



Office of the President

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: FEBRUARY 2021

OVERVIEW AND REPORTS

The Winter Board of Trustees meetings were held via Zoom Thursday and Friday of last week. As usual, this report will provide an overview of the meetings and deliver operational detail through the area reports linked below. The reports contain substantive information that speaks to the depth and breadth of our work together.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Trustees met in their respective Standing Committees (Academic Affairs and Student Experience; Finance, Audit, and Facilities; and University Relations) on Thursday afternoon. The Trusteeship Committee met the previous week, continuing their work on Trustee recruitment and addressing Trustee development topics. Additionally, each area of the University submitted a report, available via the links below. I again encourage you to read through the reports to learn about the great work that happens each and every day across campus. Each time the Board reports are created, I am reminded how blessed we are to work alongside such gifted colleagues.

The area reports can be accessed through these links: <links redacted>

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

Beyond these Board reports, I want to highlight some important updates from the Finance, Audit, and Facilities Committee and the University Relations Committee (an enrollment update, specifically).

FINANCIAL UPDATE:

<financial info redacted>

ENROLLMENT UPDATE:

<enrollment info redacted>

BOARD DISCUSSIONS

Following the Committee meetings on Thursday afternoon, the Board discussed a number of matters over the remainder of the meeting and approved a variety of action items (noted below). These items included an assessment of the current year's financial performance, continued COVID-19 impact and future plans, strategic planning, reviewing and approving the 2021-22 budget plan, and other matters regarding Board member recruitment and Board governance and development. Of particular significance was the in-depth review and determination of each tenure candidate's file and the actions granting emeritus status to several retiring faculty, noted in more detail below.

Additionally, a significant portion of the meetings was reserved for a report and discussion related to the recent faculty-designed and led survey on human sexuality as well as broadly discussing matters of human sexuality and its relationship to our mission, statement of faith, and context. On Thursday evening, Dr. Carlene Brown presented the survey results for both the faculty and staff surveys. Staff Council President, Gina Whitehouse, and ASSP President, José Flores, offered thoughts and comments on this topic as well. Following the comments by Dr. Brown, Gina, and José, the Board engaged in a robust conversation regarding the survey results and the faculty and staff perspectives on this matter.

Thank you to those of you who completed the survey and gave voice to your beliefs and perspectives. Just as the Board received a report and had an opportunity to discuss the survey results, it is important for faculty and staff to also receive the results and have an opportunity to discuss together the meaning, interpretation, and understanding of the data. To that end, the Faculty Council, who served as the body that oversaw the design, implementation, and analysis of the survey, working together with Staff Council, is providing a report on the results of both surveys for your review. As these results are made available, I ask three things of you:

First, the survey report, although offered for your review, is intended to remain confidential and behind the University firewall. Please do not forward the report. If you experience difficulty accessing the reports, please contact <redacted> to troubleshoot access issues. Faculty Council has discussed the best ways to share the results with interested students while also maintaining the confidentiality of responses that were written with the Board as the intended audience. Thank you for your help in maintaining this confidentiality.

Second, to enhance our dialogue, discussion, and understanding around the data, the Faculty Council, in partnership with Staff Council and the Provost, is planning to host various discussion opportunities for faculty and staff in the coming weeks. I encourage your participation and engagement. The email Dr. Brown sent to faculty and staff on behalf of Faculty and Staff Councils on Tuesday, February 23, provided the details.

Third, given that our community members hold various perspectives and beliefs, it is my hope that as we engage in these discussions we would pursue charity toward each other in all things. May we continually assume good faith and love one another as members of an academic community of faith committed to grounding all we do in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

You will be able to access the report through this [link](#). As you will see, the report is rich and compels deeper reflection about our community and the individual perspectives within it. In addition to receiving the survey results and hearing from Dr. Brown, Gina, and José, the Board also received a compendium of written input from the community, in the form of letters and statements written by particular departments, alumni, and students. The Board engaged in substantive dialogue and considered many aspects of the issues presented – theological, legal, contextual, operational, etc. – consistent with the Board’s responsibility in shared governance to consider how the University can best fulfill its mission.

Although the Board of Trustees is a less-visible group on campus, given connections within the Christian and professional communities, many faculty and staff members know our Board members from other contexts. We are blessed to have a diverse Board composed of prayerful, engaged, thoughtful, and accomplished professionals who take their role seriously. They also bring great capacity to understand the challenges facing SPU and all of higher education these days. The Board is populated with women and men with a deep faith in Christ and a heart for SPU’s life-changing mission. In fact, many of our Board members have directly benefited from our mission as they are either alumni or parents of alumni themselves. I am blessed with the opportunity to serve alongside them, and I am grateful for the many tireless and sacrificial ways they support and advance SPU’s mission.

Given the Board’s responsibility in this meeting to make fully informed decisions on the action items noted below (Tenure, 2021-22 Guideline Budget, etc.), and in order to provide the Board with additional time to review the further provided input noted above, an additional Board meeting will be scheduled in the coming weeks to continue the Board’s discussion.

I will be sure to keep the campus informed as we move forward together in our shared mission of educating students for a greater purpose.

FRIDAY DEVOTIONAL

The Friday session of the Board meeting began with a devotional brought by the Rev. Celeste Cranston, Director of the Center for Biblical and Theological Education. She shared from the story of Jacob’s wrestling with God in Genesis 32. Through this experience, Jacob was able to let go of “either/or” thinking, emerging with an ability to hold tension rather than a sense of triumph. He moved from fear into a deeper relationship with the living God, and from a posture of humility, learned to see the face of God in others. She ended with an observation about a verse that she often has glossed over in the past (v. 32) that says that Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the hip because Jacob sustained a wound to his hip during this episode, noting that the places of pain and wounding are to be held as sacred and cared for. Celeste called us to pay special attention to those members of our community who are wounded, marginalized, and vulnerable.

During the general business sessions of the meeting, the Board discussed a number of matters and approved a variety of action items (noted below).

BOARD ACTIONS

Action items from the Board included:

- Approval of the 2021-22 Board Meeting Schedule
- Approval to engage Clark Nuber to conduct the University’s independent audit
- Approval of the Federal Single Audit Report for fiscal year ended June 30, 2020
- Approval of the 2021-22 Guideline Budget and funding allocations

Additionally, and as referenced above, one of the highlights of the February Board meeting is the opportunity for the Board to recognize the meritorious service of retiring faculty members and to consider junior faculty for tenure.

EMERITI FACULTY:

It is with delight that I announce the following retiring faculty members were proudly recognized as “Emeriti Faculty.”

<redacted>

We are a better place because of their investment in our mission, and, in turn, the lives and futures of our students and those of us who have had the privilege of serving alongside them. May God bless each of them and their families during this transition to their next phase of life – one that I am sure will continue to benefit from their investment and influence in new ways.

TENURE CANDIDATES:

As it relates to the tenure candidates, the Faculty Handbook states, “...tenure at Seattle Pacific University is understood as a symbol of stability of the integrity of the community, and of the joint commitment of every member of the community to the mission of the University.” Receiving tenure speaks to a faculty member’s commitment and dedication to the profession and to student success. The process is demanding, and achieving tenure is a tremendous accomplishment.

I am pleased to announce the Board of Trustees approved the following eight faculty members to receive tenure:

<redacted>

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely yours,

Dan