

Board of Trustees Student Experience Committee

October 9, 2017

Faculty Representatives Dave Dinehart and Lynne Hartnett

The new format for the committee allowed for an especially productive meeting. Most of the discussion centered around issues of inclusion and the emotional and psychological well-being of our students. At the very beginning of the meeting, Board Member Carolyn Everson raised concerns that the experience of students from less represented groups did not equal that of more privileged students. One of the ways that we decided to consider this issue was to invite a wide array of students to come to each meeting of the committee to share their experiences. Father Stack's office will work to make sure that the students invited to share their impressions reflect diversity in socio-economic backgrounds, racial identity, gender, majors, and year. The committee discussed how to ensure that we prioritize ways to improve not only the diversity of our campus but also the feeling of inclusion on campus. This perspective guided most of our conversation.

We discussed developing broad themes that could be incorporated annually throughout the University. Two of the possibilities considered were inclusion and global citizenship.

Our committee moved from this conversation into discussions about the emotional and psychological health and well-being of our students. The committee spent a great deal of time discussing ways that we can proactively take stock of students' physical, spiritual, emotional and psychological health. We discussed utilizing self-assessments like those used by some companies as a way to have students become more aware of their overall health. In the interests of considering the whole experience of our students, we plan to hold joint sessions with the Academic Affairs committee regularly. The newly expanded format for the Board of Trustees Committees affords the time to do so.

In order to maximize the time that we do have, the committee decided to move away from a reading of reports during committee meetings. Henceforth, reports will be provided in advance on SharePoint. Then the committee meetings can be sent in discussion.

The one exception to this rule would be the reports from SGA. Matt McCarry, the SGA President, will report to the committee throughout the year. He and the other members of the student government leadership seem incredibly dynamic and forward-thinking. The group has initiated a series of new programs including opportunities for students to "ride-along" with the Lower Merion Police and Public Safety Officers on Friday nights, the creation of a student fan group called the Nation, and opportunities for students to offer suggestions both in conventional suggestion boxes and through a virtual suggestion box.

Father Peter joined the meeting and raised the issue of space. He noted that one of the greatest needs that students identify is the need for more study space on campus. Two ways this is being addressed is to keep Tolentine open twenty-four hours a day and to have the first and second floors of Falvey open for student use twenty-four hours a day. But Father Peter noted that we still need more.

At the end of the meeting, there was a general consensus that this was one of the most productive, energetic, and exciting meetings of this committee in quite some time.

I was delighted to see how dedicated members of the board are to improving the Villanova experience for *all* of our students and having frank conversations about race and privilege in order to do so.

Respectfully submitted by Lynne Hartnett