



Town Hall with Dr. Pestello

March 30th, 2015

Introduction by Dr. Pestello:

- ❖ Classy Legacy Program
 - 2017 – over \$9,000
 - 2018 – over \$12,000
- ❖ Alumni giving rate is just over 11%
- ❖ Preparation for the second building will begin in September 2015
- ❖ Strategic Planning Process
 - Numerous groups responsible for advancing it
 - Topical Working Groups working hard
 - Will be taken to the Board of Trustees next month for final approval
- ❖ Clocktower Accords
 - First four points of thirteen – currently discussions to increase funding for African American Study Programs
 - Recruitment, retention, access and success
 - Starting to explore the creation of a center
 - Art work
 - In talks with two brother artists
 - Sponsoring a national conference on racial issues
 - Diversity Speaker Series
- ❖ Atlas Week – Simple Steps, Global Change, Starts with You

Question and Answer:

- ❖ Question: Frost Campus is named after a Confederate General who served in the Confederate Army. This is not representative of the SLU values. Could it not be named after someone else?
Answer: Unsure if the name can be changed. Promise to become more acquainted with history of the name.
- ❖ Question: What is the plan going forward to increase academic reputation? What can we do to have SLU become a national name?
Answer: SLU should be considered one of the top Catholic, Research institutions in the country. One of the first things I did in administrative structure is to separate Marketing from strategic advancement. Both are too important to be smashed together. Secondly, the website will be renovated – old and not indicative of the University. Recently a Harvard Professor Dr. Jonathan Walton spoke praises about Saint Louis University. Important that national figures are talking about STL. SLU needs to be better promoted.
- ❖ Question: More researching opportunities in medical and science fields. How do we diversify research in the Business School and Arts and Sciences?
Answer: Sponsored research has declined. What has contributed to the decline? What do we need in terms of people to get research done

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- ❖ Question: There is currently only one student on the search to replace Father Stark. Will another student be added?
Answer: No, but students will be heard in a number of opportunities
- ❖ You have faced a number of events since your inauguration. How did you handle this?
Answer: There is no script for how to handle such events. It's important to follow values in decisions making. It's important to follow Christ and Ignatius. The Jesuit mission has been the guiding light. It may not be the right place for some, but it is the right place for many.
- ❖ Question: Will you be attending events during Atlas Week?
Answer: Time has been allotted to attend events during Atlas Week. The calendar is a mystery!
- ❖ Question: There is an issue with lack of childcare. What is your opinion on the issue and what will the future look like for this issue?
Answer: It has not been something that has been a central focus. It has been studied in the past but ultimately it is very expensive. This will be included in possible benefits looking forward. From experience at University of Dayton, it is very challenging and expensive to do. It will definitely be something worth looking into.
- ❖ Question: The Deans and Vice Presidents are quite homogenous. What is the plan for adding more diversity in the Dean and Vice President level?
Answer: The main objective is to find qualified candidates and have a diversified pool of finalists. We need to challenge ourselves to diversify the pool in order to increase diversity at all levels. The Trustees are committed to this effort.
- ❖ Question: The student has had several encounters with individuals that are hungry and finds it de-humanizing to ignore people asking for food. The student has offered to buy food with a school ID and the responses were very hesitant. The individuals were fearful of being arrested on campus. How should we feel about this as men and women for others?
Answer: It is hard to believe that the person would be arrested for walking onto campus. Dr. Pestello did not provide an answer as to how to make individuals of this nature feel more comfortable. He asked the student if the student had an idea. The student felt it was important to tell the story so as to improve the situation.
- ❖ Question/Statement: A suggest was made to bring an ice hockey rink to campus. Ice time is expensive and SLU Club hockey spends a significant amount of money on it. It would have economic benefits. Has it ever been thought about it?
Answer: Never thought about it, but we will at least discuss it.
- ❖ Can you please address some key factors that you have identified in attracting SLU employees?
Answer: Phil Alderson – Dean of the Medical School: We try to create an exciting environment. Dr. Varvares was hired by Harvard – a positive development. SLU is seen as a place that improves career. Dr. Ellen Harshman – Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs: The best opportunity to move the university forward is hiring wonderful faculty and staff. We hire for mission. We focus on hiring and retaining employees. We give employees what they need to do their jobs well. Hiring is the most important thing we do. Keeping quality employees here is the second most

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important thing. Michael Luna – President of Human Resources: It is attractive that the university has a new president and a new strategic plan. We hire people that are attracted to the mission as well as the strategic plan.

- ❖ Question: Can you address the question of hiring more diverse candidates?
The university is working hard to bring more diversity and experiences into the University – it requires a serious commitment. Dr. Porterfield – Vice President of Student Development: We talked to preparation programs and developed networks to recruit. We started a mentoring program and created videos. We own up to deficiencies. We are recognized as one of the top places to practice student affairs.
- ❖ Question: You previously touched on the work of art. The statue outside of Fusz Hall celebrates white supremacy and colonialism. It is necessary to take down the statue. Is there anything that can be done to take down the statue ASAP?
Answer: Not much in higher education happens ASAP. The institution will take this note very seriously.
- ❖ Question: Within the strategic plan, is there any program to be added that will allow students to learn about diversity and service in a hands-on way?
Answer: The strategic plan is more general. Dr. Porterfield will take this into account. There have been numerous suggestions and it is a priority.
- ❖ Question/Statement: SLU has strayed away from Catholic virtues and moved more towards political correctness. SLU seems to be taking a liberal stance on abortion and gay pride.
Answer: I have not seen SLU take a political stance – liberal or conservative. I think SLU has been largely inclusive. The Arts & Sciences Department is very focused on Catholic history.
- ❖ Question: With the growing number of options for housing, is there something we don't know? Is there going to be a large increase in enrollment?
Answer: Analyses show that the demand for housing is much higher than what is available. Housing currently is dated. Housing does not meet the pragmatic needs for students.
- ❖ Question: Are you going to address the problem that 41% of the professors here are adjunct professors? What is the retention for professors with tenure?
Answer: There is not anything unusual with the turnover patterns. With respect to the adjunct professors, we are aware they are an important part of the university resources. These are typically people with special expertise. The faculty is very important and their needs are taken very seriously.
- ❖ Question: Comment on the recent raise in tuition. Where is some of that money going? How will the University address students who really want to be here but it is financially difficult?
Answer: Our largest portion of budget is personnel. Our costs have gone up – what we do is expensive. Our students benefit both while they are here and long after. Our faculty and staff help students while at school and beyond. In budget discussions, we have opted to keep tuition increases under 4%. It will be under 4%. We will be using endowment funding and fundraising to be responsible. It is important to take this challenge very seriously. We actively try to keep tuition as affordable as possible.

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Note: Several questions sent by students to SGA via email or via the Google form were not answered due to time constraints. SGA recorded the questions and will be sending said questions to administration who will then send SGA the answers. Once responses are received, individuals who sent the questions should receive emails with the questions and responses. If you have further questions, comments, or concerns, please contact SGA at sga@slu.edu.