

**Saint Paul School of Theology
July 2022 Board Meeting Minutes
July 14-15, 2022
On Zoom and On Location
at the Saint Paul Kansas Campus**

Thursday, July 14th, 2022:

Board Members Present: *Debbie Buzard, Linda Shipman, Amy Hogan, Tex Sample, David Wiggs, Jabari Wamble, Mark Faulkner, Dana Aldridge, Sharon Cleaver, Arden Borgen (Zoom), Jennifer Ahrens-Sims (Zoom), Lee Myane (Zoom)*

Guests Present: *Jeanne Hoeft, Sharon Betsworth, Jay Simmons, Neil Blair, Baylee Cook*

Zoom Guests: *Linda Louderback, Jack Gregory, Jennifer Smith, Richard Liantonio, Casey Sigmon, Shannon Hancock, Tammi Allensworth, Tiana Gatewood, Israel Kamudzandu*

1:02pm Devotion – David Wiggs

David opened the meeting with prayer and a devotion reminding us of the mission statement of Saint Paul School of Theology, and the theological education that Saint Paul offers to its students.

1:07pm Introduction of Dr. Amy Hogan as new Chair of the Board – Dr. Tex Sample

Dr. Sample shared his confidence in transferring his responsibilities as Chair to Dr. Hogan, remarking on her competence and kindness.

Academic Committee Report - Lee Myane

The Committee has met once since the April Board meeting.

- Overview of HLC Assurance Argument
 - HLC will arrive on Sunday September the 11th, will stay through 9/13.
 - Areas of focus: Strategic Planning and Finances.
 - Trustees should anticipate questions around Mission and Mission Statements.
 - Criteria #2: Institutional conduct. Are our policies public, accessible to students?
 - Criteria #3: Teaching and learning programs. Are the faculty involved and qualified? Does the institution fund Library Services?

Linda asked if Trustees would receive a resource sheet to prepare for the visit. This was confirmed by Dr. Jay Simmons.

President Blair expressed a word of thanks to Jay for his work in HLC.

President Blair expressed that when he received the letter indicating that the school was on probation, he learned much from the HLC visit.

Dr. Hogan expressed that HLC is not a “gotcha” process- but a very illuminating and helpful aid for the seminary.

1:32pm Governance Committee - Dana Aldridge

Dana has been appointed as Chair, and Linda Shipman as secretary.

The Committee provided list of candidates to Dr. Hogan, Dr. Sample, and President Blair for a new Trustee position – The Board seeks a Native American/Indigenous woman. The Committee has received a few writeups on the candidates.

The Committee has begun reviewing the Board Policies. Details to come with a presentation later today.

The Committee voted unanimously to add policies and bylines to school Moodle site.

Summer responsibilities of the Committee include reviewing Board functions and individual Trustees (in the process of reaching out to individual members for a check in).

3 updated policies:

1. 6.4 Academic Committee

Add the VPAAD to the process.

2. 7.2 Term/Service of the President

Current policy states that Board will conduct review 9 months prior to the end of the President's contract.

Proposed Policy: Extend to 24 months.

3. 7.2.1 - Presidential Assessment

Proposed Timeline to the Presidential review process.

MOTION TO accept proposed changes by the Governance Committee by Dr. Amy Hogan. Passed unanimously.

Discussion:

When will this timeframe begin? Dana Aldridge: President Blair will begin meetings, and Board will review the annual Presidential Assessment during the October meeting. President Blair expressed thanks to Dana for her knowledge of Board policies and her work in Governance.

No further reporting by the Governance Committee.

1:47pm Resource Committee - Linda Shipman

The Committee has met once since the April Board Meeting. No changes.

Review:

* 2.55% draw from endowment. Matt monitors the Cash draw closely.

* Numbers for fall enrollment are still somewhat stagnant. The hope is that these will rise, of course.

* Faculty and staff salary: President Blair has been tasked with this review. Matt is chairing a committee to look at salary data from comparable schools. President Blair will report his recommendations.

Discussion: *Has a comparative study already been completed or will this be a future task?* Matt's hope is the committee meets this month, but the final report is not completed. It is expected to be reported in the October meeting. President Blair mentioned that he has done some preliminary work in looking at seminaries in similar cost-of-living areas. Mark Faulkner commented that Saint Paul went through a period of survival mode, and the reluctance to adjust faculty salaries had resulted in bonuses against raises, with the seminary now having the opportunity to look at the future in a more positive light.

1:55 pm Strategic Planning Committee - Amy Hogan

4.0% of operating budget is currently unencumbered for Strategic Planning expenses. This is a rare achievement in higher education.

Goal 2: Recruitment for diverse student body.

Goal 3: Employ faculty that address the changing realities of church and world.

Goal 5: Awareness, diversity, social justice.

Review of Annual Reports.

Dr. Hoeft showed plan for the faculty with some action items. These funds are released in the summer for faculty (July/August). She stated commitment to keeping quality of online education high and continue to innovate and improve as new technology and methods become available.

Nomination of Chair during next meeting - taking candidate nominations currently.

