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**Ursuline Education Foundation**

**Canonical Stewards Meeting**

**August 18, 2023**

Present for the Zoom call meeting were Sr. Ann Barrett, Win Bell, Sr. Mary Ann Dooling, John Grimes, Margaret Hesse, James MacLaren, Sr. Peggy Moore, Karen Mortillaro, and Regina Sullivan. Erin Valentine could not be present.

John opened the meeting by thanking everyone for their continued commitment to the Ursuline Education Foundation. Kaen Mortillaro then offered the opening prayer.

The minutes of the Canonical Stewards meeting of April 14, 2023, were approved.

The purpose of today’s meeting was stated: to review the governance topics of approving nominees of boards of trustees, review the self-evaluations of the boards of trustees and review the evaluations of the heads of schools. Discussion of the Mount Merici Identity Assessment is tabled for now.

Regarding the nominees for local trustees there were no concerns. It was noted that the provincial team has already approved the nominees and that next year this will be the responsibility of the stewards. Historically there have been few concerns about board nominees; it is understood that the schools do an excellent job of vetting their candidates. At the same time, perhaps there is a mechanism where the stewards can follow up and do their due diligence before giving approval. This will be a matter of further discussion and research. Karen suggested checking with the Marianists Sponsorship Office for an explanation of their process.

John also explained that we had received guidance from the provincial team that the stewards were not responsible for the two school foundations; Ursuline Academy of Dalla Foundation and URSULINE Academy of New Orleans Foundation. These two foundations are under the guidance of the academy board of trustees.

The next topic for discussion was the self- evaluations of the school boards of trustees and the evaluations of the heads of schools.

Since the UEF’s formal mandate is mission driven and excludes responsibility for daily operating issues discussion took place on the value of the stewards reviewing the evaluations; these give the stewards an understanding of the challenges and opportunities each school encounters. The stewards are responsible for the mission which is to ensure the school lives out its Catholic and Ursuline Identity. The evaluations provide many insights that help the stewards be aware of challenging issues in a school. However, at the same time there is a gray area that makes it difficult to ascertain how much, if any, active involvement the stewards should take on an issue. At what point does an issue threaten the school’s mission……its Catholic/Ursuline identity?

An example was given that could possibly be an instance where steward involvement would be necessary. It was suggested that the stewards mainly be considered as a resource for the schools and available for further action if it seems necessary. The UEF has a vested interest in the schools and anything that can damage a school’s image, reputation and heritage cannot be ignored. Discussion with the heads of schools on this issue is a priority. Perhaps the local Archdiocese/diocese might also provide some insight.

At present, the provincial team is responding to the local boards of trustees regarding their evaluations. In the future, once the stewards have reviewed the evaluations, the chair will send a follow up letter to each local board of trustee’s member with comments and a request for follow-up action as needed.

It was suggested that the evaluation document be standardized so that the format for each school is the same. This would allow the stewards to frame questions that most relate to their responsibility of ensuring the mission.

The committee structure for the stewards was then presented for approval. John suggested the Canonical Stewards meet three times a year with committee meetings held prior to these meetings. The August meeting would be to discuss the evaluations and have a sense of the state of each school. The December meeting would be for finance/budget issues and Identity Assessments as needed. The May meeting would be for approving the board of trustee nominees and Identity Assessments as needed. The Finance, Mission and Trustees committees would meet prior to these three main meetings.

The final topic for discussion was the suggestion of an in-person meeting of the stewards at Ursuline Academy of Dallas, March 25-26, 2024. There is a meeting already scheduled at this time/place/ for the schools’ leaderships groups; the heads of schools, principals and mission directors of the five schools. This would be a great opportunity for the stewards, heads, principals, and mission directors to meet and share with each other.

The stewards agreed and plan to participate in this meeting. Details are still to be worked out but basically it will be arriving the afternoon of Monday, March 25, in time for dinner with the leadership group. The next morning, Tuesday the 26th,would be the time for the stewards to meet with the leadership group as a whole and then separately with the heads of schools. Gretchen Kane, head of Ursuline Academy of Dallas. is agreeable to this and looks forward to welcoming the stewards.

The next meeting of the stewards will be December 1, 2023, at 10:00 am central time, 11:00 am in the east. The focus of the meeting will be finances and the budget.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by

Sr. Ann Barrett, osu