



**Governing Board  
Minutes from Retreat of June 22, 2017**

**Present:** Bob Lisi (Chair), Hilaire Hauer (Vice Chair), Paul Fitzgerald (Treasurer), Cynthia Zook (Executive Committee), Fr James Bissonette, Mary Lou Jennings, Fr. Richard Kunst, Fr Ryan Moravitz, Fr. Peter Muhich, Karen Newstrom, Stephen Olson, Laura Schauer, Sister Edith Bogue (Secretary). Bishop Paul Sirba participated intermittently throughout the retreat.

1. Opening Prayer led by Bishop Paul Sirba

Agenda – Approval moved by Fr Ryan, seconded. Carried.

2. Mission Moments focused on two questions: What do you see as your greatest contribution going forward to this organization? Where can you best serve as a board member? Each member of the Board shared their thoughts.
3. Our Mission and Vision and
4. Our Identity

During an extended discussion, the Board members reflected on the Mission and Vision of Stella Maris Academy and the challenge of expressing it concretely in the day-to-day activities of the school. The Formation Model of Education, still a work in progress, is seen as a key element, one that extends into academics and the school culture. Ideas related to the Catholic Liberal Arts model and the Catholic Intellectual Tradition were discussed. Some members described conversations with leaders at schools in which these models have been implemented.

A key aspect for developing the Formation Model will be the commitment, preparation and development of the leadership, teachers, and staff in each location. These require time and resources, so the plan Formation Model will become visible over a period of months and years, not immediately. But the direction and work begin now.

Leadership toward the Formation Model will come from the President, when that person is hired. However, the Board has a significant responsibility to articulate the Mission and Vision to the principals, teachers, parents, students and general community. If a President is not hired immediately, the Board will need to consider ways to do this. These might include the appointment of an Interim President.

5. Bishop Paul Sirba presided at the celebration of the Eucharist.

6. Brand Development

Erin Makela gave an overview of branding, a merging of our brand and our identity. Our brand is our image in the community. It expresses our Mission, Vision, and Values. The elements chosen now provide the road map for future branding work. Consistency is a key element of branding.

Branding is based on a message matrix, which identifies the top messages and audiences, and the keywords for reaching them. Branding elements were presented in a packet of materials.

The Board discussed this packet.

The Board agreed upon criteria for building our brand. These include: connection to our Catholic faith and to the Stella Maris Academy name, originality (differentiated from other schools in the area), accessibility to students (something they can relate to), and clarity so that the brand is not misconstrued or misrepresented. Brand elements should heighten school spirit.

7. Uniform Policy

The Board discerned criteria for accepting a new uniform policy. It should express the Stella Maris identity and be suitable to be phased-in over the course of a year. It should be practical. There should be some distinction between Elementary and Middle School uniforms. Athletic wear should be available for middle school. The elements should contribute to attire for performances and/or formal events. There should be Spirit-wear options.

Erin Makela presented a proposed set of uniform items and a policy.

**Motion:** by Fr Kunst, seconded, that we accept the items of the uniform as presented.

8. Mascot and Crest

Two options for the Mascot and Crest were developed by the Flint Group. The Board stated criteria for the selection, including connection to Catholic faith and Stella Maris Academy name, differentiation from other schools, and ability for students to relate to the images chosen. Design objectives clean lines tending toward simplicity, memorable images, timeless style, appropriate, and something that would resonate with K through 12 grade students. The elements should work well in both print and embroidery, and in black-and-white.

**Motion:** by Fr Muhich, seconded, to accept the Sentinel as mascot from Family 1. To choose the crest at a later date, considering a revision of the Family #1 crest or the Family #2 crest as is. New fonts might be considered. A circular application will be developed for whichever crest is chosen. The vote will be taken by email.

9. Accreditation

Julianne Blazevic, Principal at the St. James campus, is coordinating the work for the accreditation of Stella Maris Academy by the Minnesota Nonpublic School Accrediting Association (MNSAA). The MNSAA accreditation visit, scheduled before the unification of the Duluth Area Catholic Schools, will take place October 22-25, 2017. The participation of Board members is needed both in the preparation of the Accreditation document and during the on-site visit in October.

**Motion: Laura.** Sr Edith Bogue and Karen Newstrom work with Julianne for the Governance aspect of the Accreditation Self-Study.

