

**Saint Paul School of Theology**  
**On Campus at Saint Paul in Leawood and on Zoom (Z)**

**April 2024** (approved at July 2024 mtg)

**Thursday, April 11, 2024**

Board Members Present: Amy Hogan, Tex Sample, Mark Faulkner (Z), Dana Alridge, Linda Shipman, David Wiggs (Z), Jabari Wamble, Arden Borgan (Z), Jennifer Ahrens-Sims (Z), Sharon Cleaver, Shannon Dyer, Rogers Strickland (Z), Matt Mills, Jay Simmons, Sharon Betsworth, Shannon Hancock, Tiffany Nagel-Monroe.

Board Absent: Andy Bryan, Tino Herrera, James Tindall.

Guest Present: Richard Liantonio, Heesung Hwang, Jennifer Smith, Elaine Robinson (Z), Jeanne Hoeft, Laura Murphy, Israel Kamudzandu, Kris Kwam (Z), Lucas Endicott (Z), Nancy Howell (Z).

**1:05pm**

- **Call to Order** – Sharon Cleaver
- **Election of New Trustees** – Dana Alridge, electing and adding to Board of Trustees, Laura Murphy, and Roger Drake (cv and story previously submitted).
  - o **Motion** – Tex Sample, 2<sup>nd</sup> Linda Shipman
- **Review and Approve October Minutes** – Sharon Cleaver
  - o **Motion** – Jabari Wamble, 2<sup>nd</sup> Linda Shipman

**1:10pm**

- **Opening Devotion** – Tiffany Nagel-Monroe, “Coming Up on September,” Marge Piercy  
<https://holytrinity.to/2017/09/poetry-for-the-fall/>
  - o Embracing Change and Cultivating Community – Tiffany reflected on the cyclical nature of life and the need for reassessment, using imagery of white butterflies and ripening grapes. She encouraged listeners to reflect on their own lives and share, emphasizing the importance of embracing change and letting go of the past. The discussion concluded with a sense of hope for the future and the anticipation of new life and harvests to come. The speaker underscored the importance of community, collaboration, and openness, especially during challenging times, and urged the board, faculty, and staff to approach the future with open minds and hearts.

**1:30pm**

- **President’s Report** – Jay Simmons
  - o Accolades to Tiffany, who is leaving Saint Paul.
  - o Executive Director for OKC campus is ongoing until 5/6, and the search committee consists of Matt Mills, Elaine Robinson, and Alanna Ireland.
  - o Executive Director of Development and Alumni Relations, EDDAR, had 2 finalists present, and the search committee of Shannon Hancock, Tiffany Nagel Monroe, Jeanne Hoeft, and , after all evaluations reviewed, decided to keep looking. Will look at the position description and renew the search. Thanks to the bequest from Mel Winger, we are currently in a good position with unrestricted donations for this fiscal year.
  - o Strategic Plan – been working on this with Leadership Team and will discuss at Friday’s BOT meeting.
  - o July 2023 Minutes – looking for the notes, minutes, trying to recreate with Amy Hogan, as our office lost a staff member. Plan to present July 2023 minutes for the board’s review at our next meeting.
  - o Bishop Meetings: Simmons reported on meetings with Bishop Nunn in Oklahoma, Bishop Farr in Missouri, Bishop Kim in Korea, Bishop Wilson of Great Plains, and Bishop Bigham-Tsai of Iowa, asking questions such as, “what the needs in your conference are, and how can Saint Paul help.”
    - need materials to help equip pastors to educate congregations about meaning of being United Methodist Church.
    - we are doing the same thing as other seminaries and need to be more innovative, more focused & specialization degrees, need leadership effort, need entrepreneurs to grow more churches, need more spiritual formation and emotional intelligence, need music programs that are more theologically sound, more communication btwn SPST and Farr and especially regarding Course of Study, accolades to Dr. Endicott in COS, need more cooperation btwn SPST & Central Methodist University.
    - need music programs that are more theologically sound.
    - need pastors who have a deeply imbedded sense of self and values in order to establish boundaries in their churches, new pastors are overwhelmed as to their responsibilities, need more spiritual formation, enthusiasm towards music specialization.

