

Augustana College

Rock Island, IL

## MINUTES

## FACULTY MEETING

Tuesday, August 24, 2010

11:30 a.m.

Olin Auditorium

1) Call to Order – President Bahls at 11:34 a.m.

2) Invocation – Pastor Priggie

President Bahls introduced Augustana’s new legal counsel, Augie grad Sheri Curran, who comes to us from Lee Enterprises, and encouraged the faculty to consult Sheri for safety issues, contract issues, etc.

3) **Motion-Good, Second-Tallitsch MOTION APPROVED**  
**“To approve the minutes of the April 29, 2010 Faculty Meeting as revised.”**

4) President’s Remarks – President Bahls

Enrollment

Augustana College finds itself in better condition than last year. The President thanked all who supported the recruitment effort and efforts to develop new majors. We are expecting our largest-ever first-year class--750 students compared to 625 last year--and exceeded our target of 50 transfer students. Augustana, however, will not become a college that makes up enrollment with transfer students. We are experiencing the most diverse class ever and have a record number of international students. Next year’s enrollment goal is set high as well in an effort to even out revenue flow—at 700 or more. Seven hundred fifty, however, is too many students to maintain given our infrastructure of faculty and physical plant. Our success this year was achieved with an aggressive financial aid strategy; however we realized less net-revenue per first-year student. Our statistics indicate there are less net family income and less overall family wealth, and as a result, financial aid packages may have been too generous this year. As we become a more diverse socio-economic institution, we have more issues to consider. Why didn’t we hit our financial aid goal? Numbers given to admissions were too rich because we set tuition in January and receive deposits in May, and we don’t have true figures until then.

Allen Bertsche commented on the decline in Illinois high school graduates and the less than desired success in diversity. Kent Barnds responded there was recruiting in Southern Wisconsin and Colorado. The problem in recruiting out of state is that we realize less net tuition student revenue. If you move more admissions counselors out of state, you have fewer to stay in state. If we think about diversity, typically classes we have not attracted well cost more to attract. For the next couple of years, revenue will grow at rate of 3% in good years as compared to 7-8% in previous years. We should feel good about where we are.

### Presidential Goals for 2010-11

The Board requires the president to develop by October a list of goals each year. (This list was handed out to faculty). The President indicated that if the faculty had any additional ideas for this document, that it is not too late to modify it. It is a tool to help the college focus on things we might do differently.

The college is engaging in a period of strategic planning. Faculty will be receiving emails from the planning committee, and President Bahls asked them to please respond and get involved. This strategic planning is an addendum to Authentically Augustana. President Bahl's sense is that Augustana does not need a comprehensive strategic plan that covers every aspect of the college. Rather, he anticipates a bridge strategic plan—a shorter-term plan addressing how we might best focus our efforts over the next several years, which is outcome-based instead of input-based with the overriding objective of improving student learning outcomes. Kent Barnds will head up this committee. How do we plan for the next three years to deal with those immediate issues in enrollment, in faculty concerns (job market is not as rich. What does this mean?), and possibly in expectation of students who are not as well prepared? As we identify issues, we will challenge faculty with these questions. The last plan focused on improving financial investment in college. How do we know if those dollars were successfully spent? The President urges the faculty to be involved in this process. Faculty senate will be involved. Our prior strategic plan suggested, for example, that faculty incorporate a senior-year experience.

President Bahls sees his role as facilitating faculty discussion of academic calendar and load-shift issues. President Bahls stated he is very impressed with faculty for their decision to build a load shift. He cautioned that the Board of Trustees establishes teaching load by constitution. So the faculty can only make recommendations to the Board, and he feels the Board will approve although he believes there will be times the Board will ask difficult questions, so he suggests the faculty think about building their case.

Because of the decline in net revenue per student, we are resolved to sharpen our business practices to protect academic areas. Academic departments have not yet been asked to cut costs, but their help is needed in improving the financial condition. Augustana makes two million dollars in purchases per year. To reduce these expenses, enhanced purchasing policies were implemented this year including a requirement to solicit bids for purchases.

