

Minutes of the September 2, 2004 Faculty Meeting

President Thomforde called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. Pastor Koenig gave the blessing. After reminding faculty of the etymology of “conspiracy,” she asked that we might “breathe together” throughout the coming year.

Approval of the Minutes of the May, 2004 Faculty Meeting

Moved and approved.

President’s Remarks

President Thomforde announced a forum scheduled for September 8 in the Viking Theater on the sale of WCAL. He noted that proceeds from the sale would be used to enhance existing college programs and activities rather than to fund new ones. Possible uses include rebuilding the organ, endowment of the sacred music program, endowment of a Regent’s Professor, and of those portions of St. Olaf music organizations that send students across the country and abroad. In response to a question about how the decision to sell was made, President Thomforde gave a succinct summary of events and procedures leading to the decision. He said that discussions were initiated by MPR’s presentation of a formal proposal last November. The initial offer was for 8.5 million. President Thomforde consulted with Jan McDaniel and asked a Washington D.C. law firm to assess MPR’s proposal. The proposal was then forwarded to Jerrol Tostrud, Chair of the Board of Regents, and to Addison Piper of the Finance Committee. A survey of WCAL and its listening audience was conducted by Patrick Communications. The license was then put out to potential bidders. After thirteen bidders came forward (not all of whom were actually in a position to buy), MPR raised its offer to 10.5 million, and agreed to meet several conditions stipulated by the College. After consideration by the full Board in consultation with Alan Norton and Jim May, the decision to sell was made. President Thomforde noted that a major concern was the expectation that the future of FM licenses would diminish because of developments in satellite communications. He characterized the decision as wrenching and tragic, but for the greater long-term benefit of the College.

Treasurer’s Report

Alan Norton announced that the auditor will present a financial statement to the Board in October. The figure for net revenue from students will be available for that meeting. There will be a forum. Currently our operating revenue is 87.6 million and our expenses are 86.2 million, leaving a net of 1.4 million, or 1.6% of our revenue. Of the two fundamental categories of expenses, instruction and academic support, the latter now accounts for 68% of our expenses, up from 66% a year ago. We continue to hold our own in support to core programs. Unrestricted gifts have not yet come back to previous levels. Currently we need to spend 10 million a year to maintain capital. In the face of this challenge, the Board has adopted a new asset allocation to allow further diversification. The market continues to be overvalued. The current per-unit value of the endowment is \$2.60, up from a low of \$2; the value will not get back to \$3 per share

until 2014. We need unrestricted gifts to add to our endowment. Currently we are depending more on revenue from students: this rose from 76% to 77-78% of our revenue. We face two challenges, a need for compensation and a need for capital. Some strategic initiatives are underway: Kathy Chadwick is working on administrative efficiency and, under Pete Sandberg's guidance, the windmill project will yield substantial savings on energy costs.

Enrollment and financial Aid

Kathy Ruby, Interim Vice President of Enrollment, gave a brief profile of the class of 2008. Information will be posted on an internal IRP website for which a St. Olaf password is required.

Dean's Remarks

Dean May welcomed back the faculty, especially those returning from leave. He asked new faculty to stand and be recognized. Three tasks are at hand: finding a replacement for Pat Quade as Director of International and off-campus Studies; a re-examination of our general education program (a timeline for this is given in the report from the GE Task Force); completion of our faculty governance initiative (GRECO II) by a re-examination of the committee system of the College. He reminded faculty of Week I activities, and urged us to attend the St. Olaf Welcome ceremony in the gym, a ceremony particularly appreciated by parents of new students. He closed with an inspiring quotation from "A Man For All Seasons."

Announcements

Bryn Geffert announced that two grants from the Mellon foundation have enabled us to merge the St. Olaf and Carleton library catalogues. Books can be transported on the van that runs between the two schools twice a day. The loan period for faculty is now one year. It is possible to put Carleton books on St. Olaf reserve for classes. Carleton is still in the process of cataloguing videos.

Karen Achberger introduced two visiting international scholars new to the German Department: Monika Albrecht from Germany and Joachim Liedtke from Sweden.

Pastor Jennifer Koenig announced that September 10, the first Friday at Chapel, would be an official welcome for new faculty and staff.

Paddy Dale, Director of Government and Foundation Relations, thanked all those who submitted grant proposals. Resources coming into the college from government and foundation grants have doubled this year. He and his colleagues will be happy to visit departments to talk to faculty about grant opportunities. He encouraged faculty to continue to submit innovative proposals, characterizing himself as "a miner of good ideas."

Judy Kutlulas announced that the St. Olaf Action Association (formerly known as the Faculty Action Association) is seeking a new officer to oversee the scholarship fund

Michael Fitzgerald asked about the number of Lutherans enrolled in the College. Kathy Ruby will provide that information.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:58.

Respectfully submitted,

Vicki Harper
Faculty Secretary