Will appoint Strategic Planning Committee (non-Board) in the Fall of 2022 - will meet in Spring 2023, begin planning process in Fall of 2023, first draft circulation in Spring 2024/Fall of 2024 will begin approving/adopting June 2025.

2:03pm Trust and Collaboration Task Force - Dana Aldridge

The Task Force has operated for 3 years as requested by the Board. The goal was to create Board member, faculty, staff engagement. The Task Force received feedback from a consultant and have been strategically diving into the topics included. The Task Force is moving into an “Equity Audit.” The plan for the October 2022 Meeting was to bring in a certain speaker who is no longer available. The goal is still to find someone to speak to this topic for the Meeting.

Discussion:

How do we evaluate the success of the workshops/seminar? And can we have an overview of what the racial equity would entail? Dana Aldridge: After the April meeting, surveys were sent out with little to no response from the Board, only faculty/staff response. The feedback was overall that the workshop was enjoyable, but it was ultimately too much information to implement. Richard Liantonio: This would “ask the institution” in various aspects if racial equity is experienced by the student body, as well as faculty/staff/Board. In the process of finding a consultant to guide this conversation. The purpose of the audit is to identify whether the structures advantage or disadvantage certain people. President Blair asked if anyone on the Board has participated in a racial equity audit before, Dr. Hogan responded that Ottawa has had success.

2:22pm Break

2:45pm Return from Break

Open Discussion begun by Amy about local congregation life, concerns and joys, in anticipation of Lovett Weems’ presentation on Friday. Reflections include commentary about COVID restrictions, the advent of online services, struggles with younger populations/youth leaders. Energy level and community in congregations is simply different than it was pre-COVID. Attendance online has also dwindled as well.

Dr. Sample shared that engagement with preexisting justice organizations and community organizing is imperative and recommended that congregations make sure to privilege online audiences.

3:16pm Sharing about work in Guatemala - Rogers Strickland

Proposal to have a few students, faculty, or staff from Saint Paul join the upcoming January trip. Rogers described the partnership and collaboration with the local Catholic parish and county government in San Lucas.

3:30 pm Session with VPAAD Sharon Betsworth

A word of thanks from Dr. Betsworth to the Board, and Dr. Jeanne Hoeft, for their help in the process. The Board introduced themselves individually, followed by personal sharing from Dr. Betsworth.

5:00pm Adjourn for Dinner and Conversation

Friday, July 15th, 2022:

Board Members Present:

Tex Sample, Rogers Strickland, Dana Aldridge, Linda Shipman, Amy Hogan, David Wiggs. On Zoom: Arden Borgen, Andy Bryan, Debra Buzard, Mark Faulkner, Jennifer Ahrens-Sims, Sharon Cleaver

Guests Present: Lovett Weems, Neil Blair, Jay Simmons, Sharon Betsworth, Baylee Cook

Guests Present on Zoom:

Denise Walker, Jeanne Hoeft, Jennifer Smith, Richard Liantonio, Shannon Hancock, Tammi Allensworth, Tiana Gatewood, Lucas Endicott, Elizabeth Campbell

8:08am Prayer, Board called to Session – President Neil Blair

President Blair offered thanks for those in attendance online and on Zoom, and for the contributions of Dr Lovett Weems to our time together and expressed a few words about the leadership shown by Dr. Weems' in communicating the needs of the church throughout his career.

8:13am Board Study Sessions - Dr. Lovett Weems

Dr. Weems introduced his work with the Religious Workforce Project, Lilly Endowment, Lewis Center for Church Leadership.

Dr. Weems presented on the *The United Methodist Church Trends, 2000-2019*.

Topics include:

- I. ATS Enrollment Patterns, 2000-2020
- II. UMC Ministry Categories III.
- III. UMC Congregational Changes
- IV. UMC Clergy Deployment

Key observations from these trends:

1. Overall enrollment consistency with internal disruptions
2. Mainline collapse (MDiv enrollment declining 50% over the 20-year period)
3. Evangelical Protestant trending in mainline direction.
4. Black Protestant decline less than mainline but more than evangelical
5. Roman Catholic relative stability
6. Seminary patterns vary by constituencies

Of these observations, Dr. Weems asked participants to highlight the one that seems most significant to themselves. Comments include the economic issues of 2008 and the COVID crisis influencing financial factors; catering to professional degrees due to the disruptions present in the UMC more widely.

Seminary growth is correlated to vitality in churches. Question: *How do you define “vitality”?*
Discussion: Budget factors, presence of seminary students on staff, generating energy and the need for new leadership. Evidence of energy, growing churches require new staff. Moving toward energy amongst staff rather than length of experience in their position.

What clues does the group see for the future of Saint Paul?

Comment by Jennifer Smith: Seminary needs greater focus on COS program and students.

Discussion: *MDIV brings in more financially than COS or other degrees?* Yes.

10:23am Break

10:45am Continuation of Board Study Session

Dr. Lucas Endicott presented to the board an overview of Course of Study operations and provided more information about particulars.

11:30am Adjourn

Submitted by

Baylee Cook, President/Board Executive Assistant