



Vol. 20, No. 1 October 21, 2013

Board of Trustees Retreat

The Board of Trustees engaged in a day and a half-long retreat to explore the critical issues facing higher education. A delegation of faculty was invited by the Trustees to participate and explore the trends. The retreat included a keynote address by Rick Legon, President of the Association of Governing Boards, who spoke about the major forces confronting higher education, including the economic factors, regional and national demographics, public scrutiny of measurable outcomes, and the impact of online technologies. His remarks challenged the group to envision what Canisius would look like in 20 years and set the framework for the subsequent retreat sessions. The retreat agenda included discussion among Trustees and faculty about:

- Online education and the issues raised in a recent article by Nathan Heller, “Laptop U: Has the Future of College Moved Online?” from the 5/20/13 edition of The New Yorker
- The college’s mission and vision statements and their relevance in light of work on the strategic assessment initiatives.
- The definition and role of shared governance.
- Accountability and assessment in higher education, how it is factored into our work on the strategic assessment, and our use of assessment to make the case for the value of a Canisius education.

A regular session of the Board of Trustees met following the retreat. Highlights of that meeting follow.

President’s Report

President Hurley reported on a recent meeting hosted Fr. General Adolfo Nicolás, Superior General of the Jesuits, for Presidents of the 28 U.S. Jesuit Colleges & Universities (AJCU) and their Board Chairs. The event marked the first time all 28 AJCU Board Chairs were together. Fr. General’s remarks addressed the qualities of spiritual and heroic leadership and he challenged presidents and trustees to exercise creativity as they think about how they are called to address the needs of the poor in the world. Mr. Hurley also reported that the searches for the Vice President of Enrollment Management and the Vice President for Institutional Advancement positions will be reopened.

2014 Commencement Honorees

The Board approved CNN News Correspondent, Wolf Blitzer, as the May 2014 Undergraduate Commencement Speaker and former Dunkin Donuts CEO, Jon Luther, as the May 2014 Graduate Commencement speaker. Each will also receive honorary degrees from Canisius.

The Board also approved the conferral of an honorary degree on Rev. Edward Durkin, S.J., principal of Buffalo’s Nativity Miguel Middle School. Other honorary degrees are in the process of confirmation.

Academics Committee

Dr. Christine Licata-Culhane reported that the Academics Committee reviewed the next phase of the branding campaign and recruitment strategies. Brand messaging will move from the theme of exploration and transition to a stronger focus on the academics and mission of Canisius. The committee heard from Director of Graduate Admissions, Julie Zulewski, about graduate recruitment strategies, which will emphasize program outcomes and student testimonials. The committee also heard reports about the Strategic Assessment initiatives, particularly the Academic Program Board’s academic program review process. The committee reviewed progress on the Middle States Commission on Higher Education self-study process and ways to address gaps in the Core Curriculum assessment. The committee also received an update on the Retention Task Force and looks forward to reviewing the recommendations at the December meeting.

Audit Committee Mr. Ben K. Wells reported that field work has concluded and the concurrent partner reviews are underway by Deloitte. The college did not meet expendable net assets ratio and certain waivers will be sought. Otherwise, there were no material weaknesses reported.

Finance and Facilities Committee The Committee recommended and the Board approved an appropriation of an amount not to exceed \$1 million from the college's accumulated surplus to supplement the 2013-14 operating budget revenues and balance the budget. The Committee also recommended and the Board authorized the college to proceed with the renovation to the main floor of the library, provided that contractor bids for the project do not exceed \$1.2 million. Committee Chair Michael Ervolina reported that the committee reviewed the draft audited financial statements for the 2012-13 fiscal year. The documents reflect that the college ended the year with a \$1.47 million surplus, including the \$1.65 million transfer in accumulated surplus. The college reduced its expenses by \$3 million last year and increased its net assets by \$9 million. The committee also reviewed the employment statistics, capital projects, and plans for the next phase of the Library Learning Commons renovations, which will proceed this December as a result of successful fundraising for the initiative.

Institutional Advancement Committee Mr. John R. Connolly reported that the committee reviewed the progress of the Canisius Fund and emphasized the importance of increasing participation in the Leadership Society. He reported on the status of Canisius' partnership with Legacy Leaders to increase bequests to the college and discussed new alumni engagement initiatives that are underway.

Mission & Identity Hon. Mary Grace Diehl reported that the committee discussed the Office of Mission & Identity's goals for the year and met with Mike Hayes, Director of Campus Ministry. Among the goals for the committee this year, Ms. Diehl, said that they would evaluate the committee charge and look for opportunities for all constituents to engage in mission and identity matters. Looking ahead, the Board will participate in four-part online series prepared by Rev. Michael F. Tunney, S.J. and begin each meeting with a "mission moment."

Student Life Committee Mr. Lawrence J. Vilardo said that the committee reviewed a report completed by Athletics Director, Bill Maher, on the value and costs of the athletics program. Recent changes in the program include transitioning synchronized swimming to a club level sport. The committee heard from Brock Wilkinson, President of USA, on the Sleep-Out in the Quad event, student participation rates in service work, and concerns about student representation on the college budget committee. Brock also reported that students are voicing concern about post-graduation job placements and the implications employment pathways have on student recruitment and retention. The committee heard about progress of the Task Force on Retention and discussed the status of the Middle States self-study.

Trusteeship Committee Mr. Rocco J. Maggiotto reported that committee reviewed results of the Board Effectiveness Survey and will present the results at the December meeting. The committee reviewed the conflict of interest forms for Trustees and administrators and found no significant concerns. The committee will begin the process of identifying new candidates for the Board and urges Trustees to please submit nominations by December. The committee is also aware of faculty interest in Board participation and will consider opportunities to engage faculty in its upcoming meetings.

Future Meetings **2013-14 Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule**

- December 9, 2013
- February 24, 2014
- May 5, 2014

Erica C. Sammarco, Secretary