Trustees Present: Pam Lassiter, Sandy Lish, Tom Peisch, Diane Schmalensee

Staff Present: Stephen Dill, Interim Director of Marketing and Institutional Communications; Cyndi Fox, Staff Assistant, Office of the President

Call to Order and Establishment of Quorum and Introductions

Trustee Lish called the meeting to order and established that a quorum was present.

Approval of the June 2, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Trustee Lassiter moved to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2020 meeting, and Trustee Schmalensee seconded the motion. The motion passed via the following roll call vote: Trustee Lassiter – YES; Trustee Lish – YES; Chair Peisch – YES; Trustee Schmalensee – YES.

President Podell’s 2019/2020 Agenda

Trustee Schmalensee noted the following items from President Podell’s 2019/2020 Agenda are addressed as follows in the survey:

Topic four (Planning for the new Framingham Campus) and topic five (Fundraise for the new Framingham campus) are addressed in the internal survey in question three (Continued Viability and Strength), under bullet point two (Funding and Planning). She also said that topic three (Pursue the Equity Agenda) is addressed in survey question seven, under the first two bullet points. Topic two (Work to Maintain Enrollment) is covered in survey question five (Student Success), under bullet four. Topic one of the 2020-2019 President’s Agenda, Implement Year 2 of the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, is mentioned in the last bullet of question one.

Trustee Lassiter voiced the question, “Did the goals actually get accomplished?”, as well as noting that she knows the answer some of these from discussions at the Board of Trustees meetings. Trustee Schmalensee said that with the survey they are looking to see what the perceptions are as to the accomplishments of President Podell. Trustee Lish mentioned the five points are not attached to the survey, that the survey seeks to get perceptions from participants, noting that everyone who takes it will respond differently based on their level of knowledge on the topic. Trustee Schmalensee said it will be helpful to do analyses of past surveys since some respondents give a large overview and others get very specific. There is also the chance that people may respond that they don’t know. If many people respond that way, then more communication concerning the goal and how to attain it is required.
Trustee Lish thanked Trustee Schmalensee for creating the survey questions so quickly and thoroughly. Trustee Schmalensee discussed the inclusion of the pandemic in all survey sections and including a separate section for Equity. She heard back from all members of the committee and, after gathering all the feedback, sent a version of the questions to Vice President Courtney Jackson, who suggested some changes. The current version reflects the feedback from everyone on the committee and Vice President Jackson.

Trustee Schmalensee noted that this year there is a big change from past years because a separate version of the survey is being sent to each group of constituents. Separate versions provide the ability to know which groups are represented. In past years, some respondents did not indicate which group they were a part of. The Trustees are the only group that requires a name at the end of the survey, as they are required by the state to identify themselves. Trustee Schmalensee also explained there are internal and external versions of the survey, each of which has a different cover letter. The external version does not include the Equity or Student Success questions.

Trustee Lassiter raised a question regarding question seven in the Student Survey. She asked if the students would be aware of equity emphasis in leadership, faculty, and staff and that they could have perceptions and compare this to Commissioner Santiago’s challenge regarding enrollment, attainment, and long-term success through equity. Trustee Schmalensee noted that these are addressed in the second to last bullet point in the Equity question. Trustee Schmalensee also added that bullets one and two could be removed if it is felt that students would not know about diversity in leadership, faculty and staff positions. Trustee Lish added that students may not have been enrolled long enough to know this, and Trustee Lassiter also added that there was a “Don’t Know” choice in the question. It was also noted that the Equity question is new to the survey and has no comparison from previous years. Trustee Schmalensee remarked that it would be better to get answers rather than “Don’t Know”. Trustee Lassiter said that this could result in a low student response. Trustee Lish responded that if it would not be a problem, then bullets one and two in question seven of the Student Survey should be omitted. Chair Peisch echoed that they should be omitted if it would encourage a better response rate and make it simpler. Trustee Schmalensee concluded that all internal constituents will get an identical version, with the exception of the Student version which will exclude bullets one and two from question seven.

Trustee Lassiter offered to work together with the Student Government Association if more students are needed to respond. Reminders can be sent, and she will defer to Executive Director Karen Britton regarding this.

Trustee Lish requested a timeline of the survey that she can present at the Full Board of Trustees Meeting on June 16. Trustee Schmalensee asked that Trustee Lish encourage the participation by all Trustees and also advise all are required by state law to identify themselves in the survey. Trustee Lassiter added that they be advised that the Board will also need to vote on a salary recommendation.

The committee established a timeline for the survey as follows:

June 15 - send test Presidential Eval “B” (Trustees), to the committee, test Presidential Eval “C” (Direct Reports) to Executive Director Britton and Vice President Jackson
June 16 - edits and corrections
June 17 - send survey to all groups with June 30 deadline to respond
June 23 - send reminder email to respond to survey by June 30
June 30 - survey responses due.
Chair Peisch said a Full Board of Trustees meeting is tentatively scheduled for July 14. Trustee Lish commented that the committee should meet to discuss the survey outcome prior to that meeting. Trustee Schmalensee said she would complete the survey report prior to a committee meeting so that there would be time to revise the report if necessary. The committee decided to meet on July 10 at 9:00 am. The committee will present the survey results at the Full Board of Trustees Meeting schedule on July, 14, at which time a vote could be taken.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on July 10 at 9:00 am.

Adjournment

Trustee Lish moved that the meeting be adjourned, and Trustee Schmalensee seconded. The motion passed via the following roll call vote: Trustee Lassiter – YES; Trustee Lish – YES; Chair Peisch – YES; Trustee Schmalensee – YES.

The meeting adjourned at 10:35 am.

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Sandy Lish, Committee Chair  Date  7/16/2020