

From: President
Sent: Wednesday, May 25, 2022 11:02 AM
Subject: Board Report - May 2022



Board of Trustees: May 2022
Overview and Reports

The spring meeting of the Board of Trustees was held this past Thursday and Friday. Several Trustees arrived in Seattle early to participate in a donor event at Nickerson Studios on Wednesday evening and to participate in meetings of the Academic Affairs and Student Experience Committee and the Finance, Audit, and Facilities Committee earlier that same day. The Board was joined on Thursday by Dr. Andy Westmoreland, who was invited to help facilitate several important discussions. Thursday also included an impromptu meeting of several Trustees and students who had gathered outside of Upper Gwinn to draw attention to the needs of LGBTQIA+ students at SPU. The Thursday evening dinner began with a performance by an SPU String Quartet and ended with a presentation by Dr. Rick Steele on the history of the University Faith Statement. Earlier in the day, Dr. April Middeljans provided a Faculty Chair report to the Trustees. Friday's devotional was brought by President Shirley Hoogstra of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities, who joined the Board via Zoom. The Friday morning business session featured committee reports, an Interim President's update, and was followed by executive session.

History of our Statement of Faith

As part of the meeting events, we were blessed to have Dr. Rick Steele, professor of moral and historical theology, associate dean of Seattle Pacific Seminary, and part of the committee that

helped craft our Statement of Faith, present. He gave context to the creation of the statement and the power of its role in the shaping of our faith community.

“Some twenty years ago, the Board of Trustees approved a new Mission Statement for the University. Shortly thereafter, President Philip Eaton announced his desire for a parallel document, a Faith Statement. In autumn 2002, President Eaton convened a task force to draft this statement. The task force met regularly over the next eighteen months and submitted a final draft in April 2004. The task force had nine members, representing various campus constituencies: trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students. I am the only member of the committee still employed fulltime here at SPU.”

Dr. Steele further shared that the purpose of the statement is to guide our life together. “The great Methodist theologian, Nels Ferré, called Christians to occupy what he called the “extreme center” in human affairs. Ferré was cautioning Christians against identifying themselves too closely with the theological and political dogmas of the radical Left or the radical Right. He insisted that Christians should not define themselves or each other by their location on a spectrum of human opinions, but by their common loyalty to Jesus and their common duty to love their neighbors. That is just what the SPU Statement of Faith calls us to, as well. When the words we use to define our loyalty to Jesus and our love for our neighbors are invested by the surrounding culture with alien meanings, or stripped of any meaning at all, then out of loyalty to Jesus and love for neighbor, we may need to revise our vocabulary to preserve our message. What we can’t do is water down our message for fear of being rejected by our neighbors. Being Christian means running the risk of being rejected by those with whom we want to share the message — and yet continuing to proclaim that message boldly and to embody it faithfully precisely because we love our Lord and precisely because we love our neighbors for our Lord’s sake. The key thing is to strive as a community to keep Christ at the “extreme center” of our life together, while granting freedom of conscience and a measure of lifestyle diversity to those who join us. As I read it, that is what our Faith Statement invites, challenges, and enables us to do.”

We thank Dr. Steele for his extraordinary service and contribution to the life of Seattle Pacific University which we experienced a taste of on Thursday night.

Trustee Departures and Elections

We are deeply thankful to the service of three members of the Board who have departed the Board. In March, Dr. Tina Chang vacated her position as Vice Chair and also as a member of the Board.

As we began the meetings this past week, Dr. Denise Martinez withdrew from her role as a Trustee. Finally, as a young alum of SPU and Trustee, Kevin Johnson shared that this meeting would be his last as he was ending his service on the Board at the conclusion of this Spring meeting.

The Board reelected four members to additional three-year terms: Mark Mason, Mike McKee, George Parker, and Matt Whitehead.

Officer Elections

Officers were also elected in this annual meeting.

- Dean Kato replaces Cedric Davis as Chair effective July 1, 2022. Cedric Davis remains on the Board and will begin his final year of Board service.
- Deborah Wilds was elected to the open Vice Chair position.
- Mike McKee was re-elected as Treasurer.
- Becky Gilliam was elected to serve another year as Secretary.

Financial Sustainability Working Groups (FSWG)

As we have reported throughout the winter and spring, the four Financial Sustainability work groups were tasked with identifying viable options to increase revenue and reduce expenses across the University. The work groups provided comprehensive reports to the Board during this May meeting. The Board was able to review these reports and will be further analyzing and considering next steps and anticipates future campus communications over the summer.

Faculty Chair Report

Faculty Chair Dr. April Middeljans provided her report in representing the faculty to the Board. As she has shared in her email to the faculty, she provided a compelling picture of the unique role and space that SPU fills within the collection of Christian colleges. Her leadership has been a vision for what shared governance is attempting to be across countless colleges and universities. The work that she and faculty council led this year is shaping our hope that even with setbacks we can search for a way to see all the needs of the University as important to the overall choices that we make. I encourage you to re-read her comments as they are piercing and poignant insights into the challenges we continue to face as we strive to work together in shared governance.

Area Reports

These reports, including the Faculty Chair report, are linked below, and I encourage you to read them and learn more about all that is happening across campus. <links redacted>

- [Provost](#)
- [Academic Affairs](#)
- [Inclusive Excellence](#)
- [Student Formation and Community Engagement](#)
- [University Ministries](#)
- [Enrollment Management and Marketing](#)
- [Finance and Administration](#)
- [University Advancement](#)

- [Faculty Chair Report](#)

Committee Reports and Actions

The standing committees met prior to the full meeting of the Board. Their committee reports were given to the full Board on Friday.

Actions recommended by Committees and approved by the Board included:

- Approval of Faculty Handbook revisions
- Approval of the 2022-23 Budget

<financial information redacted>

Presidential Search

In executive session, the Board also had discussion about a presidential search. We will share more information as it is received from the Board in the coming weeks.

With deep appreciation,

Pete Menjares



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