



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY UPDATE

September 25, 2006

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Good morning. And let's hear it for Auggie spirit as we commence our week-long Homecoming celebration!

CAMPUS PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

I want to report this week on some of the highlights of the Augsburg College Board of Regents meeting that was held on Friday and Saturday. For those of you who don't know, Augsburg is governed by a corporation comprising representatives of four Lutheran (ELCA) synods – Minneapolis, St. Paul, Southeast Minnesota, and Northwest Wisconsin. The corporation in turn elects a Board of Regents, composed of up to 35 members who are alumni, parents, civic leaders, business people, and church representatives. The board meets four times a year to transact the business of the College.

Many members of our College community – students, faculty, and staff – participate in board meetings as your representatives. The board meeting agendas are set to ensure that board members have a deep and broad sense of the good work all of you do for the College each and every day.

Our meetings on the weekend focused on three primary themes:

- Approving the annual audit of the College's finances. As I have reported before, the financial results for the College were very strong for the 2005-06 fiscal year (which ended May 31, 2006). Both operating and balance sheet improvements were illustrated by a very positive audit report.
- Receiving an update on the planning for the new Center for Faith and Learning and the Christensen Chair in Religion and Vocation. Faculty members David Tiede (Christensen Chair), Phil Quanbeck, and Mark Tranvik (Religion), along with staff member John Knight, led an engaging session that introduced the board to the work that the Center for Faith and Learning will do to enhance our work as a College community with the concept of vocation. Many of you will hear this same report in the weeks ahead. You will be impressed and proud of how the center's work enhances Augsburg's work and spreads the College's image to the wider church and world.
- Spent time with many students and members of the student affairs staff to discuss and learn more about the student experience at Augsburg. This was an important session as we seek to raise the student voice and profile for the board. My thanks to all the good and diverse Augsburg students who participated in the board session.

In addition to these important focused topics and the normal business of the board, the board and I also had an opportunity to talk about my initial impressions of Augsburg College and our work together here. In what follows, I offer you an edited version of my report to the board. I welcome your comments at augpres@augsb.org.

Abundance

The four official meetings of the Board of Regents during the 2006-07 academic year will each focus on one of the four themes of my inauguration – abundance, generosity,

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engagement, and service. Our first meeting together was all about abundance.

And abundance is evident all around us here at Augsburg:

- The abundance of hospitality and community
- The abundance of teaching and learning
- The abundance of campus life
- The abundance of service and engagement with each other and the wider world
- The abundance of God's gracious work in our midst

I give thanks for the abundance of your welcome to me, Abigail, Thomas, and Maya, and for the abundance of promise in this college. Now two months into my work as president, I am so very clear that the call to Augsburg was timely and meaningful.

My first official report as president will focus more on early observations of the institutional culture and aspirations than on specific initiatives.

I want to focus my attention in this report on three general areas:

Leadership model

I have spent a good bit of time these first few weeks working with my senior staff and other College leaders to define a leadership model for the College that responds to its needs and aspirations going forward.

I have sensed a deep need for **mutual translation** of the College's vision into practice – translation by College leaders of the vision and translation by the community of its perceived gifts and roles in making the vision a reality.

I also have found a community that wants to move forward, to make things happen, to see the vision in action. **A bias to action**, therefore, seems relevant to our work in the year ahead. Practicing what we preach – not talking a good idea to death – being willing to try new things, even if we sometimes may need to double back and redo (or ask for forgiveness!)

The community has resonated to a leadership model that is characterized by the following purposes:

- Affirm our work as a teaching and learning community – make learning the core of everything we do academically and administratively
- Recognize and help create intersections among the systems that comprise the College – ensure that our complex systems are aligned and dynamic
- Practice transparency – no secrets, communicate and communicate again
- Be consultative, yet also decisive – listen carefully to as many voices as feasible, and then make a decision

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- Be accessible and visible, present to each other – pay attention to the ways in which we “hide” from each other
- Be accountable and responsible – no special deals, pursuing responsibility is expected

We have shared this leadership model widely and have found that it is meaningful to staff, faculty, and students as an aspiration not just for my presidential leadership, but also for the work all of us do together on campus and beyond.

Governance

We have set out to create a governance model for the College that honors the basic tenets of this leadership program.

The President's Cabinet, which meets weekly, comprises the five vice presidents (academic affairs, advancement, enrollment management, finance and administration, and student affairs), two special assistants (campus culture and College outreach), and the chief information officer. It is the primary decision-making body for the College. It receives regular reports on key initiatives, confers widely with staff and faculty on operational and strategic questions, and works collaboratively to serve the College.

The President's Advisory Group, which meets bi-weekly, comprises the cabinet along with a representative group of faculty, staff, and students who come together to hear reports on institutional initiatives, confer with the president on institutional decisions, and serve as a sounding board and advocacy group for institutional activities. Membership in the advisory group will rotate annually to allow for leadership development opportunities for various members of the community.

