

Fall 2018 Meeting Summary

The Board of Trustees held its fall meeting from November 1-3 on the Lawrence University campus in Appleton, WI. Ahead of the meeting, the Board was provided with materials to prepare for conversations on campus. Included in the materials were administrative reports from the president's cabinet and the observers representing the Faculty Governance Committee and the Lawrence University Community Council.

The meeting began with a reception and dinner with students on Thursday, November 1. The topic of the discussion was the Center for Spiritual and Religious Life. The university's Center for Spiritual and Religious Life is entering its third year and the dinner conversation sought to gauge the impact of the Center and its mission on the lives of students. Most students reported coming to Lawrence with a variety of religious experiences. Students reported that places where spiritual encounters happen range widely across campus from places like Sabin House, local houses of worship, nature, music spaces, and Björklunden. Though most students reported they felt open about sharing their religious identities, it was recognized that tensions can sometimes arise. Sabin House is a critical space for a variety of conversations around spirituality and religion on campus. Students cite that their spiritual identity has been greatly enhanced since coming to Lawrence and that they have developed connections to wellness and wellbeing through spiritual exploration.

During the meeting, reports were delivered from the President and Chair of the Board. The Board reviewed the President's priorities for the academic year as well as a summary of results from the Campus Climate Survey administered in spring of 2018. Survey findings suggest that there is an overall feeling that the campus is committed to becoming more inclusive but there are concerns about lack of respect for differing social and cultural perspectives, difficulties communicating across differences and an overall stressful culture. Pedestrian Safety was the focus of the Buildings and Grounds Committee. Lawrence continues to work with the City of Appleton to make crosswalk and lighting improvements. The Enrollment Committee celebrated a strong incoming first-year class of 400 students. Lawrence continues to make progress towards achieving a graduation rate of 85% through work with a recruiting consultant in addition to analyzing why students choose to leave Lawrence. The Finance Committee continues to consider program enhancements that can lead to increased auxiliary revenue as well as expense reduction measures to achieve a balanced budget.

In the course of the meeting, the Board:

- Approved the granting of an honorary degree during 2019 Commencement

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for February 13-15, 2019 on the Lawrence University campus in Appleton, WI.