

MEMORANDUM

Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014
To: Members of the Hampshire College Community
From: Gaye Hill, Chair of the Board of Trustees
Re: February 2014 Board meetings

Hampshire College's Board of Trustees met twice this month. The first meeting was held by telephone on February 7, and was convened so that the Board could vote on two time-sensitive items – approving the faculty personnel actions from CCFRAP and awarding the baccalaureate degree to February graduates (we did not want faculty and graduates to have to wait on these items any longer than necessary). Our second meeting took place on campus this past week, February 20-22.

Below is a recap of the votes and topics discussed at these two meetings.

VOTES:

The Board voted in support of each of the following motions:

~ To award the Bachelor of Arts degree to candidates listed on the February 2014 roster, as recommended by the faculty on February 4, 2014.

~ To approve the faculty personnel actions recommended by President Lash in his memorandum, "Appointments, reappointments, promotions, revision or extension of contracts, and sabbatical leaves and leaves of absence," dated January 27, 2014. On behalf of the Board, I offer my warm congratulations to Michelle Bigenho, Andrea Dezsö, Jennifer Hamilton, Chris Jarvis, Thom Long, Steve Roof, Charles Ross, Helen Scharber, Udit Sen, and John Slepian on your reappointments and promotions!

~ To approve the Hampshire College Financial Report for fiscal year 2012-2013 as submitted, as recommended by the Audit and Compliance Committee.

MAJOR AREAS OF DISCUSSION:

~ President Jonathan Lash briefed the trustees on the work that Institutional Research Director Meredith Twombly and Professors Myrna Breitbart, Elizabeth Conlisk, Jennifer Hamilton, and Laura Wenk have been doing to identify and characterize students who thrive at Hampshire. I speak for all the trustees in saying that their research is invaluable and gives us important insight into how we can best support Hampshire's educational mission through enrollment positioning. The question of aligning Hampshire's size and capacity has been a topic of Board discussion for some time, and the trustees conveyed their strong support for the president's decision to reduce the number of new students admitted for Fall 2014, understanding both the potential financial risks and the reputational rewards.

~ Keeling & Associates provided the trustees with an update on strategic planning, as they have at each Board meeting this year. They described the numerous avenues through which faculty, staff, students, and trustees have contributed ideas and information to the process, and noted that there is remarkable consensus across all constituencies about priorities moving forward, including the need to realign enrollment decisions. Richard Keeling told us that Hampshire's strategic planning effort is the most inclusive and highly trust-based exercise he has ever witnessed – not a surprise given the integrity of this community, but still a delight to hear.

~ The chairs of the Student Life, Academic Affairs, and Enrollment Committees reported on a joint meeting of all three committees to discuss retention efforts from their different perspectives. It was a very informative conversation and the committees will continue to meet together at least twice yearly. In addition, the trustees received updates on the Portal project, the Food, Farm, and Sustainability Initiative, and the Entrepreneurship Initiative, as well as a briefing on the progress being achieved under Hampshire's Policy on Environmental, Social, and Governance Investing.

~ A large portion of this Board meeting was devoted to a discussion of the role of technology in higher education as a core strategic issue. (The trustees have been working to educate themselves on compelling trends; previous sessions have dealt with the finances of higher education and the need for positioning and differentiation in higher education.) Trustee Ben Cushman facilitated the sessions and arranged to bring in a number of guests, which greatly enriched the Board's conversation. Gardner Campbell, who is Vice Provost in the Office of Learning Innovation and Student Success at Virginia Commonwealth University (and also a Hampshire parent), and Jon Udell, whose title is Microsoft Evangelist, provided an external perspective on the many uses of technology in higher education. Campus participants included Information Technology Director Bob Crowley and Assistant Director Asha Kinney; Director of the Library Jennifer King; Professors Sarah Hews, Chris Perry, Lee Spector, and Neil

Stillings; alum and adjunct instructor Zeke Nierenberg 09F; and student Mitch Krieger 11F. Their contributions were especially impressive and inspiring, and it was evident that they “wowed” our visitors.

~ Finally, it was wonderful to have a number of you join us at the reception the Board hosted in the library gallery on Thursday evening. It means a great deal to the trustees to be able to regularly meet and interact with the on-campus community, and I thank you for taking the time to come.

I hope the above information is helpful. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact me at trustees@hampshire.edu or Beth Ward, secretary of the College, at bward@hampshire.edu.