- SPST seminary is doing the same as other seminaries, DMin program is not meeting the needs for their pastors, need more innovation, pointed towards Clairmont's effort to launch a Korean-focused DMin degree with marketing to 2,000 pastors and only a dozen enrolled.
    - Strong interest in Pause/ Play Center from bishops.
    - Jay will detail these comments in a report to Faculty Council in the week of April 15.
  - o Korea trips – first one in October with Shannon, Heesung, and Dr. Chun, second one in March. Applications for admission from four Korean students in hand for Fall 2024.
    - Korean Alumni reunion week
      - Dinner on 6/1
      - Workshop with Casey Sigmon
      - Other activities
    - Several opportunities to broaden faculty and student exchange agreements in Korea.
  - o General Conference – in Charlotte, NC end of April, Jay and Sharon attending.
    - Association of United Methodist Theological Seminaries (AUMTS) presidents will be covering several legislative committees.
    - Possibility of the United States to become its own Conference, with own Book of Discipline.
  - o University Senate –
    - Proposal for all Methodist Seminaries have all faculty be UMC.
    - This needs to be a NO vote. Must be mindful of this.
  - o Higher Learning Commission – Jay going to annual meeting, meets with Institutional Action Council, The Presidents' Program, Peer Review Training, and updates from HLC. Matt Mills part of Peer Review Committee.
  - o Accolades to Sharon Cleaver for stepping into role of Board Chair.

1:50pm

- **Academic Committee** – Jennifer Ahrens-Sims

- o Assessment Reports
  - Enrollment Trends – holding steady in total enrollment, racial/ethnicity, age, gender diversity.
  - Educational Effectiveness – student satisfaction high, retention and persistence lower than desired, working on benchmarks, scheduling, advising, registration.
  - Work of the Faculty – meeting or exceeding expectations, full time load, publishing books, etc.
- o Faculty Reviews
  - Joshua Bartholomew – 3<sup>rd</sup> year review completed FA 23.
  - Casey Sigmon – Promotion and Tenure review FA 24.
- o Faculty Research Leave - Approval for AY 2024-25 Research Leaves
  - FA 24 – Israel Kamudzandu.
  - SP 25 – Joshua Bartholomew.
  - Committee voted and approved and does not need BOT to vote and approve.
- o Process of revising MDiv program underway.
- o Faculty Handbook revisions underway.
- o Voting on Graduates, email forthcoming.

- **Academic Report** – Sharon Betsworth

- o Heesung Hwang – book published, writings, received grant for self-care peer mentoring program along with other Korean American Scholars with the American Academy of Religion.
- o Jacob Randolph – articles in journals, peer reviews, American play movement, online publications, etc.
- o Working Preacher publications by Sharon Betsworth, Israel Kamudzandu, Casey Sigmon.
- o Sigmon gave a presentation at the North American Academy of Liturgy and also at Saint Andrews UMC in Denver on our new specialization in modern worship, and the MACM specialization of Modern Worship in Music will launch fall of 2024.
- o Sigmon's Lily Grant has launched the Pause Play Center for Preachers and is in the process of the first cohort of 12.
- o Elaine Robinson presented to The Order of Elders of the Oklahoma Conference on her book, Leading with Love, and will present at the SPST forum.
- o Sharon Betsworth has authored a whimsical paper for the Society of Biblical Literature.
- o MDiv program review, every five years per Assessment, purpose and goal statements, more innovation, help students understand context, Student Learning Outcomes, or SLO's, 1 thru 4 and how to balance that with ATS standards.
  - SLO 1 – understanding Bible.
  - SLO 2 – formation & practices.
  - SLO 3 – one's own social location, praxis.

- SLO 4 – growth of integrity.
- o Curriculum mapping – take all classes taught, which SLO is that addressing, and is it a primary emphasis, secondary emphasis, how many credit hours, balance it out.
- o The discussion included the importance of emotional intelligence and the integration of theological thinking into the curriculum.

