

Questions Posed by The Students, Alumni, and Faculty

To the Board of Regents

May 4, 2017

QUESTIONS DIRECTED TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS

- What initiatives are in place to guarantee diversity of representation within the Board member group?
- How does the Board plan on protecting minority groups on campus from harassment moving forward? On the flip side, does the Board plan on providing racial sensitivity training (or rather what means does the Board think would be most effective in informing both students and faculty about topics of race, culture, gender, etc.)? If so, how?
- Do members of the Board of Regents have any expertise in the study of race and ethnicity from a social and political perspective? How do members of the BoR feel that without these expertise they can make decisions about “diversity” on campus?
- What does the Board of Regents understand by the phrase “Institutional Racism”? Do they think that St. Olaf College has institutional problems that restrict the potentials of individuals of color?
- Will the Board of Regents acknowledge that this institution is built of Native American land?
- How does the BoR currently envision the future of St. Olaf College? Has that changed and if it has how has it in light of student concerns today?
- What sort of policies does the BoR think would be effective in addressing student concerns? How will the BoR try to attract more students and faculty of color to the college?
- When and if policies are agreed upon, how will the success of such policies be measured? Through what means and metrics will the college measure the efficacy of its actions/policies/programs?
- The president mentioned that the Board is not very accessible to the St. Olaf community, how can we change that in order to keep the Board informed about our concerns?
- What sort of policies have the BoR taken in the past to deal with racial issues on campus and what were the results of those policies?
- Many colleges have begun collaborating with each other to find resources that include hiring legal defense teams, discussing ways to support faculty, staff, and students from Muslim backgrounds, namely those from the 6 countries affected by the recent federal travel ban. Has the Board of Regents, on behalf of St. Olaf, considered ways to protect students, faculty, or staff that are affected by the Muslim ban and does BoR have plans in place to counteract future discrimination against them?

QUESTIONS REGARDING RACIAL CLIMATE ON CAMPUS

- Do BoR members know about the number and content of hate speech incidents that have taken place in the past decade? Do they get regular reports about scrawled words on public posters, on social media, and so on?
- How does the Board of Regents intend to increase the amount of severely underrepresented groups, such as Native Americans, at this school?
- How will the Board demonstrate that they're taking our suggestions seriously? Similarly, can we get "progress reports" of some sort?

QUESTIONS REGARDING THE INSTITUTE FOR FREEDOM AND COMMUNITY

- Regarding the Institute for Freedom and Community:
Was the Board of Regents consulted about the appointment of Arne Christenson?
- Does the Board of Regents have any understanding of what role the Advisory Board plays in the functioning of the Institute for Freedom and Community?
Does the Board see its membership in AIPAC as contradictory to the mission of the Institute, which "encourages free inquiry and meaningful debate of important political and social issues"?
 - Because his presence in a lobby that actively oppresses Palestinian individuals, of which we have a population at St. Olaf, seems to contradict the goals of the Institute, as students cannot participate in "free inquiry" when their humanity is threatened.
 - Was BOR aware of the student petitions that were delivered to PDA last spring stating that students do not support Arne Christenson being on the board?

QUESTIONS REGARDING CAMPUS STRUCTURE

- Why are mental health services so scarce on campus? Is this because of a financial constraint? Legal?
- Do BOR members know about POC faculty members and staff who haven't stayed at St. Olaf? Are exit interviews with such people conducted and reported to them? How about POC students?
- Why do tenured faculty get to continue teaching after racially harassing students? What training do faculty receive to accommodate for domestic and international students of color? How much training does the BOR receive to tackle issues of institutional racism?
- How does the BoR view diversity at St. Olaf? Are there things they would change about the way students of diverse backgrounds are recruited? Why or why not?