



Board of Trustees HIGHLIGHTS & SUMMARY

Vol. 23, No. 3 February 27, 2017

President's Report

President John J. Hurley announced that Trustee Mark Czarnecki, President of M&T Bank, had passed away the previous day. He also requested prayers for former trustee, Larry Aiello, who is recovering from serious illness and making a slow recovery, and for Judy Bassanello, trustee and president of the Alumni Association, who is undergoing treatment for breast cancer.

Mr. Hurley assured the Board that retention and enrollment are a top priority of everyone at the college. The Enrollment Management, Academics and Student Life Committees of the Board all heard presentations on the challenges in these areas.

He reported on the college's response to Governor Andrew Cuomo's free tuition plan for SUNY and CUNY schools. Working in concert with the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities in Albany, the college is actively lobbying for an expansion of the state's Tuition Assistance Program instead of free tuition in the public sector. He said the governor's proposal threatens enrollment, student choice, and limits access to financial aid. Additionally, it undermines the careful balance of public and private education opportunities in the state and is fundamentally unfair to students who want to attend private institutions. He encouraged everyone to continue their advocacy by contacting members of the local delegation to voice their opposition.

At the federal level, there is also great uncertainty. There may be the possibility of less regulation under this administration, but there is great concern about the future of financial aid programs such as Pell and SEOG. The administration's stance on immigration is also a concern for the intellectual and cultural life of our colleges and universities.

Mr. Hurley reported that the Policy Manual Project is ongoing and in the midst of a 60-day public comment period. He said the goal is to present the majority of the Policy Manual to the Board in May for approval. The Faculty Handbook, volume IV of the manual, is under review by two groups within the Faculty Senate. A reasonable timetable for completing this piece of the project is under consideration.

Mr. Hurley presented the topline results of the faculty and employee engagement surveys. He noted that people generally feel very positive about the work that they do and demonstrate pride in working at Canisius. However, there were lower scores on several measures. He said that the criticism expressed in the survey is reflective of the college's financial challenges and the uncertainties driven by the market forces. The college intends to form engagement teams that will review the survey results and recommend some changes. The survey will be conducted annually to measure the college's progress.

Mr. Hurley reported on the campus conversation on race. He said that as a result of the racial incident on the campus in the fall, there is a heightened recognition among faculty, staff, and students that we need to address these issues. Through a dedicated task force on race, recommendations are emerging, including ways to use the core curriculum as a place to reflect diversity and to provide faculty with a toolkit to help them facilitate difficult conversations. Student and alumni groups are also considering ways in which issues of diversity could be improved.

Mr. Hurley congratulated the men's hockey team on its 15-game undefeated streak. Canisius has the top goalie in the league and the team has won its first conference regular season championship. He also reported that Canisius' team for the Chartered Financial Analyst Research Competition has earned its 7th first place finish in the regional championships and moving onto the finals in Seattle, WA. Mr. Hurley concluded his remarks by reminding the Board about the impact of their giving. He read two touching letters from students who were applying for a grant to participate in service immersions trips offered through Campus Ministry. Their stories were heartfelt reminders of the college's mission, the compassion of our students, and the responsibility they accept to make the world a better place.

Discussion on Next Phase of Science Hall Development

Marco Benedetti, Vice President for Business & Finance, led a presentation on several considerations for the next phase of buildout for Science Hall. He presented slides dealing with possible funding considerations pertinent to the next phase of development, including issuance of debt, borrowing from accumulated surplus, and donor contributions. He discussed these factors in the context of the college's five-year financial plan and enrollment projections. Mr. Benedetti also discussed current cost projections, delivery methods, and the impacts of timing. The board suggested that the college continue to work on this plan.

Sale of Campion Hall

The Board unanimously approved the sale of Campion Hall to Priam Enterprises, LLC.

Board Chair Election

Dr. Rick N. Gilbert, Jr., Chair of the Committee on Trusteeship, reported that Ed Carey will conclude his term as Board Chair on June 30. He outlined the process for electing the next board chair. Written statements were prepared by the nominees and circulated in advance of the meeting. A web-based vote was held and Mr. Lee Wortham was announced as the person selected to succeed Mr. Carey. Mr. Wortham has served on the Board for the past three years, and chairs the Investment Advisory Committee, on which he has served since 2011. He is a partner at Barrantys LLC and has served on many corporate and non-profit boards. He is also chair of the Roswell Park Alliance Foundation.

Academics Committee

Dr. Margaret McCarthy, Vice President for Academic Affairs, reported to the committee on the Center for Urban Education and about sustainability programs, including a proposal to develop a community garden. The committee heard a report on developing plans to collaborate with the Innovation Center at the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus and discussed opportunities emerging for the Center for Professional Development, Office of Professional Studies, and other new academic program possibilities. Dr. McCarthy also reported on retention results, outcomes of the faculty engagement survey, and the policy manual project. Dr. Karl Kozlowski, Chair of the Faculty Senate, provided an update on the Core Capstone and shared areas of concern for the faculty, including the faculty engagement survey and the Faculty Handbook.

Audit Committee

The committee reviewed the 2015 IRS 990 tax return. The committee endorsed a resolution to approve and file the 990. Marco Benedetti, Vice President for Business and Finance, reported on the work of the Retirement Planning Committee. The committee supported proposed changes to the investment menu options and the benchmarking approach. The committee reviewed the conflict of interest disclosures for Trustees and key employees and approved the handling of related party transactions. The committee also examined current legal claims against the college and determined that insurance coverage was adequate.

