

GRACE Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
April 1, 2020
2:00-4:00 p.m.
Conference Call

Members present: Bishop David Ricken, Fr. Dan Felton, Todd Blahnik, Bill Micksch, Fr. Patrick Beno, Anthony Cirignani, OFM, Sr. Marla Clercx, ANG, Fr. Deacon Kevin DeCleene, Fr. William Hoffman, Fr. Michael Ingold, Fr. Robert Kabat, Fr. James Lucas, Abott Gary Neville, Deacon Jeff Prickette, Fr. Tom Reynebeau, Fr. David Schmidt, Deacon Paul Umentum, Fr. Mark Vander Steeg

Others present: Kim Desotell, Gerry Faller, Dean Gerondale, Peter Murphy, Marv Wall, Lori Ashmann-Recorder

Members not present: Fr. Peter Ambting, O.Praem.. Fr. Brian Belongia, Andrew Cribben, O.Praem., Fr. Richard Getchel

- Call to Order and Opening Prayer: Bishop Ricken called the meeting to order with an opening prayer of gratitude.
- Agenda Review and Approval: Motion made by Fr. Kabat and seconded by Fr. Vander Steeg to approve the agenda. Motion carried.
- Meeting Minutes: Motion made by Fr. Ingold and seconded by all to approve the November 20, 2019 meeting minutes. Motion carried.
- Meeting Protocol: Fr. