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12:58 PM

to WILLIAMS-ALL

Dear faculty, staff and students,

I am pleased to share a summary of proceedings from the winter 2021 Board of Trustees meeting, which was held virtually last Friday, January 22. Taking a cue from our faculty, the Trustees decided to “flip” some parts of the meeting by having us send them video presentations and other materials in advance, freeing additional meeting time for robust discussion.

Following is a summary of the topics and discussions. You can find reports from past meetings on the [News from the Board](#) website.

- I was very pleased to discuss my thoughts on the upcoming strategic plan with the Board. We had largely paused the project last spring to focus on pandemic response, and happily are now at a point where we can return some focus to planning our longer-term future. I started the session by reviewing the major themes that emerged from last year’s working groups, and then talked about how I have started to incorporate those themes into a plan for Williams’ focus over the next ten to fifteen years. We discussed a timeline for the rest of the project, including time to collect community feedback on a draft, and the steps required to operationalize it. I look forward to sharing further information this spring, as the draft comes together.
- Class of 1956 Director of the Williams College Museum of Art Pam Franks and Provost and Class of 1969 Professor of Economics Dukes Love updated the board on an arts programming study and discussed the impact of Covid-19 on museum operations and arts institutions in our region.
- Dean of Admission and Financial Aid Liz Creighton ’01 and Provost Love discussed the role of access and affordability in the college’s strategic planning and reviewed possible changes to the college’s financial aid methodology for measuring family resources, which we expect will enhance our support for middle income families. We will provide more information about any such changes to students and families as soon as the changes are in place.
- Continuing their close attention to COVID and its impact on the college, the trustees reviewed our continued planning for Spring 2021 and beyond.

The agenda also included updates and reports on important operational matters:

- Vice President for Finance and Administration and Treasurer Fred Pudderster reported on the college finances, which are in good overall health, although we will continue to be fiscally cautious in light of the ongoing pandemic and global uncertainty.

- The Board also received a written report from Associate Vice President for Finance and Administration Matt Sheehy on the college's compliance and risk management work.
- Chief Investment Officer Collette Chilton summarized the college's investment activity and endowment performance. As a reminder, [the Investment Office publishes annual reports on their website](#).
- Vice President for College Relations Megan Morey shared information about alumni giving and participation in this fiscal year to date, as well as continuing efforts to engage alumni as partners in our educational mission.
- Society of Alumni president Kate Boyle Ramsdell '97, who attends the Board meetings by invitation, provided an update about our celebration of [the Society's bicentennial](#) in 2021. As some of you may know, the Society is believed to be the oldest continuously operating organization of its kind in the world. I am thrilled that the Society chose to treat this year as an opportunity to look ahead, celebrating the ways in which our global alumni community is becoming ever-more diverse, inclusive and dynamic.
- Vice President for Communications Jim Reische answered questions about a periodic refresh of the college's visual identity. You will receive a campus email with information about the project from Jim and Associate Vice President for Communications Meike Kaan later this week.

Finally, the Trustees voted on several items:

- They confirmed the 2021–22 comprehensive fee. We will provide details when we send our annual tuition letter to students in March.
- They formally approved a recommendation from the [Committee on Appointments and Promotions](#) to promote [eight of our faculty](#) to the rank of associate professor, with tenure, effective July 1, 2021. Congratulations to our faculty colleagues on this important and very special accomplishment!
- They approved amendments to the [College Laws](#) related to the length of trustee terms. These updates will be added to the [online version of the Laws](#) shortly.

As I have noted in past summaries, all of us are missing the opportunities for community connection that were such a highlight of in-person Board meetings. We look forward to the day when it will be possible to hold those gatherings again. In the meantime, the Board expressed their deep gratitude and admiration for the way we have all worked together to keep our community safe, and to uphold Williams' educational excellence in the face of historic challenges. To which I add my own thanks, as well!

Sincerely,

Maud