## MINUTES FROM 912 ASSEMBLY (ADRIAN NELSON)

September 9, 2012

- 1. The Speaker, Eileen Buchanan, called the meeting to order at 4:15pm. The parliamentarian, Katelynn Delavan, reviewed the rules of order of the Assembly. The speaker explained that the agenda was grouped into informational sequences, instead of voting in a lump sequence, in order to facilitate understanding of the college as a whole.
- 2. The minutes of April 1, 2012 were approved.
- 3. Proposal for Suspension of the rules: That the requirement for committees which have mandatory Weekend College representation be suspended FOR THIS MEETING ONLY if sufficient weekenders are not available. This includes Board representation.

Discussion brought up the importance of serving on committees, although aconstitutional provision was being suspended. Changes are occurring with the Weekend Program, and it is no longer the same large percentage of the student body that it was in Waukegan. There is some precedent for the suspension of the rules.

The motion to suspend the rules for Weekend Program representation passes.

Student members for the Academic Planning Committee were nominated and elected. Sarah Scalise and Daniel Lakemacher are the new student representatives on the APC.

4. Report from the Agenda Committee on its focus last year, given by Eileen:

Much of the Assembly working depended on good faith in terms of its members and contributors. We rule by persuasion but the Assembly did not have enough clout for what it needed to get done, and the constitution dated back to the 1980s, and many committees and the community as a whole has changed. The Assembly needs reintroduction to the community. An ad hoc committee was started to revise the Assembly constitution which has worked for the past year. The work is in progress still, and will continue with the next agenda committee/speaker. We as a community will work together to create the ethos (transparency with confidentiality but not secrecy; equality; good will; that we all have a share and a stake in our college) and the life of the college. The agenda committee works for this. It will likely call firesides to continue this work and discussion, and hopes to have an updated constitution by the end of this calendar year.

Election of officers and agenda committee:

Speaker: Eileen is elected for another year.

Parliamentarian: Adam Bechtol, student.

Secretary: Aron Dunlap, faculty.

Ombudsperson: Susan Henking, president; Bev Thurber, faculty; and Grey Litaker, student, spoke about the sensitivity of this position and some of the legal issues around confidentiality. It is easy to get sensitivity training from IIT. It is also important to realize the position as a negotiator of conflicts, and beware of the stress that comes with the role. The Ombudsperson does not handle academic disputes, but personal disputes—students, staff, student and staff. Harold Stone, faculty, is elected.

Electing the 3 remaining members of the Agenda Committee. Brenton Stewart, student; Matt Kawahara, student; and Albert Fernandez, faculty, are elected.

## 5. Financial overview, given by Susan:

There is a relationship between financial viability and academic success. A budget is a way of stating and maintaining your contributors on the value of education; what you spend your money on is what you value. Our goal for the year is to meet our values and balance the budget. We won't spend more than we have—spend less, make more. Our revenue comes from tuition (a little more than 75%) and the rest is a combination of development outreach and others. we have to raise the other 20-25% every year, which is difficult in this economy. The main budgetary goal is balance the budget; this year's budget has not yet been presented to the Budget Committee or the Board, but it will be soon. Understanding the process of managing the budget is important, so we don't have the same crises every year. People balanced on the edge of poverty are most often sent into the irrecoverable point by a car breaking down. Shimer can't afford that—it can't have emergencies. It need to get to a point where enough is set aside for that and we are able to plan ahead—then we will be more stable. This institution raises more in year than most institutions do. We also need to support our students and admission – retention, recruitment. All functions of the college need to be healthy in order to contribute to a balanced budget.

Sandra Collins, staff, said our financial aid is virtually 100% unfunded. Most colleges have more funded financial aid. Mary Pat Barbarie, staff, said the perception is that alumni are not as generous as they could be. However, the national average shows that alumni giving percentage is about 13%; Shimer is at 10%. So we are close. Our average alumni gift (\$250) is about 300% of national average. The Development Office's report may be consulted for numbers. Elaine Vincent, staff, said we need to spread the Shimer word; she is going to work jointly with Isabella Winkler, staff, in developing Shimer's brand identity. Its goal is to find students that need a liberal arts education, and the staff would be delighted with any help.

Discussion brought forward a request for a community Fireside to go over details of how Shimer can move forward in this situation. There is a great deal of need for a better website and funded financial aid. The bottom line for Shimer is that it must stay in the black (have positive financial status) in order to stay accredited. There was a further request for the school's budget that is sent

to the Board to be made available to the community; Mary Pat Barbarie, staff, volunteered to make that available.

