

USHS Board Meeting

10/28/2014

Present: Maxine Adelstein, Catherine Antunes, Pat Aylward, James Cotten, John Laird, Lora Laird, Carol Lee, Maria McConchie, Dawn Meltzer, Renata Parrino, Cheryl Ritenbaugh, Carolyn Shenmen, Phil Sorenson

Excused Absence: Donna Crews-Finney, Sharmila Graefer, Robert Jaffe, Patricia Brady Walzer, Lincoln Wachtel, Elizabeth Donihoo

Unexcused: Kimberlee Bach

Guest: Christine Lee

Next Meeting: Tues. 11/25/2014, 2pm - 4pm PST
Conference Dial-in Number: [\(605\) 475-4800](tel:(605)475-4800)
Pin: 271411#

Decisions:

- August and September minutes approved (both need web versions).
- Board agreed with co-presidents' strategy for handling probably low Year 1 Fall enrollment.

Agenda:

Maxine Adelstein opened with Fatiha.

Co-President's Report

A request to also report on co-presidents' meeting with Sidi last month.

Maxine Adelstein: We met with Sidi in San Diego, hoping to get guidance on the University moving forward. He gave us minor points, like work on accreditation. Focus was mostly on SSC and how we can support SSC, letting us know that Amina al-Jamal will be at the Land [holding retreats] but not teaching at USHS.

Enrollment report moved up prior to remainder of co-presidents' report.

Enrollment Report

Christine Lee: Y1Fall, 11 enrolled, 24 under budget with 2 app's in process, 9 strong prospects for winter enrollment + 11 other prospects for winter. Y2 budgeted for 26, has 28 enrolled, 1 may drop. Y3 budgeted for 17, enrolled 7 so far out of 21 student from 13-14. Y4 at budget with 12 + 1 non-paying. Focus on getting more into the winter session, keeping year 1 enrollment open.

Fawzia teleseries launching tomorrow, budgeted for 10, enrolled 25 over that; about \$27,000 over for income.

Co-President's Report, continued.

Carolyn: Written report was sent out to entire board yesterday, we'll take questions.

Q: Can you summarize what you feel is most important for Board to look at right now?

Carolyn: Our proposed response to the disappointing fall enrollment, which is substantially below budget. We feel there are two alternatives: try to make up for budget shortfall by moving programs around and try to recover, or start cutting immediately into programs and staff.

Our preference is the first. Would like to not make budget cuts at this point, but review results of our proposed steps and come to board in December with the outcome of that and further proposed way forward.

Steps we propose:

First, keep enrollment for Y1 Fall class open - allow students to join late, send recordings, etc., for missed session. Has worked just fine in the past to let students "catch up." This will maximize enrollment so it falls within this financial year.

Second, move all Y1 Spring class sessions into this fiscal year, so all the tuition hits this fiscal year. Also, we'd like to hold 2 spring classes, one at Farm of Peace, one at SSC or in Bay Area.

Third, run a Y1 summer session as a 3 week intensive. Also will try to get that tuition within this fiscal year.

Basically going to a year-'round enrollment. Also meets another goal of getting students through a MDiv in 3 years instead of 4.

Increasing Y1 enrollment also affects follow-on Year 2 and 3.

Fourth, strongly market our teleseries, first of which is Fawzia, because those have potential for huge enrollments, and if oversubscribed can make up some of our deficit.

Those are the main highlights. We expect to have some indication of how this works by beginning of December, which will determine our next steps.

- Questions and discussion on when USHS can start offering online courses for credit. Defining the for-credit curriculum is the first part of the strategic plan.
- FOC and both co-chairs expressed support for enrollment strategy.

- No paramount and principled objections were voiced to co-presidents' plan.
- Pat A: We consider this board confirmation and support for the plan and look forward to hearing results in the months ahead.

Financial report.

Phil Sorenson gave the financial report. Report was sent out report before meeting, 4 attachments. Based on current, conservative projections, our cash dips down a bit but does recover to get through the year. I think our model still needs to be adjusted in some ways.

To be clear, despite our adequate cash reserves, we [FOC] don't think the University is strong or robust; we are not in intensive care but right down the hall from it. A few things could send us either way. Positives: staff morale seems high. Will continue to watch the cash flow and reserves. Very little activity past 2 months. Nothing unexpected.

Assumptions include 17 students for Y1 Fall?

Development Committee Report

Catherine Antunes: In October we completed the "three amigos" letter, coming from SSC, FoP and USHS, to university donors, letting them know our change in campaign timeline. Decided on a theme and logo for this campaign, Nourishing Light. We are also starting with foundations, a new part of our development effort.

This month we'll be initiating the Board campaign as well as faculty and staff. Larger community will be asked in early December for holiday giving.

John Laird: Have not received a matching grant for fall yet, I am in discussions with the donor. We did have a \$5K donation that came in unexpectedly. He also went over details of additional letters and donor pools.

Other Committee Reports. None.

Other Business.

Agreed not to change the November/December meeting dates despite their proximity to holidays.

Strategic Plan.

Carolyn Shenmen: Sent out before meeting. We merged our existing plan with input from other visioning meetings with various parties, and synthesized all that.

Maxine Adelstein gave a broad overview: We want to use facilities year 'round, not sporadically. To move to a full time university with a masters in 2 years, we'd like

that happen incrementally -- for example, adding 3 week intensives as a first step. The curriculum would be enhanced to focus, per Sidi, on training gnostic healers.

With a full-time, credit-based curriculum, by the year 5 [in the plan] there's a series of modules on a trimester schedule. Some at the Land, some distance learning, completely credit-based. That's a 5-year goal. This year, [the 3-week intensive] is designed for two things: one is to allow students to do Y1 over the summer and go straight into Y2. The other is [to allow students] to come only during the summer, [completing] one year at a time in compressed format.

Around about [plan] year 3, we'll implement credit-based modules and change record-keeping so we are recording credits for online courses. We are moving in all of these directions at once. The 5-year plan is to make the transition not too disruptive for the students already in the system.

In terms of facilities, for the next few years we believe we have enough capacity at the SSRC. If that turns out not to be the case, we'll have to figure out where to put the overflow and move faster on building a campus.

Cheryl proposed to completely redo our accreditation plan, find what is out there that we can already fit into and what they require. Our goal is to find an accreditation that enables students to get student loans. I would like to come up with new recommendations by the January meeting.

Carolyn S: We have a timeline for a newsletter, Q&A calls, so we need to have a general statement of Board support even if all details are not worked out yet.

Discussion regarding online classes for credit. Co-president Carolyn said by the end of second [plan] year, they expect to have credits assigned. She is opposed to rushing into online courses now, need to have administrative system set up to handle it. We already do have 6 teleseries this year and a strong online offering in January (non-credit). Maxine added that nobody has ever asked for credit for any of the teleseries or online offerings yet. There's still a lot to be defined, it's not going to happen immediately.

Pat A.: We are 10 minutes past time, it's a great discussion, propose we continue at a future meeting.

- Maxine: Because it's so important, we might want to have a board subcommittee working to move it up sooner.

Meeting closed with Fatiha.