### Dean's Search

President Bahls stated he was pleased with the process to date and is pleased with the pool we are generating for our new academic dean. The president who served Columbia University in the post-World War II years had it about right. He said: "There is probably no more complicated business in the world than picking a new dean within a university." This Columbia president said that every constituency has "an almost religious fervor in insisting on acceptance of their particular views." These views are varied and each voice expresses his/her own view. This president at Columbia was Dwight D. Eisenhower, who managed an invasion of Europe, but considered dean-selection to be more complicated.

President Bahls stated that we should expect this to be a good process but with bumps in the road. In President Bahls's opinion, the academic dean is the single most important officer at the college. The

President's role is to make sure we have physical and monetary resources to support the academic program. The dean's task, in deciding how to deploy those resources, is far more complex. The new dean should be a leader who works with faculty to advance the student learning at the college, while at the same time works with the administration in generating and allocating the resources necessary to achieve our academic goals. Augustana's dean should build consensus, but also motivate us to hold ourselves to the high standards that will enable us to help sustain our reputation as an outstanding liberal arts college.

In a nutshell, the dean is a link between faculty and administration. The link should be strong and tempered. In terms of our dean search, that means that the dean is a strong presence on campus. A good dean has ideas that are informed not only by Augustana culture but also knowledge of what is happening nationally within liberal arts colleges. The dean is not an order-taker. The dean is neither owned by the faculty nor the administration. Likewise, the dean is neither a spokesperson for the administration nor the faculty. And the dean should make both the administration and the faculty uncomfortable at times, as he or she urges us to hold ourselves to high standards in advancing student learning. And the dean should not be easily intimidated by the administration or the faculty. President Bahls hopes our new dean makes life uncomfortable for him, but also hopes our dean makes life uncomfortable on the academic side, pushing all of us ahead to help our students grow in mind, body and spirit. This makes credibility an imperative for a strong dean. Credibility is achieved by the personal characteristics that the search committee is identifying.

We need a dean that says 'here are the traditions in a liberal arts college'. Deans with a longer term tend to have a better impact on the college. President Bahls asks that we not pull the dean apart, and hopes we engage with each other in a real dialogue when times get tough. There are important issues facing the college that are part academic and part administrative: how do we operate in slow revenue growth? What is the balance between pre-professional and liberal arts curriculum? A dean who is a strong link has high credibility, both with the faculty and the administration, and challenges us all to engage in critical thinking and who does so in a way that builds strong systems of faculty governance.

President Bahls quoted Diana Walsh, president of Wellesley College, who wrote about what makes a unhealthy faculty/dean relationship in the August 20, 2010 issue of *Inside Higher Ed*: "*...from the day I arrived on campus as a new president, I was schooled in a cultural norm that the better part of valor was to tiptoe around the faculty. It was as though 'the faculty' as a whole was a hibernating bear no one dared disturb for fear of being mauled.*"

Steve Bahls hopes our dean doesn't feel that way. One of his charges to the next dean will be not only to wake sleeping bears, but to dance with them in a way that improves student learning and helps them grow in mind, body and spirit.

Critical thinking involves skepticism, but skepticism applied inappropriately devolves into cynicism, and criticism applied inappropriately devolves into contempt, belligerence and disengagement. These conditions, according to Diana Walsh, destroy effective faculty self-governance because faculty do not have meaningful systems to discuss and resolve issues effectively. President Bahls does not believe that the failure of many faculties to engage is due to bad faith, rather it is because faculty are fiercely committed to the mission of liberal arts education, and that fierce commitment leads to a passion that

sometimes transforms into the “less-than productive.” He also believes that part of a breakdown in faculty governance could be excessive collegiality, meaning it is often easier not to engage out of fear of offending a valued colleague.

We need to think about how we engage each other, how we structure faculty governance. We need a strong dean who is not going to have it her way or his way. The entire college needs to work on these problems together. The key challenge for our dean will be how to build strong systems of governance and become a strong link between the faculty and the administration, in a way that advances student learning.

#### Other Business

Jeff Strasser expressed his concern that we need to ensure that the renovations on Old Main attain the LEED certification level of Silver or equivalent as specified in the Environmental Action Plan.

President Bahls ended the meeting by welcoming the faculty back and thanking them for their many efforts on behalf of the college.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Koski and Virginia Johnson