Enrollment Management Committee

The Enrollment Management Committee discussed student retention rates, Fall 2017 freshmen enrollment progress, and international student recruitment initiatives. Annie Dobies, Assistant Vice President & Director of the Griff Center for Academic Engagement, reported a decrease in student retention among freshmen and transfer student populations from Fall 2016 to Spring 2017. Preliminary research revealed that academic difficulties, unmet financial need, and a higher than usual attrition rate within certain academic programs are among the causes. Justin Rogers, Director of Undergraduate Admissions, reported that the current Fall 2017 freshmen application, admit and deposit counts are similar to last year and he expects to meet the enrollment goal set for the Fall. Mr. Hurley outlined the college's strategy to increase international student enrollment. He reported that Canisius has signed agreements with international student agents and is actively recruiting in local high schools, as well as in high schools located in Toronto and southern Ontario, Canada, where there are large international student populations. Mr. Hurley reported that slow, steady growth of the international student population is projected.

Finance & Facilities Committee

The committee reviewed current year results through the Fall 2016 semester. Mr. Benedetti reported that tuition revenue was below budget for the summer and fall periods, but lower expenses partially offset the shortfall. The 2017 projected deficit is anticipated to grow as a result of higher than expected attrition and tuition discounting. The committee reviewed and approved the potential sale of Campion Hall to a developer, who intends to convert the building to market rate efficiency apartments. The committee discussed a range of funding considerations pertinent to the next phase of development for the 2nd floor of Science Hall. They reviewed lending options, borrowing from accumulated surplus, and fundraising goals. They also looked at updated drawings, which included space considerations for biology and ABEC on the second floor. The administration will continue to work on its financial plans and gather more data before moving forward.

Mission & Identity Committee

A joint meeting of the Mission & Identity and Student Life Committees was held to explore the ways in which mission was experienced through student life and learning at Canisius. The committees used Characteristic 3 of the *Some Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities: A Self-Evaluation* published by the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities as a framework for the discussion. Faculty guests, Dr. Fernanda Astiz, Professor of Teacher Education, and Dr. Timothy Wadkins, Professor of Religious Studies and Director for the Institute for Global Study of Religion, described how they infuse mission-related content, pedagogy, and signature learning experiences, such as immersion travel, into their teaching and research. Student guests Kate Campanaro '18, Chanel Davis '17, Jeffrey Spencer '17, and Alie Iwanenko '17 discussed a variety of experiences that shaped their understanding of the Canisius College mission and deepened their personal faith life through courses, student clubs, Campus Ministry programs, service learning, immersion programs, and athletics. The committee discussed opportunities to extend these experiences to more students.

**Institutional
Advancement
Committee**

Bill Collins, vice president for institutional advancement, reported that total collected revenue was \$4.7 million and that the total number of donors has increased to 4,300, both figures slightly ahead of last year. He added that the college has raised more than \$500,000 from the 50-year reunion class ('67) and eleven new endowed scholarships have been established to date. Alumni events featuring President Hurley have been scheduled in Washington DC, Orlando, Tampa, Naples and Venice FL, NYC, Boston and Chicago. The Office of Alumni Engagement is also working with the Griff Center to arrange for President Hurley to visit regional companies employing large cohorts of Canisius alumni. Similar events have taken place at Ingram Micro and Citi, and an upcoming event Geico is scheduled. Alumni and Enrollment Management are collaborating on admitted student events in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and NYC. He also reported that the Regents Ball is nearly sold out. The committee also discussed the college's response to the governor's "free tuition" proposal. The committee reviewed the Institutional Advancement division's strategic plan, including preliminary plans for a comprehensive fundraising campaign to start in late 2018.

**Investment Advisory
Committee**

The Investment Advisory Committee reported that the endowment reached a high watermark of \$120 million.

**Student Life
Committee**

Elias Ayoub, President of the Undergraduate Student Association (USA) updated the committee on the ongoing priorities of USA, including improving sustainability, divestment, and involvement in the Campus Conversation on Race working group. Mr. Ayoub also discussed upcoming USA elections, for both executive committee members and class year senators, and talked about his efforts to diversify the candidate pool. Dr. Jennifer Lodi-Smith, representing the Faculty Senate Student Liaison Committee, updated the committee on the work of this group. Dr. Lodi-Smith indicated that student attendance at meetings was still an issue. There was a recommendation made to adjust the meeting times to better meet the needs of the students. Dr. Lodi-Smith also reported that the committee had been asked to provide feedback for course evaluations used for on-line classes, and that they were working on that request. Dr. Terri Mangione, Vice President for Student Affairs, reported on the retention rates for the spring 2017 semester. Dr. Mangione also updated the committee on the work of the Campus Conversations on Race group that she chairs. She provided a brief update on the new bias reporting system and discussed the Callisto tool used for recording and reporting incidents of sexual violence.

Upcoming Dates

Regents Ball: May 6, 2017

Board Meeting: May 8, 2017

Graduate Commencement: May 17, 2017

Undergraduate Commencement: May 20, 2017

Erica C. Sammarco, Secretary