Minutes of the November 27 Meeting

I. President DiBiasio called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM.

II. Invocation was offered by John Berg.

III. Minutes from October 23, 2012 were approved as submitted.

IV. Approval of Fall Term Graduates: Cheryl Simon requested approval of the fall term graduates with the following addition: Benjamin Allen was added to the College of Pharmacy graduates. (See Academic Affairs website under Faculty Agenda for the distributed list.) Fall term graduates were approved.

V. Honorary Degree Recommendations: Jon Smalley requested approval of the following recipients for honorary degrees: Judy (Jacobs) Mifsud, Oscar Mifsud and Jeffrey W. Wadelin. (See Attachment 1, which was distributed in the agenda, for further details). The honorary degree recipients were approved.

VI. Unfinished Business: Margot Cullen opened discussion regarding the revised mission statement for the University. She stressed the importance of our mission statement as a core identity issue and one that is essential to institutional morale and a sense of purpose. However, some had voiced concerns over the revised statement. She outlined the following four areas of concern (See Attachment 2 for further details, which is included at the end of these minutes):

i. The mission statement needs to be more fully developed with more precise wording.

ii. The mission statement needs to be more specific by including some distinctive features of ONU.

iii. The revised mission and vision statements dropped significant language including the following two phrases: “consistent with Judeo-Christian ideals” and “values of truth, beauty and goodness.”

iv. The faculty should have a more active role in shaping the mission statement.

She continued that her concern was that the revised mission statement represented a radical change from the previous mission statement. She would like to know how the faculty feels about this rather substantial change.

a. Bill Theisen commented that we need to agree on a process for moving forward with the new mission statement.

b. President DiBiasio thanked Margot for her passion and sincerity regarding this issue. He also thanked others that have provided feedback. He then stated that the next step in the process is to incorporate the comments that have been received and to develop a revised draft of the strategic plan and the heritage, mission, vision and core values statements. He would like to present a draft to the Board of Trustees at the May meeting so there should be time to revise the document again prior to that deadline.
c. Discussion followed. Mike Milks agreed that the mission statement was now missing an important existential piece. Thomas Hunt mentioned the need to recognize that we are building on the ideas of those that came before us. This version of the mission statement seems to be missing that.

d. Dean Catherine Albrecht recognized that some comments she has received from faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences are similar to Margot’s; other comments seem to go in a different direction. She seconded Bill Theisen’s idea that the process is important. Perhaps a committee could be formed to address some of these concerns.

e. Margot Cullen stated that there seemed to be universal agreement regarding faculty involvement.

f. Ray Person mentioned that he has had many opportunities to voice his opinion regarding this issue. Now we need to trust the process.

g. Margot Cullen responded that she has not had the opportunity to be a part of many of these conversations and suggested that discussing profound issues in a large assembly is important.

h. President DiBiasio concluded the discussion by thanking Margot and others for their comments and feedback and hopes the new draft of the strategic plan and mission statement will reflect the fact that he was listening to those comments.

VII. Reports from Constitutional Committees:

a. **Budget and Appropriations**: No report.

b. **Academic Affairs**: Traci Welch Moritz announced that the committee turned in sections 2 and 3 of the strategic plan to the President. In addition, the committee members are trying to clear up some issues with the faculty handbook regarding policy and procedure alignment. The committee will also be considering a request for a zero billing course from the History and Political Science department.

c. **Student Affairs**: Jenny Walton announced that the committee approved Le Cercle Francais. They are currently considering additional applications for other proposed student organizations.

d. Paul Logsdon announced that the committee has received applications for sabbatical leave and is preparing a ranked recommendation. The committee also submitted to University Council a revision to the emeritus status in the faculty handbook. It passed its second reading.

