

## **Minutes of the Assembly of Shimer College**

**April 1, 2012**

Speaker Eileen Buchanan called the meeting to order at 4:15pm.

**Secretary:** Eileen announced that the current secretary Simon Creek (student) was unable to attend, and Adrian Nelson (staff) volunteered to act as Secretary for this meeting.

**Committee Reports:** The Committee Reports have been sent in advance so as to cut down on time spent at the Assembly giving them; elections have also been put off due to the crowded agenda. It was requested that questions be pointed and confined to reports to as to avoid spending an hour on committee reports.

**Scheduling of the Assembly:** Items have been listed with the agenda with the amount of time to be spent on them. If the conversations go beyond this, members will have knowledge that the time is being extended.

### **I. Questions on Committee Reports**

There were no questions for the APC, Administrative, Agenda, or Financial Aid Policy Committees.

Sarah Scalise asked JD Donovan (faculty), Admission Committee, about the number of deposits for next fall, and if they were on par with previous years. The answer was 5, and yes. Allie Peluso (student) asked for admit/rejection numbers, and numbers for next spring. B David Galt (staff) responded that Admission was hoping for spring numbers next year like this current year's number (13).

Judicial, Appeals and Grievance Committee (Bev Thurber, faculty) reported the Judicial Subcommittee met with B David.

Quality of Life Committee (Daniela Barbaris, faculty) reported the last meeting of QLC discussed asking for community feedback regarding community building, community Tuesday, and the future of such activities.

Development (Mary Pat Barbarie, staff) reported that \$40,000 could be added to the numbers of gifts given. Development may organize a Q&A session later on for those interested in the development team's day-to-day activities.

Budget Committee (Sandra Collins, staff) reported that the sale of farmland gifted to Shimer in a will was now closed, and Shimer should see money soon. Tim Eident (student) asked for final figures; the number was around \$100,000. The number, however, is not represented in the report as it will not count towards this year's budget.

B David announced the successful hiring of new data services administrator. A reception will be held at 1pm tomorrow in Admission. 5 Shimer students were also placed for the summer internship program.

Trillian Bergmann (student) announced that Wednesday during lunch, Shimer has a table in the MTCC to advertise to IIT students. It will be at 12:15pm. Students are invited to speak about Shimer.

## **II. Presidential Address by Ed Noonan**

Ed Noonan spoke of his love for the Assembly, and for Shimer, and what he's learned during his time here. He praised the progress that Shimer has made, and everything that Shimer continues to provide for its students, staff, faculty, and alumni. He thanked everyone in the community as he steps down as interim president to make way for president-elect Susan Henking.

## **III. Response from President-Elect Susan Henking**

Susan said that Ed would be a hard act to follow. She called her task at Shimer the 'conundrum of democracy' – delegating the work, but working together. She spoke of Shimer as a place where people could listen, and disagree, and still love each other.

## **IV. Motion from the ad hoc committee on governance:**

Motivated by Allison Savage (student). The committee met to consider the language of the proposal, which is as follows:

*That the Shimer College Assembly invite the Board of Trustees to consider the formation of an Assembly-Board Relations Committee. This committee would be a permanent joint committee of both the Assembly and the Board of Trustees.*

*The Assembly-Board Relations Committee shall be responsible for maintaining an open dialogue between the Assembly and the Board of Trustees by engaging elected representatives from both bodies in discussion on matters relevant to the College in general.*

*Membership of this committee shall be composed of members of the internal community elected by the Assembly and an equal number of members elected by the Board of Trustees. It shall be chaired by one of these members to be determined at the committee's first meeting of the fall semester. Additional members of the community may be invited to meetings at the committee's behest.*

**Discussion:** Katelynn Delavan (student) wanted to hear from people serving on the Board if they think this committee would be helpful. Albert Fernandez (faculty) responded that it would be helpful; an absence of communication has hindered Assembly-Board relationships in the past.