In addition, we continue to form ad hoc groups and task forces to address particular issues (such as the inauguration and first-year initiatives). We also are working with the Student Senates (Day and Weekend), Staff Senate, and Faculty Senate to determine how best to include these representative groups in advisory and decision-making processes.

An additional governance issue revolves around the role of various other constituent groups connected to the College's work (alumni, athletic boosters, friends of various centers and programs). My sense is that the Board of Regents must claim its appropriate responsibility for chartering these various groups, integrating their work, and holding the groups accountable for their efforts on behalf of Augsburg.

Communication

The core institutional practice that supports a healthy leadership and governance model is open and regular communications. We have (or will) institute a variety of opportunities for engaging and communicating with the College community.

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- Monthly Community Time gatherings with faculty and staff
- Enhanced web and e-mail communications strategies
- Participation by the President's Cabinet in a wide range of College activities

Open communication will create more and more opportunities for members of the Augsburg community to learn what is happening, to build trust, to get involved, and to help build a stronger common effort on behalf of the College.

We have instituted a policy at the cabinet level, for example, that any new initiative must include a plan for communication as part of the proposal. Our hope is that the importance and impact of open and good communications will become evident and more fully integrated into the campus culture.

Other highlights

There are several other projects worthy of your attention as the academic year commences:

Plans for the Inauguration

The theme for the inauguration is "The AGES of Imagination," a reference to the four inaugural themes (abundance, generosity, engagement, and service – that is, AGES!) and their connection to our work as a College community, stretching imaginations and being a sign of hope in the world. The inauguration will span four days: October 18-21, 2006 – with inauguration worship and investiture on October 20, 2006.

Program anniversaries

We also are celebrating several anniversaries of outstanding College programs during the coming year:

- Center for Global Education (25 years)
- Weekend College (25 years)
- Master of Arts in Leadership program (20 years)
- Step-Up program (10 years)

Watch for opportunities to celebrate and support these remarkable examples of Augsburg's mission in action.

Augsburg in China

I also want to update you on two strategies we have undertaken to establish Augsburg ties in China:

- The first is a collaborative program with the Minnesota Private College Council (MPCC), which will launch a relationship in the spring of 2007 with United International College (UIC) in Zhuhai, near Hong Kong. UIC is a new liberal arts institution with instruction offered in English. Diane Pike, a member of our sociology faculty, plans to be at UIC in the fall of 2007. In addition, President Emeritus Bill Frame is exploring the possibility of being in residence at UIC in the spring of 2007, helping to establish the formal relationship on behalf of the MPCC schools.

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- The second path for our China work is our institutional work with the Anqing Teachers College and our explorations of various exchanges with Anqing and other Chinese universities in the years ahead. We also are exploring potential business alliances in conjunction with these institutional ties.

KUDOS

My thanks to Leif Anderson, Jim West, Cherie Christ, Carol Estocko, Judy Petree, and Betsey Norgard who were involved in the creation of the new News/Calendar Web page and the new Web calendar.

I also want to share with you praise given by the leader of a church group hosted by the Center for Global Education in Cuernavaca, Mexico. The leader praised CGE-Mexico staff members Stephanie Barnes and Lisanne Morgan for their "outstanding leadership, knowledge, and ability to really connect with each participant as an individual." He went on to say how much he appreciates the work that CGE does in changing hearts and minds.

NOTABLE EVENTS IN THE NEXT WEEK

Sept. 25-30

Homecoming 2006, "Watch Us Soar"

For a complete schedule, go to www.augsburg.edu/alumni/homecoming.

Upcoming events

Oct. 2-3

2006 Christensen Symposium

Mon., Oct. 2

"Where in the World Are We? Being Christians after Christendom," Douglas John Hall, professor emeritus of Christian theology, McGill University, Montreal, Canada
7:30 p.m.—Hoversten Chapel

Tues., Oct. 3

2006 Christensen Symposium

"What Are People For? Caring for Life in a Violent World," Douglas John Hall
11 a.m.—Hoversten Chapel

DAILY CHAPEL SPEAKERS THIS WEEK:

Tues., Sept. 26—Barbara Edwards Farley, Vice President of Academic Affairs

Wed., Sept. 27—Tom Bartel, publisher, Rake magazine

Thurs., Sept. 28—Jeroy Carlson '48, "Mr. Augsburg"

Fri., Sept. 29—Homecoming Convocation

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Next week:

Mon., Oct. 2—David Tiede, Christensen Chair in Religion and Vocation

Tues., Oct. 3—Christensen Symposium—Douglas John Hall

Sports schedule— www.augsburg.edu/athletics/schedules/fall0607.html.

Have a great week!