## 2:25pm Break

## 2:40pm – Committees

- **Resource Committee** – Linda Shipman
  - o Financial – strong, no debt, 4-5% endowment draw target, endowment 9-10 times annual budget, operates with 6 months cash, diversified revenue.
  - o Rubin Brown – approved 2022-2023 audit, net assets increased \$1.4 million.
  - o FY 2022/2023
    - Actual draw \$1,134,664. Budget \$1,576,956.
    - 12 qtr. rolling average \$34.8 mil.
    - Draw down 3.3%, budget 4.64%.
  - o Blair transition plan approved was approved by full board.
  - o Presentation by Prairie Capital on 4/15.
  - o Updates to Employee handbook.
- **Governance Committee** – Dana Alridge
  - o Shannon Dyer – active on July 1, on the
    - Academic Committee and
    - Strategic Planning Committee
  - o Two policy edits
    - BP12 – Academic Affairs. Replace senior academic administrator to Chief Academic Office.
      - **Motion** – Linda Shipman, 2<sup>nd</sup> Jennifer Ahrens-Sims
    - BP7.1 – President. Be only a Member, not academic head, of Faculty Council with no vote.
      - **Motion** – Tex Sample, 2<sup>nd</sup> Linda Shipman
  - o **Nominations to Board**
    - **Dana Alridge – Chair of the BOT**
      - **Motion** – Amy Hogan nominated, 2<sup>nd</sup> Linda Shipman
    - **Sharon Cleaver – Vice-Chair of the BOT**
      - **Motion** – Mark Faulkner nominated, 2<sup>nd</sup> Jabari Wamble
    - **Shannon Dyer – Secretary of the BOT**
      - **Motion** – Dana Alridge nominated, 2<sup>nd</sup> Linda Shipman
    - Jay and Dana stated that they would work on a proposal to define the nominating process, along with various planning and deliberations prior to the board meeting.
- **Trust and Collaboration Task Force** – Dana Alridge
  - o Waiting on \$230,000 grant from GBHEM for MEF Innovation Development submitted June 16, 2023.
    - Equity Audit
    - Underrepresented student scholarships
    - IDI for all
    - Trustee, Faculty, Staff retreat
    - Training on institution equality
    - Faculty & Staff intercultural development
- **Strategic Planning Committee** – Tex Sample
  - o Continued success, 4.5% operating budget unencumbered, yearly cycle, updated KPI, strategic priorities.
  - o ELT focuses on goal #2, Korea trips.
  - o President Simmons to update on Friday, April 12 at board meeting.
  - o SPEC draft plan from Task Force, with assigned dollar amounts to goals, Plan for the Plan.
  - o ELT reviewed and received feedback from faculty and staff, and the OKC campus.
  - o Upcoming timeline includes review with ELT, draft & review to board, ELT planning session, faculty & staff review of plan, ELT to complete for submission to BOT.

## 3:05pm

- o **Faculty Presentation** – Dr. Heesung Hwang, Assistant Professor of Christian Religious Education.

- o Dr. Hwang shared her individual experiences with gender roles and the challenges she faced in pursuing a theology degree, highlighting the significant underrepresentation of women in the field. She shared her individual experiences with oppression and prejudice based on gender and skin color, and how these experiences shaped her identity and passion for advocacy and social change. She also highlighted the relational characteristics of human beings, emphasizing the importance of interdependence, intentionality, trust, honor, and love in building and sustaining relationships. She also touched on the concept of "Mutual Life" or "Co-Living" from Korean culture, stressing the importance of mutual respect, empathy, and collaboration in creating shared meaning and purpose. She emphasized the importance of community, humility, and interdependence in her theology and pedagogy, highlighting the role of education in empowering individuals to become agents of positive change. She introduced the concept of Paideia as a potential model for Christian communities, focusing on learners' full personality and character development. She also discussed the fundamental commitments stressing that education is a journey of formation and transformation. She highlighted the value of self-awareness, introspection, and the role of individuals as agents of change, also introducing a course on 'the teaching and learning lifelong process'. Finally, she noted the transformative experiences students have had while reflecting on her personal narratives, emphasizing that individuals often find meaning in the face of adversity and challenges. She discussed the importance of recognizing and nurturing the individual journeys of students, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach that encompasses both intellectual and personal growth. They also highlighted the significance of community and shared experiences in shaping personal development. Heesung introduced their upcoming book, "Reframing Christian Education for the Global Generation," and mentioned a second book tentatively titled "Virtual Education from an Asian American Christian Perspective."