Eileen noted that no numbers were listed, so how large would the committee be? Allison responded that each fall we would solicit service of staff/students/faculty, and the Board would elect equal number of members from among Trustees.

Eileen asked for further clarification of the numbers. David Shiner answered that the ad hoc committee did not want to overdetermine the considered committee for the Assembly or the Board, so the numbers are up to the Assembly/Board each year. The committee would welcome a friendly amendment, but prefers Allison's wording.

Ann Dolinko (faculty) noted that the proposal doesn't indicate a number of elected members. Alison said the committee would be the internal Assembly members (ie those reps elected in the fall—WD, WE students, faculty).

Alex Rosenberg (student) asked if the members serve in this committee, but also elected to the Board? Allison answered that you serve when you are elected as a Board representative.

**Friendly Amendment** proposed by Eileen (bolded): *Membership of this committee shall be composed of members of the internal community elected by the Assembly **to the Board** and an equal number of members elected by the Board of Trustees. It shall be chaired by one of these members to be determined at the committee's first meeting of the fall semester. Additional members of the community may be invited to meetings at the committee's behest.*

Stuart Patterson (faculty) didn't see how it would work otherwise. What sort of relationships would representatives have if they were internal members elected separately from Board representatives? David replied that this possibility was discussed; it would be a trust issue on the part of those elected (it becomes part of the duty of the representatives). This can also be looked at as a Board subcommittee because all members are already serving on the Board; the Assembly can look on it as a committee because its members are already elected. Anything separate would be more difficult to define as joint committee.

Janet Henthorn (staff) pointed out a problem: no staff member representative, as there are none to the Board.

Barbara Stone (faculty) asked: what is the possibility of a smaller committee? This would be 10 total; is that too large? Cassie Sherman (staff) responded that she was sympathetic to not wanting to overdetermine the makeup of the committee, but the Assembly can sometimes make things too big to move forward. We should take amendment and move forward; it's important that the committee happens soon.

Albert noted that if the committee consisted only of elected internal trustees, it doesn't seem to add much since internal members are already reporting back, and it doesn't seem to need more subcommittees on the board. Five should be the number. David said the committee is not in the position to consider amendments other than what was agreed to beforehand; Eileen's amendment is okay (a clarifying amendment), while an amendment changing and specifying numbers is not.

Ann said the wording isn't clear on members; could outside members come in according to last sentence? David pointed out the wording doesn't say all the internal representatives; it could be less.

Stephanie Fong (student) asked who would be doing the negotiating with the Board to affirm this arrangement. Eileen said we would forward the motion to the Board chair, bring it up in the Board and take it from there.

Sarah Walls-Rosenberg (student) asked: How many people do we elect? The answer is 5. She continued, this does not include a staff person; if we wanted to fix that, is it possible to elect a staff representative? Katelynn responded: if a staff person were to be part of the committee, it would have to be an Assembly constitutional amendment, which is a separate issue and would need to be approved by the Board.

Sarah Scalise (student) noted that the motion asks Board to consider, and wondered why we were debating specifics when the Board hasn't even accepted it.

Ben Bornstein (student), said of the character of the committee that the voice of staff is fundamental; he asked someone from the committee speak to how this could be changed. Allison answered that this issue was brought up four years ago; it was suggested to the Board to allow staff representation, but it did not pass. Ben responded: could we elect a staff representative before all this? No answer was given.

Eileen stated that the 20 minutes of discussion are up. David said he heard and shared the concern about staff issues; the line about other members being invited was concession to that. The committee wanted to go ahead with issues for now as we can't solve all issues at once.

Eileen's Friendly Amendment was accepted by committee.

B David asked a question of the presidential search committee: it had a staff position, how did that work? Eileen responded that this was not relevant, unless we were to extend time on issue. She stated if this is brought up at the Board, the representatives can bring this issue forward.

Voting on motion with friendly amendment: **motion passes**. 52 in favor, 5 opposed.

## **V. Motion on governance committee**

The motion was motivated by Eileen. The purpose of it was to thank the ad hoc committee and make it a permanent committee to work through the summer and continue to make suggestions to improve the Assembly. It would keep the same members as before and appoint members to fill spots vacated by those leaving the committee. Suggestions will be discussed in the fall Assembly and members will be reelected as a permanent committee. As follows:

*That the Shimer College Assembly thank the ad hoc committee for its work and officially appoint those members who can continue working over the summer, in addition to others who may wish to join them, as a working sub-committee on Governance. **This committee***

***will study and reflect upon the governance of the College, the role of the Assembly and its committees, and the Constitution of the Assembly, with the purpose of preserving meaningful and substantive shared governance at Shimer College. The committee will make preliminary recommendations to the Assembly at the first meeting of the fall, 2012 term at which time the Assembly will elect a standing committee to continue its work.***

**Discussion:** Cassie said there might be overlap between this committee and Board-Assembly committee. Would it be good to make sure there is communication between the two, or let one come into existence first before the other to see if that solves issues?

Adam Kotsko asked if this would be a permanent committee on governance? The answer: yes.

Ann stated it was important for the committee to meet and clarify internal Assembly issues.

Dorian Gomberg (student) clarified that it was not yet a motion to make a permanent committee.

Stephanie asked about the committee working over the summer and what work has gone on so far. Peter Vincent (student) responded that the work referenced the previous ad hoc committee formed at the last Assembly. It came out of discussion on governance and addresses larger issues. Eileen clarified that the committee was in communication with the present Administrative/Budget committee.

Isaac Marchant-Shapiro (student) asked how members would meet. David admitted they had not talked about yet, but in person would be preferable.

Ann said only minutiae were discussed so far, and the only thing on the table is the committee. Eileen said that the committee was voluntary; we are thinking of making it official ad hoc. Current members include Peter Vincent, David Shiner, Allison Savage, Heidi Angeles, and one other.

Dorian asked about the benefit to being a formal committee. David responded that it wouldn't necessarily change what we do. Allison noted that the committee was dealing with the constitution, and it wasn't their place to just be volunteers; it needs community input in elections and committee purpose.

Isaac said there was no purpose to voting when members are already continuing.

Alex R asked if nothing could stop another volunteer from serving on the committee. Barbara noted the committee would continue working, but wondered why are we doing any electing today. Eileen clarified that the electing of a new committee happens in the fall, and the committee would let people know when they are meeting.

Tim asked if anybody could be appointed. It was answered yes; procedural bits need to be worked out beforehand to make sure all constituencies are represented. Eileen said the

constituency would be put to the group in fall and elected; the summer group would be anyone willing. Tim said he would be hesitant to vote the official group into being without knowing constituency; it would be too vague. If we are voting on the committee, it should be established who will be in the committee.

Eileen wanted to encourage anybody who was interested in the Assembly be able to attend and work on issues. We should allow anybody of the Assembly the trust of that interest.

Trillian clarified that the committee remains ad hoc.

**Friendly Amendment:** reword 'standing committee' in last sentence- take out the word 'standing'. It was accepted.

Albert said the committee should not be looked on as extension of committee in item IV; this committee studies the Constitution of the Assembly itself, not Board relations.

**Voting on motion as amended** (minus standing): Motion passes. 4 abstentions, 50 in favor, none opposed.

It was requested that Allison Savage post the next meeting of the committee.

## **VI. Discussion Item from the Administrative and Budget Committees**

Motivated by Stephanie Fong. This is a conversation that the Administrative/Budget committees have been having with the community this past semester in trying to understand what the community wants.

Sarah W-R, member of the Budget committee, said that Budget has not been involved in this discussion; student members of Budget have not had opportunity to be involved in this conversation thus far.

Stephanie said the AC is not in favor of forming a committee; just having a discussion. Both committees have been frustrated about their roles in the Assembly, and integrating two committees might solve problems.

Peter asked: what are advantages/disadvantages of merger?

