapid changes in recruitment and connection with potential

new students. The use of new technologies and engagement methods have allowed for initial success during the COVID-19 recruiting season. Having said that, we are taking a cautious approach in the Fall 2020 session and do anticipate some students choosing to wait and enroll in the Spring 2021 semester. When combining both the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters, we are budgeting for new student growth of 10%.

Collaboration and Trust

Finally, at its last meeting in March, the Board of Trustees assigned its Executive Committee the task to initiate a process of working on the continued building of a culture of trust and collaboration among the Faculty, Staff, Administration, Students, Trustees, and other stakeholders. A first meeting was held in which a consensus emerged that a group would be called together representative of the school along with other stakeholders in order to engage in this important work. The aim and process of the effort will be of one piece and that move is now underway. In keeping with a process of trust and collaboration each representative to this committee will be chosen by their respective groups. More details will be provided in the future.

I am so very glad to be a part of Saint Paul again. The school is making great strides, and it is inspiring to be a part of this movement. We are also nearing the end of our financial year. If you have not made your contribution to this year's annual fund, it is a good time to do so. In fact, I am so pleased with all that is going on, I intend to make a second contribution. Why not join me?

Grace and Peace,

Tex Sample, Board Chair