6. Further elections: the Admission Committee, Quality of Life Committee, Governance Committee, and Board of Trustees Representatives. Marc Hoffman, staff, believed electronic voting would be possible by next spring. There was a motion to nominate and vote for members electronically for these committees; the motion passes.

## 7. Administrative changes. Report given by Susan:

There was an agreement with Sally Brown, chair of the Board of Trustees, that they will have each meeting of the board give a report to the Assembly. It is necessary to work out the relationship between management and governance. There have been a number of personnel shifts lately, and Susan is happy to answer any questions. There is a new director of admission, Elaine, and several changes coming. An important financial audit (next week) has changed dramatically in terms of legal regulations, so we are out of compliance with a number of things. (Example: every single Shimer document has a different non-discrimination statement on it.) A last change: we need to recognize that we have operated on a culture of sacrifice on the part of faculty and staff for too long. We should model as an institution for everyone equity and justice. Susan asked for contributions from students and all in figuring out how to help support staff and faculty.

Board of Trustees report, given by Barbara Stone, faculty: We have a great many alumni currently present on the board. Legal requirements are increasing; priorities and concerns are Admission and Development in terms of administration. Tim Eident, student representative, added that the Board of trustees works for and with, not against, the school. It was his experience that every Board member has respected him and the authority of the Assembly to the fullest extent. It's very possible to have a good working relationship. Board members have stepped up in every way (financially and otherwise) and are committed to working with Shimer. JD Donovan, faculty, stated that this Board of Trustees is supportive of our community and our president, both strategically and financially, and has helped Susan immensely in settling into her new role as president.

8. Committee Reports from the Governance Committee, Judicial, Appeals and Grievances Committee (JAG), and the Assembly/Board Coordinating Committee.

Governance, given by Albert: One of the duties of the Agenda Committee is to update the Constitution every year with changes that have been approved by the Assembly. Everyone will receive a digital copy of the updated Constitution very shortly. There has been considerable conversation since the Lindsay debacle about revision of the Constitution. A series of three ad hoc committees have worked or will work on Assembly governance. At the last April 1st meeting, the Assembly officially charged the Ad Hoc Committee to continue to work on governance over the summer. Its charge: "This committee will study and report on the role of governance in the college with the purpose of preserving and promoting meaningful shared

governance at Shimer College." It was to report back at the first Assembly meeting in the fall and continue to work during the academic year. The summer committee met and consisted mainly of Eileen, Albert and David Shiner, faculty, with other occasional members joining, and produced 8 different revisions of the Constitution. They will be passed on to the soon-to-be-elected committee.

Governance Recommendations: 1. General recognition that the Assembly and its committees no longer play a primary role in the administration of Shimer College. The main purpose shifts to being the voice of the community, to advising insofar as the Assembly continues, and to insuring preservation of communication and the college's core values.

- 2. The consolidation of the Administrative and Budget Committees.
- 3. A recognition in the preamble of the other governance bodies without additional text on division of responsibilities or precedence.
- 4. An end of the distinction of Weekday and Weekend representation of students on committees.
- 5. Changes, found in the attached document, to the text of the Constitution not covered by preceding recommendations. The document will be distributed.

The Speaker called a quick vote confirming the recommendations of the committee, electing five people to carry on this process and have it be open and transparent. There is no specific constituency. The motion to continue and elect the Governance committee passes.

Report from the JAG committee, given by Bev: The committee worked on one case. It also revised the description of JAG in the Assembly Constitution. The changes have been sent to Eileen to be distributed to the community. There will be training for new members of the committee. Members will be working with confidential situations.

Report from the Assembly/Board governance committee: It voted to consult with the Board if they would contribute to the meetings; Sally was consulted and she had three volunteers that were unable to make the meetings over the summer. Susan's notion to have the Board report to every Assembly led Eileen to suspend this committee to see if this fulfills the purpose of the committee without having to add a layer of committees. So moved; motion passes.

9. Announcements: There is a crockpot of very good soup made by Elaine.

Sarah Scalise: The Financial Aid Policy committee has made lots of changes to the Federal Work Study program; she will be sending out more information, so it's important that FWS supervisors give feedback and suggestions.

Barbara Stone: Don't forget to register to vote!

The meeting adjourned at 6pm