

River Campus Board of Managers Minutes

September 6, 2019

Noon in River Campus Seminary Conference Room

Attendees: Rhonda Weller-Stilson, Victoria Rust, Bob Cerchio, Mike Godard and Trudy Lee

Absent: Scott Meyer

Minutes from March read. Dennis Vollink made a motion to approve, Victoria Rust seconded, Trudy Lee accepted; motion approved.

Introduction of new Provost – started July 1, 2019 and is working on meeting everyone and is very excited to interact with each department. He explained he is ‘visiting’ today and not an official member of the board. The next Board of Regents meeting, on September 20, will include an agenda item to approve the appointment of Dr. Godard to the River Campus Board of Managers. Board members made their personal introductions.

River Campus brochures and schedule – Rhonda provided season brochure handouts. She explained it’s hard to determine if ticket sales are up or down since brochures were sent out later this year; in addition, there haven’t been enough events to make an accurate determination. With that said, our first concert, Sundays at Three, had a full house. Upcoming events include, the Symphony Sampler on September 15. It is free to the public and there has historically been an uptick in ticket sales after that concert. Three Musketeers is the opening Theatre & Dance production. Items not in the brochure include ‘Aint Misbehavin’ that will include a guest director. Tonight at Catapult, Amber Cook (one of the Theatre and Dance faculty) who has written a book, will have a show on digital textiles. This is part of the First Friday events.

Recruiting Events – Beginning this Sunday, the college will be recruiting through out the St. Louis Region. All academic areas are engaged with this process and the fairs will be very discipline specific. Chicago and Kansas City job fairs are also scheduled. Recruiting events have helped areas such as Theatre who have their highest student numbers (218 majors) to date.

New Faculty and Staff

- Nancy Palmeri started on August 1st and is the new Art & Design Chairperson. She replaces Caroline Kahler who retired.
- Konika Arora was hired for a one-year position. She holds an MFA in Interior Design and is from India.
- Joshua Newth, a previous instructor, is our new Foundation Review Faculty in Art & Design.
- Blake Sanders, has been hired as an instructor in Art & design and holds an MFA from Tulane
- Kate Stepaniuc has been permanently hired as an Assistant Professor in Mass Media
- Theatre and Dance has a full staff including:
 - Brandon Newton – Assistant Professor of Scene Design
 - Rob Anderson – Technical Director
 - Andrew Lopez – Scene Shop Supervisor
 - Kitt Lavoie – Assistant Professor of Theatre, Acting & Directing.

College Tailgating – The college has purchased football tickets and is participating in pre-game events with the goal of recruiting and alumni relations. We will be at all home football games.

Student Updates – we gauge our strength by our student's successes. A few of the alumni currently making names for themselves are:

- Heather Leslie – (Mass Media) worked for the Discovery Network, and is now part of the assistant director team for a new NBC show, “Bluff City Law”.
- Jose Alpizar – (Theatre and Dance) has recently started a world tour working with Royal Caribbean line.
- (Music Education) - There are currently 11 employed in school districts from Jefferson City to Bloomfield.
- Jay Wade – (current Theatre and Dance student) - has been cast in the Alabama Shakespeare Festival production of *Pipeline*. He is due to graduate in December.
- Jeremy Boyer – (Music) is the St Louis Blues organist

Discussion

Rhonda discussed rankings our programs have achieved in recent months that include:

- Onstage Blog - named us the best theatre program in the state of Missouri
- Princeton Review – one of the Best Colleges in the Midwest
- National accreditations that include: Accrediting Council of Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC), National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD), National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST), National Association of Schools of Art & Design (NASAD), Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA) and Public Relations Society of America (PRSA).

Trudy discussed that her area has been short-handed and will be hiring 2 Associate Development Directors to help with department advancement efforts. In addition, their office is working on new software implementation. The Foundation is also working closely with Student Financial Services to create a means of awarding multiple scholarships. One initiative is to award scholarships earlier in the year and to spread the dollars among many vs. lump sums to a few.

There was discussion on how community members could best help the board. One key area of focus is the annual River Campus Summer Arts Festival. This popular community event hosted more than 4,000 guests this past summer. The university has paid the bulk of expenses to support the program, but it may not be financially sustainable in future years. One concern is that previous sponsors have changed their business models and are no longer supporting the initiative. Future initiatives will be examined at future meetings.

Dennis Vollink made a motion to adjourn, Victoria Rust seconded - meeting adjourned.