VIII. Reports from Operational Committees:

a. **Athletic Events**: Tom Simmons announced that the ONU baseball team will play against Case at Progressive Field (home field of the Cleveland Indians) on April 24th, 2013. Alison Steinbrunner finished second in the cross country national championships. ONU men’s soccer plays in the Final Four of the NCAA Division III National Championship on Friday, November 30th at 2:30. In addition, Nate Bascom is going to be named the National Academic All-American
of the Year for Men’s Division III Soccer. Finally, the ONU men’s soccer team will receive the Coaches’ Team Academic Award for maintaining a team average GPA above a 3.0. Last year, the average GPA was a 3.37. The men are pursuing a diversity of majors on the team and are a great representation of the University.

b. Cultural Events: John Armstrong announced that the Holiday Spectacular is this weekend.

c. International Affairs: Brian Keas announced that International Week occurred prior to Thanksgiving Break. The next committee meeting will be next semester.

d. Religious Affairs: David MacDonald announced that the committee met prior to Thanksgiving break. They are currently considering two proposed student groups.

e. Information Technology: Jeff Rieman had a few announcements.
   i. IT has hired Joseph Blankson as an Educational Technology Specialist. Jay Brake has moved over to supervise the Help Desk and Technicians. When you have computer issues, call the Help Desk (x1111) first to streamline the process.
   ii. Rory Bedford has retired and IT is currently looking for a replacement by January 1st, 2013.
   iii. IT has moved away from the concept of each tech covering a particular building. Now, all techs will cover all of the buildings on campus.
   iv. IT has hired Elisha Schick as a new Senior Technical Specialist to assist with inventories, monitoring email lists, and assisting the office with administrative duties.
   v. Moodle Room training will continue at the Heterick Library Computer Lab this Wednesday at noon and this Thursday at 3 PM.

IX. Questions for the President: President DiBiasio highlighted a few items before opening the floor to questions.

a. There had been a question regarding evaluations of the Provost. Annual evaluations conducted by faculty and deans will begin in February 2013.

b. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education approved our program for accreditation until 2019. The program deserves special congratulations because the council listed no areas of improvement. Congratulations to Tena Roepke for her leadership and to everyone else involved with the teacher education program.

c. The Law School bar pass rate was a close third in the state of Ohio (91%).

d. The Pharmacy School board pass rate was the highest in the state of Ohio (99.2%), with the largest number of students sitting for the exam.

e. There will be another university forum focused on finances on Monday. If there is sufficient interest, the forum can be brought to specific departments or colleges as well.
f. President DiBiasio encouraged everyone to attend the holiday gathering on December 7th.

g. Lisa Robeson responded to Margot Cullen’s previous comments regarding the mission statement. She mentioned that we are relying on the input from deans to represent the faculty. However, the distribution of faculty across the colleges is not equal. The College of Arts and Sciences has 142 faculty members. We need to be aware that Dean Albrecht is one of five deans, but is representing the varied interests of over half of our faculty members at ONU.

h. Traci Welch Moritz asked about the status of the searches for current open positions (Disabilities Coordinator, Director of Career Services and the Director for Multicultural Development). President DiBiasio responded that the search for a new Director for Multicultural Development is moving forward. Vice President Adriane Thompson-Bradshaw added that the search committee has narrowed down the strong candidate pool from 50 to the top 3 individuals. She hopes to announce a new Director prior to the Christmas break.

X. Report from University Council: Rob Alexander encouraged faculty to read the minutes from University Council and announced that a line has been added in the University Council agenda for faculty comments. Those wishing to address Council should contact Rob Alexander or Jenny Donley (the Council secretary). He also mentioned that Margot Cullen raised her concerns regarding the mission statement at the last University Council meeting and the topic generated a good amount of discussion. At the meeting, Rob noted that he had confirmed with the President that the current document was indeed a draft. He added that he views this version of the strategic plan and mission statement as undergoing a process similar to peer-review. After the next draft, we might need to revisit our discussion of the mission statement. He also added that it is important to know the extent and degree of concern the faculty have regarding the mission statement. Our participation in the process is just as important as the outcome. Mike Milks asked whether it would be possible to make the reports from the Constitutional Committees more detailed and accessible to the university community. Rob noted that he directed the Chairs of the Constitutional Committees to be more detailed in their reports at the last University Council meeting.