**3:50pm**

- **Certificate Presentation** – Sharon Cleaver
  - o Tex Sample, Amy Hogan, Andy Bryan, for service on the Board of Trustees.

**3:55pm**

- **Concluding Prayer** – Tiffany Nagel-Monroe

**4:00pm**

- **Meeting Recess** – Sharon Cleaver

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Board Absent: Andy Bryan, Tino Herrera, James Tindall, Jabari Wamble,

Guest Present: Richard Liantonio, Jennifer Smith, Elaine Robinson (Z), Laura Murphy, Shannon Dyer (Z) Israel Kamudzandu, Nancy Howell (Z).

**8:00am**

- **Call to Order** – Sharon Cleaver

**8:00am**

- **Opening Prayer** – David Wiggs

**8:05am**

- **Strategic Planning Draft** – Jay Simmons
  - o Each goal includes indicators of effectiveness, and has figured the cost or allocation, tactics to implement, timeline scenarios, achievement benchmarks, who is heading this initiative and those who can assist.
  - o **Goal #1** - Saint Paul will develop a culture of belonging, advocacy, justice, equity, diversity, inclusion BAJEDI.

- The board reviewed ideas for a theological framework for Saint Paul's BAJEDI efforts, including steps to: create a culture of trust and safety.; review the racial history of Saint Paul; develop methods to address resistance to an anti-oppression and antiracism institution; define BAJEDI for Saint Paul; and create department-level BAJEDI plans. One trustee recommended adding a scriptural reference and to include steps to build the beloved community.
- o **Goal #2** - Saint Paul's educational programs will address and respond to the changing contexts of the church and world.
  - The board discussed strategic planning funds and the importance of digital ministry and technology skills in today's context. David emphasized the need for churches to adapt to digital ministry, while Amy highlighted the challenges and opportunities in rural America. The board also discussed the importance of contextualizing the curriculum to meet the needs of students and the need to provide non-degree offerings to alumni and clergy. Lastly, they addressed the need for a more diverse faculty and the ongoing efforts to improve in this area.
- o **Goal #3** - Saint Paul will strengthen our enrollment management to reflect our commitment to diversity.
  - Discussion focused on the goal of increasing enrollment and reflecting the changing demographics of the region, including developing a mentorship program for diverse students to enhance their retention and graduation. The group also considered expanding scholarship support for non-United Methodist students due to the lack of resources. The idea of serving disaffiliated churches was raised as a potential opportunity, but some noted that this would require careful consideration and coordination. Members discussed strategies to increase international enrollment at Saint Paul, including leveraging connections with churches and pastors in countries like Mexico, Guatemala, and Korea. One trustee suggested utilizing existing denominational resources, such as Lydia Patterson Institute, to identify and recruit students.
- o **Goal #4** - Saint Paul will engage in a variety of development, fund raising, communication, and promotional activities to support the mission of the seminary.
  - The Board agreed with the idea of raising awareness and developing relationships with potential donors for training and scholarship programs. One trustee shared his experience with house-building projects in Guatemala as a potential source of funding. The group also discussed the importance of a comprehensive campaign and the development of a case statement for future fundraising efforts. A member emphasized the importance of targeted fundraising and proposed a program to connect donors with scholarship recipients to motivate more donations. The group discussed fundraising strategies, the need to engage with alumni and donors, and the potential for joint degree offerings with Oklahoma City University. They agreed on the need for increased partnerships with OCU and Resurrection, and the potential to develop a closer relationship between Saint Paul and the United Methodist Church.

