

February 16, 2007

From Jolley Bruce Christman and Lucy Williams Hooper

Dear R-MWC Community,

The Board of Trustees met on campus last weekend for its regularly scheduled winter meeting. We had several opportunities to visit with faculty, staff, and students. We also had dinner with approximately 10 members of the Alumnae Association Board who arrived prior to their weekend meeting. With this letter, we want to update others in the R-MWC community with information shared during the weekend.

Developing Ways to Communicate

As part of this year's February meeting, Public Conversation Project (PCP) of Watertown, MA came to campus to facilitate communication among the College's constituencies. PCP helps groups develop ways to communicate more effectively through the development of mutual understanding and trust. The request for a group such as this came from the Faculty Representative Committee. Trustees and members of the campus community participated in conversations scheduled over two days. Everyone who participated felt the conversations were informative and helpful.

Strategic Planning Implementation Teams

A significant part of the trustees' weekend centered on hearing and responding to the work of the Strategic Planning Implementation Teams. The six teams, comprising alumnae, faculty, students, trustees, and staff are: Alumnae Connections; Business Plan; Campus Life/Coeducational Environment; Branding, Marketing, and Communications; Curriculum/Pedagogy; and Student Recruitment/Admissions Strategies. The groups, under the guidance of the Strategic Planning Implementation Steering Committee, have developed specific approaches—principles, goals, and strategies—to implement their respective aspects of the plan. Next steps for the working teams will be to project costs, identify necessary resources, and further develop timelines.

Team reports should be complete in the next month. From these reports, the Steering Committee will synthesize the work into the Strategic Implementation Plan. The Board is expected to act on the Strategic Implementation Plan at its May meeting.

For further information: www.rmwc.edu/strategicplan

A Warning from SACS

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) has issued a warning to the College for failure to comply with SACS accreditation principle 2.11. This regulation states that the institution must demonstrate that it has a sound financial base and adequate physical resources to support its mission and the scope of its programs and services. The warning confirms the findings of the Board of Trustees and the necessity of implementing a strategic plan based on financial sustainability. It also establishes an even greater sense of urgency to bring the College into financial equilibrium.

Presidential Search

Chaired by trustee Amanda Clark Fox '67, the presidential search committee comprises faculty, trustees, students, and staff. Seven members of the committee are alumnae. The group, working with an executive search consultant, has received numerous recommendations for the College's ninth president.

Next steps for the committee will be to review and narrow the applicant pool to a list of candidates to interview. After interviews are completed, the committee will narrow the field further and ultimately recommend a finalist for the position to the Board of Trustees. The current schedule will enable a new president to be named in early summer.

For information on submitting nominations: www.rmwc.edu/presidentialsearch

Dismissal of the Lawsuits

On January 23, two lawsuits filed against the College by opponents of the school's decision to admit men were dismissed in Lynchburg Circuit Court. The first lawsuit had been brought by nine students who alleged breach of contract and sought to prevent the College from going coed for three years until the current first-year class could graduate. The second suit, filed by a small group of students, alumnae, and donors, claimed that the College is a charitable foundation under Virginia law and thus may not change its articles of incorporation unless it convinces the court that it is impossible or impracticable to keep operating as a women's college. Circuit Court Judge J. Leyburn Mosby Jr. dismissed the suits before they could proceed to trial.

Masters' Programs Accredited

The College has received notification that its two graduate programs leading to a Master of Arts in Teaching and a Master of Education have been approved by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

Letter from Three Presidents

Former Presidents William Quillian (1952-1978), Robert Spivey (1978-1987) and Linda Lorimer (1987-1993) have written an open letter to the R-MWC community. In their letter, the former presidents acknowledge "the recent tumultuous time in the life of the College." Even though they did not agree with our decision, they "...think it is time to let go."

For complete text of the letter: www.rmwc.edu/strategicplan/reading_list

In their closing, the presidents express a desire that we "...join [together] to ensure that the College continues to be a place of wisdom, honor and excellence that will inspire and educate future generations."

On behalf of the trustees, we extend our appreciation for their letter and we join with them in their hope for the future of this place we all love.

Jolley Bruce Christman '69
President of the Board

Lucy Williams Hooper '73
President-Elect