



## Saint Vincent Alumni Council Meeting Minutes

November 1, 2019

Meeting Location: Fred Rogers' Center

Presiding Council Member: Ryan Retter, Council President

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 P.M. by R. Retter.

The opening prayer was given by R. Zadzilko, followed by the Alma Mater led by Mitch Farrell and general introductions.

**Approval of the Minutes of the August 17, 2019 Meeting:** A motion was made by C. Cleveland to approve the Minutes of the August 17, 2019 meeting, which was seconded by D. Braum. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

**President Remarks** – Fr. Paul Taylor presented to Alumni Council on the state of the College and thanked Council for the work that it does to help Saint Vincent and to support the current and future students of Saint Vincent. He provided some insights into the financial burdens relating to the physical maintenance of the campus and provided some specific areas where the College is putting forth effort to make physical repairs and improvements. An update was provided on the College's strategic initiatives, including student recruitment, mission, academic excellence, sustainability and the environment. Overall, the recruitment "funnel" is getting bigger. With respect to mission, Fr. Paul wants to focus the College on doing a better job of articulating our mission through the Benedictine Hospitality that is already deeply instilled in the institution and its people. Fr. Paul then opened the floor to questions from members of Council. A discussion followed addressing topics including: physical safety and maintenance in the residence halls, the possibility of a physical plant-specific endowment, tuition costs, new building projects (e.g., dining facility, possibly indoor recreation facilities, etc.), recruitment, and partnerships similar to the nursing program partnership with Carlow University. On the point of tuition costs, Fr. Paul explained that Saint Vincent is doing more in the way of financial aid. He indicated that, while some small private institutions are cutting tuition and doing away with financial aid completely, that is not the way to long-term success and sustainability. Fr. Paul closed his remarks with a description of an interaction he recently had with a Saint Vincent alumnus who explained the impact Saint Vincent and a monk of the Archabbey had on his life. Fr. Paul explained that he understands that in his position he is entrusted with the story of Saint Vincent and will continue to work to project that story to the public.

**Vice President of Institutional Advancement Remarks** – David Hollenbaugh provided a fulsome update on the capital campaign and the progress toward the \$110 million goal. The Latimer Library is currently very close to being fully funded. He then provided an update on the planned dining facility expansion project, providing updated renderings and project details. He explained that part of this project will be to improve and address items related to the electrical and other mechanical systems that service the entire related building complex, which improvements will greatly benefit the campus in the future and which need to be addressed. This expansion is a good opportunity to address these items and is expected to begin in the first quarter of 2020. Mr. Hollenbaugh then opened the floor to questions and a discussion followed about addressing topics including: current funding needs for the Students First Fund, academic expansion for the Ucker Hall area and the Alumni giving percentages historically and in the current fiscal year.

**Alumni Relation Office Remarks** – S. Gouch and B. Becze provided an update from the Alumni Relation Office that included a recap of recent events, including the Athletic Hall of Fame Dinner, Homecoming Weekend events and the Pumpkin Patch. A discussion followed about the role of the Alumni Relations office as a community builder with the entire Saint Vincent population working to build meaningful relationship.

**Student Panel** – Alumni Council was joined by a student panel consisting of Geri Ball-Pringle (C '20), Kendra Smithbauer (C '22), Sarah Alesantrino (C '21), Jordan Joseph (C '20), Colleen Colcombe (C '22), Juliana Ruggiero (C '20), and Mary Anand (C '21). A discussion was moderated by A. Simmons. After introductions, the students explained some of the aspects of Saint Vincent that they have found to be most meaningful, which included: study abroad and travel opportunities, student government association (and other campus organizations) as an opportunity to developmental students' skills, the strong

catholic identity and campus ministry programs, the ability to become friends with the monks of the Archabbey, opportunities to interact with alumni, the beauty of the place, class sizes, the comfortable first year experience and the opportunity and orientation programs, which help to demonstrate the College's commitment to hospitality. One student noted that Saint Vincent is a place where you can attend college and not just 'not lose your faith, but actually grow in your faith.' The discussion turned to things that the College could improve and a discussion followed about how wonderful and welcoming the Saint Vincent community is, but that students that come from urban areas and distant locations feel somewhat less at-home once they leave campus. The College may be able to take steps to improve this aspect of students' experience. One way to achieve this may be to facilitate more activities in the Pittsburgh area. Steps like this may help to address the question of how does the College better keep student who come to Saint Vincent from places that are very different from Saint Vincent and western Pennsylvania. Another suggestion was to add an early acceptance program with an MD medical school to further differentiate Saint Vincent for students interested in that career path. The students then discussed a few things that alumni and Council can do to help current students, such as mentorship and networking opportunities, opportunities for meetings between alumni and students including informal lunch-type meetings, alumni involvement in campus life activities (e.g., theater activities), helping students with job and internships opportunities and experiences in different areas of the country for students not from Western Pennsylvania or who want to go somewhere new after graduation. A. Simmons thanked the student panelists for their participation in the discuss.

Next, the members of Council and some students took a guided tour of the Latimer Library led by Dr. John Smetanka, which construction project has made significant progress and which is not yet opened to the public. The tour included various aspects of the new library space including the designated study spaces, the new support offices located in the library, such as the writingsupport office, the condensed book shelves and the Saint Vincent Art Gallery space and rare book collection. Dr. Smetanka discussed various academic aspects of the College, including the ability of students to supplement their academic experience at Saint Vincent through online courses hosted with a consortium of other schools offering specialized courses that Saint Vincent is not able to provide on its own. Partnerships such as this can provide opportunities for the College moving forward.

The members of Council and some students then shared dinner in the Fred Rogers Center before the meeting was adjourned.

**Motion to Adjourn:** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by C. Cleveland and seconded by G. Maurer and passed with unanimous approval.

## **ATTENDANCE**

**D. Braum**

**C. Cleveland**

**T. Cocchi**

**P. Conroy**

**D. DeYulis**

**Megan Farrell**

**Mitch Farrell**

**G. Fetkovich**

**A. Jeffers**

**O. London**

**J. Laffey**

**J. Marsico**

**G. Maurer**

**G. Martin**

**E. McCormick**

**C. McMonagle**

**F. Nelson**

**A. Panebianco**

**R. Retter**

**J. Reilly**

**L. Scalzitti**

**R. Schulte**

**A. Simmons**

**S. Simmons**

**R. Sossong**

**R. Stillwagon**

**M. Stoltz**

**J. Winters**

**J. Wojechko**

**R. Zadzilko**

**L. Zecchini**

**Guests:**

**Fr. Paul Taylor, O.S.B.**

**David Hollenbaugh**

**B. Becze**

**S. Gouch**

**K. Vitale**

**Respectfully submitted by R. Sossong, Alumni Council Secretary. For additional detail, please see the slide materials used during this Council meeting, which are attached to these minutes.**