9:05am

- **Break** – Sharon Cleaver

9:20am

- **Financial Overview** – Matt Mills, CFO
  - o Saint Paul's (SPST) Financial Principles and Fundraising - Matt emphasized SPST's financial principles, which include no debt, a balanced budget with 4-5% draw on endowment, 4 diversified streams of revenue, and 6 months of operating cash. The endowment is 9-10 times the size of annual expenses, and 4.5% of the operating budget remains unencumbered for strategic initiatives. These principles prove SPST is a financially healthy institution. The allocation of resources was also discussed, with SPST relying heavily on its endowment compared to other freestanding seminaries. Despite this reliance, SPST remains financially healthy with a less than 5% draw on our invested assets. Lastly, Linda raised the possibility of increasing fundraising, and Jay responded that a new development officer could potentially raise about a half million dollars per year.
  - o Scholarship opportunities – A board member inquired about the ability to be a tuition free Seminary. Matt shared it would take between \$20-\$25 million under the existing structure to be tuition free for incoming students. The discussion also revealed that only 10-15% of students borrow federally which is an incredibly positive statistic. Despite the low borrowing rates there is a need to cover the funding gap for first year and non-UM students. Matt also mentioned that they have had discussions with Shannon about being more strategic in the allocation of internal aid awards. Lastly, Matt compared the school's resource allocation to its peers, noting that their resource allocation on facilities is considerably lower than most institutions in higher education.
  - o Organization Financial Status and Revenue Trends – Matt discussed the financial status of the organization, highlighting that the board approved the budget in April of 2023 for fiscal years 2024 through 2027. The institution's internal projections have been achieved, and as a result, there was no additional board approval

needed for the current year. Achieving budgets with no adjustments in our projection is another sign of a financially healthy institution that understands the operating environment. He noted that while tuition and fee revenue was down 10.2% compared to the previous year actions were taken to offset the “net” impact of the tuition decline. A decline was expected and budgeted for. SPST does anticipate tuition revenue increasing as smaller recruiting classes from the past few years move through. He also reported that the endowment drew \$700,000 of the \$1.7 million approved by the board, leaving an additional \$1 million in the endowment. The money market implemented by the CFO was praised for generating unexpected revenue. Lastly, concerns were raised about the slight decline in Seminary Fund membership over the past seven years and the reliance on a few major donors for up to 35% of our annual unrestricted fundraising budget.

- Strategic Fundraising and Credit Hour Trends – Due to already surpassing the unrestricted fundraising goals in FY 2023-2024, Matt discussed the strategic approach to fundraising for the remainder of the year, emphasizing the importance of smoothing the revenue stream over the fiscal year by conducting our next major unrestricted fundraising drive in the late Summer or early Fall of 2024 instead of in June of 2024. The team also discussed the trends in credit hour behavior, with Matt noting a decline in credit delivery across 60% of seminaries. Despite this, he indicated that there was also a trend of growth in some areas, with COS students taking more courses per year. The leadership team committed to studying these trends further using data from the Association of Theological Schools.
- CFO Reports Financial Position and Budget - The CFO reported that the organization was spending less than budget, with the balance sheet showing strong financial position. Matt noted that SPST is \$855K ahead of budget, but this should be viewed as a \$50,000 surplus due to non-recurring one-time revenue items. . The CFO also outlined key dashboard metrics and explained how the endowment’s 12-quarter rolling average is calculated, emphasizing the importance of maintaining liquidity within the operational cash of the Seminary. This excess liquidity will allow SPST to take on increased equity exposure with the ultimate hope of higher returns. Finally, as a contingency measure, the CFO mentioned that they were prepared for potential declining revenues and had identified areas for potential budget cuts if necessary.
- CFO Report and Board Appreciation- Trustees expressed appreciation for Matt's management and proactive planning amidst organizational changes.

**10:15am**

- **Closing Prayer / Executive Session / Adjournment**

- Dr. Amy Hogan offered a closing prayer based on a blessing by Reverend Jan Richardson and a reflection on their experiences and service. The board decided not to enter into an executive session, so Chair Sharon Cleaver declared the meeting adjourned.