

Admissions, Retention and Financial Aid Committee (ARFAC)

Meeting of February 11, 2003

Present: Jeanine Grenberg, Bob Hanson, Paul Niemisto (chair) Barb Lundberg, Kathy Ruby, Kurt Anderson, Seth Heringer

Not present: Bill Green

The meeting was called to order at 3:35. The first agenda item was figuring out when and where we will meet next-Paul announced the next meetings will be February 25 in Room 146 and March 11th in Room 220. Additional meetings will be firmed up after spring break.

The next item on the agenda was an update from Admissions on the current applicant pool. That pool is up about 8% to date from last year. Most colleges are noting an increase in applicants. St. Olaf this year has a surprising 16% increase in male applicants. The economy may be playing a role in this. It appears that students may be applying to more colleges so they have an array of financial aid options. Currently, there is a waiting list of 130 vs. about 75 at this time last year. There are denied 102 applicants, vs. 59 at this time last year. The academic profile of the accepted students is also very strong. The pool of accepted students already includes 8% designated multicultural, and surpassing the number of students in last year's pool. Overall, the Enrollment Division is looking to enroll 760 new first-year students.

The next agenda item was an update on the Buntrock Scholars program. There was a slight increase in the number of applicants. In regards to faculty involvement, the Admissions Office is looking at slightly changing the format of the Scholars Day interviews, to allow each faculty member to interview more students, with shorter interview times. This would alleviate some of the difficulty in finding enough faculty members to interview, and would resolve some of the comments they've received about interviews where everyone ran out of things to say! Scholars Day is March 15.

Junior Days are scheduled again for this year on Monday, February 17th, and Saturday, March 1st. Barb thinks the increase in applicant pool this year may be due in part to the successful Junior Days last year. There are over 320 students registered.

Finally, Spring Open House is scheduled for Saturday, April 12. The Admissions Office is looking at ways to have a more academic focus during Spring Open House. In the past, each faculty has held a breakfast and students were encouraged to attend any breakfast(s) to interact with faculty. The Admissions Office is interested in hearing from faculty about any ideas they may have about reorganizing Spring Open House to provide a better academic focus.

Kathy provided an update on the status of the MN State Grant program and state work-study programs. At this point, based on current expectations, we are expecting to lose anywhere between \$400,000 and \$800,000 in state funds between the two funds. Since we meet full demonstrated need, this will not affect individual students (we make up the loss in grant for needy students), but the college as a whole will feel the effect. The Minnesota Private College Council is encouraging students and employees at all of the private colleges to get involved in

the issues. The web site www.mnprivatecolleges.com provides information through their Government Issues link. They are also sponsoring a Day at the Capitol on Tuesday, February 25- student government will be getting involved in this initiative.

The committee moved to the discussion of the Strategic Plan, and our response to it, as requested by President Thomforde. The sections regarding review of financial aid policies used to enroll the class and the quest for diversity require quite a bit of discussion, which we were able to just begin at this meeting. The tension between increasing diversity and remaining true to our heritage was one topic of discussion. The huge financial commitment we make with our need-blind admission policy and full demonstrated need financial aid policy were also discussed briefly. There is a plan to be holding informational sessions on campus about those policies, with the help of ARFAC. Committee members indicated their desire to be a part of those sessions. It was requested that Barb provide the committee with more detailed information about the need sensitive admissions vs meeting full demonstrated need at St. Olaf, so the committee could be ready for a more in-depth discussion of that topic. The chair also asked that committee members gather feedback on the components of the Strategic Plan that are related to ARFAC, and to put that feedback in writing so we could continue discussions at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:40. The committee will discuss the Strategic Plan in much more detail at the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Ruby