XI. Other Reports: None.

XII. Announcements:

a. Paul Logsdon announced that there will be a new director for the library. The selection process will begin over the holidays.
XIII. The meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM.

Submitted by,

__________________________
Leslie A. Riley
Secretary
Concerns about the draft mission statement

October 30, 2012

University Council

Margot Cullen

As a mission statement (and related materials concerning vision, etc.) significantly defines our common experience at ONU, making sure that we have one that most of us can affirm is important. Also, the mission statement is frequently used to justify changes or retention of elements within various levels of university structures, so has practical policy implications.

The mission statements in question

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<th>Current mission statement</th>
<th>Draft new mission statement</th>
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<td>Ohio Northern University, a United Methodist-related institution of higher learning, seeks to educate and graduate students accomplished in scholastic achievement, prepared for a useful life and meaningful career and inspired with a desire to contribute to the good of mankind consistent with Judeo-Christian ideals.</td>
<td>‘To engage with students to dream, learn, problem-solve, innovate, create, serve, and work so they are inspired and equipped to make significant contributions to their professions and communities.’</td>
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Dan DiBiasio in recent e-mails has generously offered some insights about what he considers to be strong points of the new draft mission statement:

“First is the question about ‘why the administration wants to change an established, and fairly successful, mission statement? ’ The short answer is that the administration, as well as the faculty who were involved in drafting and reviewing these documents, do not intend to change the university’s mission, but rather to offer a new, more contemporary way to state our mission, admittedly one that is unconventional, less descriptive, and more focused on what we all do with students.”
“Specifically about mission, a few faculty colleagues urged us be open to some of the latest thinking on mission, particularly the views advanced by a speaker at Stanford's entrepreneur center.

Now, just because the type of mission statement proposed was advocated for by a Stanford speaker, doesn't make it right for ONU or mean that it will be embraced by all, most, or many! Nonetheless, to foreclose on trying something a little more unconventional, might be seen as being reticent to experiment or as not open to new ideas.”

Concerns

The effort to be engaged with students in creatively innovative ways is a worthy one, and we all most likely agree with Dan that this kind of innovation at ONU is necessary and desirable. However, despite the good intentions behind the draft statement, a number of people have raised issues concerning it.

A. Some people think that draft mission statement needs to be more fully developed with more precise wording.

B. Some people think that the draft mission statement is too generic and needs to contain some distinctive features about ONU.

C. Some people think that discarding the wording “consistent with Judeo-Christian ideals” does indeed “signal a radical change of purpose” that Dan asserts is not implied in the draft. Also, a number of the people who hold this view also think that suggesting these changes without expressed concern from the administration for how the loss of these ideals would influence various stakeholders, especially committed faculty is a problem of its own. These ideals are significant to the cultural history of ONU and important in themselves.

Also, along the same lines, a number of people have concern about dropping the classical ideas of beauty, truth, and goodness from the vision statement.
D. Some people want the faculty to play a more active role in shaping and refining the mission statement and related materials (not necessarily the whole strategic plan.)

Possibilities?

After discussion of this topic with many others, I am wondering if the material associated with mission (heritage, vision, etc.) might well be separated from the strategic plan and worked on more intensively by the faculty. After faculty have presented several versions of this material to their colleagues and the administration, then perhaps the faculty could vote on their preferred version. Everyone might not agree with the results, but at least there would have been more focused faculty governance participation on this most important presentation of our university’s identity.

Below is one example of a possible revision of the draft. The administration might solicit specific alternatives so that people can compare and contrast their concepts of the heritage, mission, purpose, vision etc. of ONU.

To engage students to learn, problem-solve, create and serve through a vital synthesis of humanistic liberal arts and professional preparation, in ways consistent with Judeo-Christian ideals, so our graduates are inspired and equipped by their education to make significant contributions to their professions and communities.