Marc Hoffman (staff) said these committees face the largest challenges since the move to Chicago. Staff members hired with expertise need feedback on expectations. Both committees deal the most with new staff; both are very important to oversight. They want to ask the wider community how these groups should do.

Ben said the integration of new committee should be done sooner.

Alex R stated it was extremely helpful to serve on committee, and hoped Shimerians would continue to have these opportunities.

Cassie said the issue of transparency is an increasingly difficult issue to bring up. Admission has gotten much more complicated; how much do offices know about each other? How much does the community know about how other offices work? It would be good to have firesides about committees/offices each year so that work can be substantive.

Albert said the integration of two committees was a good idea; the separation goes back to when committees were running the school. It is not the case anymore, but transparency/oversight is needed; this is part of the role of Assembly committees. He would be in favor of joining roles of Administrative/Budget committees.

Allison said an oversight committee would help bridge the gap between community and committee/directors, and help community understanding.

Allie clarified that the Administrative and Budget committees are combinable, and wondered if the oversight committee would be combined with that too.

Stephanie wanted to continue to revise how committee could work.

Grey Litaker (student) said the idea of oversight committee would help the increasing complexity of Shimer and keep administration possible.

Rebecca Noble (student) asked if we could put aside more space to talk about the committees.

Stuart said that might work with the assessment of committees as well, for assessing committees of the Board; we could also call directors together to see what might be done. He hoped we would try to find input from constituencies not normally heard from.

Eric Nichol森 (alum) said the committee would need to come up with right constituencies.

Eileen motivated a **5-minute extension** to the discussion; it passed.

Cassie said that Shimer's plan/necessity is to continue to grow; outside pressures from accreditation, etc, are going to make assessment more needed. Our lack of assessment was a hindrance to self-study committee. It is getting harder to know what everybody else does. Having a committee involved working on educating the community (as well as assessment) would help to continue the unsegregated spirit that makes this democracy possible.

Stephanie said this issue did come up at our meetings. Marc said they are working towards more transparency; he is willing to talk about anything in work and hopes all will continue to ask questions.

Cassie noted that we do answer questions but it's harder to be proactive about education; the committee is helpful to keep people informed and make sure people are reminded that they can ask. Albert said that asking questions is important, and it is good to have a formalized mechanism for such things.

Eileen gave thanks to the committees for starting this discussion. As the structures are being reviewed there may need to be changes to the constitution. We should think about what makes sense in action.

David said that we need a suspension of the constitution in order to continue the discussion of restructuring committees due to elections. Elections need to happen to the Administrative/Budget committees, and we need to let these committees continue with currently elected members. They need to understand that their terms of service may change. We would need to suspend the constitution in order to postpone elections.

Isaac asked if we could keep members working in the ad hoc committee over the summer; could the issue be brought back as well? Stephanie encouraged all to come to the summer discussions.

Eileen suggested to chairs of the committees to gather old/new members of committee over summer.

## **VII. Announcements**

The winners of poetry contest are Bryan Maddox and Dinah Gumms.

Stuart Patterson has won money from National Endowment of Humanities; it will mean electives offered in next two years over Hutchins.

This is Cassie's last Assembly; she said, thanks for everything, Shimer.

Afternoon community time is coming, and QLC is looking for community feedback on community Tuesdays.

SMELT meetings are now Thursday at 6:15pm. They are now doing activism around the death of Rekiya Boyes. It is very important that Shimer look out to rest of community beyond IIT.

Albert thanked the secretary for service.

Trillian reminded everyone that there will be tables on the bridge of MTCC about Shimer to facilitate IIT students interested in Shimer; next Monday is the event on cross-registration.

The Artistic Showcase is here in Cinderella.

Stuart said his students will be presenting papers they have been writing on Monday/Wednesday/Thursday during the last week of school, from 1:45-3:05pm. 4 papers presented.

The Spring Play is April 11 (Wednesday) in Cinderella Lounge, 7pm, "The Blue Hour" and other sketches.

**Adjourned at 6:10pm.**