10. Organization Employees

a. President selection process

Discussion centered on the development of criteria for the selection of the president, especially with regard to the Board's interest in the Catholic Liberal Arts perspective. The first President job description was general in nature. A revised description with more specificity is being written, and would shape the pool of future applicants.

**Motion:** by Sister Edith Bogue, seconded: That the board chooses to move toward a Catholic liberal arts curriculum grounded in the Catholic intellectual tradition, to be defined and implemented over a period of years. **Carried.**

The need for Stella Maris Academy to have a public face, able to articulate and animate the mission and vision, was discussed. Board members could take on part of this work, but would not have the day-to-day presence required.

**Motion** by Fr. Ryan Moravitz, seconded: To electronically receive communication if there is a meeting of the minds on the Interim President position to be held by Hilaire Hauer, with information about compensation and description. **Carried.**

b. Faculty and staff placement

Cynthia Zook provided an update on faculty and staff contracts and placement. Nearly all have been settled. Families are eager to know which teachers will be in which locations.

11. Minutes of the June 1, 2017 meeting of the Board were approved.

12. Committee Updates/Proposals

a. Executive Committee

Meetings have focused on planning process for unifying business operations, president search, leases and contracts, and developing Board agenda.

b. Transition Team

The Transition Team continues to develop methods for working together. They are coordinating their work on a grid of tasks and dates. Their focus, at present, is on preparing each site for its use in September 2017.

c. Development

Efforts are working in parallel for scheduling immediate fund-raising events and for developing an overall fundraising strategy including seeking major gifts. There will be a Stella Maris Scholarship Dinner with an Honorary Chair as well as underwriters and sponsors for the dinner. Jennifer Austin will chair the dinner.

The need to unify and coordinate a donor database across all the sites was identified. Fr. Ryan spoke of the usefulness of specialized software, Raiser's Edge, for this purpose. It costs \$27,000, with the start-up costs spread over 3 years (\$9,000 each) for new customers.

**Motion by Sister Edith, seconded:** Approve purchase of Raiser's Edge, with provision that Fr Ryan try to barter the price down. **Carried.**

d. Formation Model

The Transition Team is working to create an office of Faith Formation or Spiritual Formation. There is 1.6 FTE in the budget for this. This office would have responsibility for scheduling various faith formation activities at each campus, as well as providing teacher support and training.

Seeking a way to welcome the presence of priests at Stella Maris, whether as classroom faculty, co-curricular faculty, or chaplains. This would include priests in parishes that do not have a Stella Maris campus on site.

e. Finance – Proposed 2017/2018 Budget – Handed out.

This is very much a living document, evolving as enrollment numbers and costs become known. Since the last report, it is moving toward the direction of a balanced budget.

Most recent enrollment is 513. Using a calculated average for tuition, we have a calculated amount of income, including \$1.6 million from tuition. It was suggested that, as the first year ends, the Board revisit the possibility of having a maximum tuition per family. We might depress enrollment of children from large families without such a cap.

The question of fees remains open. This budget includes \$70,000 - \$80,000 from fees or some other types of income derived through the parents. Some of these amounts are tied to participation in specific programs. Others apply to every parent. The budget also includes an amount from Development, but that is not firm at this time.

The Expenses for Salaries and Benefits are fairly accurate numbers at this time. Maintenance is still not as certain. The Benefits shown in the budget used a percentage projection based on total salaries and wages number. The benefits packages differed at the previous schools, which are now unified into one package.

The other expense information uses historical expense information from each site. The amount budgeted has not been adjusted because, at this time, there is no data on which to increase or decrease expense estimates per campus.

This projection shows a budget that is \$75,000 in the black.

Capital expenses are not yet known, especially as parishes are making some capital improvements before the school year begins.

f. Facilities  
Lease agreements are being prepared. This committee is also looking at the definitions of each of the items in the agreements. It is anticipated these will be completed before the school year begins.

g. High School Task Force  
  
Not discussed due to time constraints.

13. Next Steps for Continued Board Formation

Start by reading the book that is provided in the packet of materials.

14. Remaining 2017 Board Meeting Dates (4:00-5:30pm unless noted otherwise)

August 3rd  
September 7th  
October 5th  
November 2nd  
December 7th

15. Closing Prayer at 4:50pm by Bishop Paul Sirba

Respectfully submitted,  
Sister Edith Bogue