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# SALVE REGINA UNIVERSITY FACULTY ASSEMBLY

## Minutes of the meeting of November 6, 2000

Terrence Gavan, Speaker of the Assembly, presided.

1. **Call to Order, Minutes:** The meeting was called to order at 2:04 and the minutes of the meeting of October 2 were approved.
2. **President's Address**

The President, Sister M. Therese Antone, RSM, announced the death of Sister Philemon Banigan RSM, a retired member of the faculty. Sister Philemon came to the Salve Regina in 1950 and served in a variety of posts for over forty years. She was, among other things, Chair of the Chemistry Department, Registrar, Director of Admissions, and basketball coach. She played a significant role in the planning for the O'Hare Academic Center.

Sister Therese based her presentation to the faculty on the Annual Report that she had recently submitted to the Board of Trustees. Prior to the Annual Meeting, Sister Therese sent this Summary Report which contained information about academic affairs, enrollment, salaries, budget, and many other matters. Faculty may consult two copies of this Summary Report on reserve in the library.

The theme of Sister Therese's remarks was optimism. She also outlined challenges that face the University. For example: undergraduate curriculum and teaching style, revitalization of graduate programs, additional improved student residences, the entry of for-profit companies into education, the need to build the endowment, and how Salve Regina will continue its existence as a Catholic institution sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy. She maintained that we can confront these challenges and the future from a position of stability.

The President was pleased to report that major capital improvements throughout the campus have been paid for with "cash from outside funding sources," rather than from the endowment. This fund raising is in addition to the published Capital Campaign goals.

The Rodgers Recreation Center has opened

Ochre Court is now listed on "Save America's Treasures." Because of this, it was possible to obtain a \$300,000 grant for renovations to this significant building. Work on Wakehurst continues. The second and third floors, extensively renovated, will be dedicated to academic purposes. A reconfiguration of the basement will create more space for student-related activities. The University has received another \$1 million gift to finance the improvements to Wakehurst. Extensive changes underway in Miley are part of the Wakehurst renovation budget.

The relocation of the Maintenance Facilities to the former Lincourt Garage is still under discussion. This move would make Wetmore available for academic purposes.

Sister Therese asked Michael Semenza to give a brief overview of the Capital Campaign. The Campaign now stands at \$23 million toward the \$25 million goal.

The President then listed some statistics about the new freshman class: 3000 applications; 66% acceptance rate compared with 88% a few years ago; higher SAT scores than last year and previous years; 75% female, 25% male; 6% minority; 35% with a family connection to Salve Regina; 56% from public high schools; two-thirds graduated in the top half of their class.

There are about 1696 full-time undergraduates, compared to 1312 in 1996. The plan is to increase both the yield and the retention rate gradually; retention depends very much on students' experience in the classroom and on "Student Life" matters.

The important "budget number" is the annual average of 1673 full-time undergraduate students. The University's planning model is for an average annual full-time undergraduate enrollment of 1650-1720, in order "to make the kind of budget we think we are going to need in the years that are coming." On-campus housing is a concern, but dormitory space is sufficient for the current enrollment.

Graduate enrollment has been declining both in headcount and FTE. The reasons for this are increased competition and the entry of for-profit corporations offering graduate degrees. Adults now have more options for graduate education. This year the graduate directors are embarking on a thorough assessment of their programs. They will send to the President their recommendations for a revitalization of graduate programs.

The future of SRU is related to its ability to "grow the endowment." The President listed the endowments of some other institutions and described the growth of the SRU endowment. The progress on the endowment, she said, should give faculty "some level of optimism and security."

Sister Therese asked William Hall to provide further details about the University's current financial status. After he finished, she explained the situation concerning the University's bond rating and the progress in this area.

On the topic of the accreditation visit, the President said that much good has come out of the preparations for this event. The Chair of the Visiting Team for the accreditation will be Dr. Anthony Bonaparte, the Provost at St. John's University (New York); he will be visiting the campus on November 30 and December 1. The accreditation Visiting Team will be on campus April 1 – 4, 2001.

Earlier in the year, faculty received copies of the planning document *Pathway to the Future: Strategic Plan 2000-2001*. (This is an abbreviated form of a larger document. The unabbreviated document is on reserve in the library and in various campus offices.) She asked faculty to refer to this document during department and committee meetings, so that all planning relates to the "Strategic Plan." She added: "I am particularly pleased that this year the self-study and the planning process both have led to a goal that focuses on 'distinctive qualities of mercy'" in our Mission. She reminded all that we must "keep up the momentum" and continue to move forward. The President concluded by thanking the faculty for enabling her to give "such a positive report because we are all very much a part of the success of this University."

### **3. Faculty Committee on Academic Standards**

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John Buckley FSC, Chair of the “Faculty Committee on Academic Standards,” spoke on behalf of this ad hoc committee. He explained that the committee was formed as a result of the “Institutional Goal” formulated at a faculty workshop last may: “To create a vibrant learning community of students, faculty and staff that fosters growth in academic, moral and social responsibility.”

The goal of this committee, according to a handout that Br. John made available, is the following: “to review and compare grade distributions in order to make a determination of whether grade inflation exists on this campus, and make recommendations to reduce or eliminate it, if it exists.”

The handout continues: “It would be helpful if Departments begin or continue their efforts to monitor the grade distributions of the faculty in their respective disciplines.”

“The committee welcomes written suggestions to enhance our investigative efforts.”

On the handout the committee is described as an “Action Team.” It is ad hoc and part of the self-study process for the accreditation visit. The committee “reports to the faculty.”

One member of the Assembly commented that we must address standards, not just grades. What value are high grades and a degree if students do poorly in tests given by outside agencies?

Another member of the faculty stated that grades and standards must be looked at together but we cannot “teach to the tests.”

#### 4. **Technology Information**

Ty Brennan asked faculty to fill out a questionnaire about technology they use. The information collected will help with planning.

Before the meeting concluded, the Speaker announced that the Assembly’s Web-site is now functioning: <http://inside.salve.edu/assembly>.

The meeting adjourned at 3:26 PM