

AAWC – Alumnae Trustee
Report of the Wilson College Board of Trustees' Meeting
October 20 – 21, 2017

The Wilson College Board of Trustees met on October 20 and 21, two beautiful days in Chambersburg that did not look (or feel) like mid-fall. The campus was still green, students were out and about (many using the Adirondack chairs and picnic tables our Association donated) and the new streetlights that now outline the campus were wearing their brand new Wilson banners.

While Wilson still has its challenges, overall, things are heading in a positive direction. Enrollment is the highest it has been in over 50 years, with a total of 1,216 students in all cohorts this fall. We are more than replacing the number graduating each year, and retention is good. 58% of the 553 “traditional” students live on campus, so we still have room for more. The student-faculty ratio stands at 12:1, with a goal of 13:1, and class size now averages 15 students, up from 14 last year.

The College's finances remain an area of attention. We received a clean opinion letter from our outside auditors. Certain expenditures are essential, but are being managed with strict attention to the budget. A card swipe system has been installed in two dorms and facilitates the students' meal plan in the dining hall. This system will be expanded to other dorms in the future.

Wilson is proceeding with plans to build a new 6000 square-foot Veterinary Medical Center to replace the current facility that is in very poor shape. This will support our programs in pre-veterinary and veterinary tech studies. Funding for about one-half the cost is in a lead gift or already in our budget. A bridge is to be constructed over the Conococheague to better connect the main campus with the fields on the other side, enabling more use and development of that space. We have a gift that will cover the costs of the bridge. Significant improvements have been made to the lighting and pedestrian needs, as well, including the lights that now run along the outside of campus, improved signage and more parking.

It is early in Fiscal Year 2018, and the requests for contributions to the Wilson Fund have not gone out yet. Therefore, early giving is behind prior year, although more people have contributed than in the past. This year, there is no Lenfest or other matching challenge in place, so we as alumnae/i will hopefully come through with our most generous contributions. To date this fiscal year, the College has received \$813,131 in bequests.

Full year tuition will be held steady for the 8th straight year at \$23,745, but room, board and fees will be increased by about 2%. Thus the tuition, room, board and fees for traditional students residing on campus will be \$36,249, up from \$35,816. The college is transitioning stand-alone fees to a comprehensive fee that includes technology, activity, graduation, and administrative costs. One disappointment in this area is Congress' allowing the Perkins Loan Program, an important part of Wilson's financial aid programs since its inception in 1965, to expire this past September. This was a revolving loan program that afforded low-interest loan funds for students to finance their education, and uses repaid funds to continue the lending cycle to future students. Wilson usually lent about \$500,000 (in small individual loans) each year and this will not be available going forward.

The College is very aware of the importance of meeting the needs of the students and the communities it serves. There are a number of initiatives under way or in the works to increase student satisfaction and retention and enhance overall revenue. The College ran a "LEAP" Program (Learning, Exploring, Achieving and Participating) for two weeks this summer, funded by a Title III grant, for 15 incoming traditional students who were particularly uneasy about coming to college this fall; and it was a great success. The College also moved individuals from the business and financial aid offices to a one-stop Student Resource center, with each student assigned their own counsellor, to assist with payment and financial aid issues and concerns. The new Nursing Skills Lab (in the old Disert/Rosenkrans basement lounge) replicates an intensive care unit and will soon be populated by robotic "patients" for whom nursing students (and others in the health care field) can provide monitored care. The Board just approved a new M.Ed. in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, preparing students with skills that will be needed by an expanding swath of our community.

The College is also moving its athletic competition to the Colonial States Athletic Conference, which will mean less time travelling for our student athletes and more games in areas in which the College actively recruits. We must re-line the floor of the gym to be in compliance with NCAA regulations. A retractable wall is going to be installed to separate the gym to allow for multiple teams to practice.

WCGA president Daniel Kelly reported on the WCGA efforts to encourage students to create memories at Wilson through a variety of activities designed to engage students and encourage their participation in the life of the College – Wilson After Dark (weekly Thursday night programs), Phoenix Friday (show your spirit), and the formation of a commuter board.

The John Stewart Memorial Library was bestowed the Design Excellence Award from the American Institute of Architecture in PA.

Institutional Advancement provided a very preliminary overview of the recent survey sent out to alumnae/i. Of 7,400 surveys sent out, 1308 (18%) were returned and the results are being evaluated. There is recognition that alumnae/i engagement is a precursor to alumnae/i philanthropy.

Wilson College will be celebrating its 150th anniversary soon, with preparations starting for an assortment of events to mark this milestone over 2019-2020. We hope all alumnae/i will make an effort to visit campus at some time during that period to participate in the celebrations.

Finally, the Board of Trustees accepted the resignation of our own Alumnae Trustee Sarah Weikert Wilson '10, who has accepted a position to teach at Wilson. Sue Ann Morin Cook '81, will take her place to finish her term. The Board also welcomed two new Trustees, Margaret Duprey and Patricia C. Shea.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynne E. DiStasio, '74

Judith Coen Grove, '74

Alumnae Trustees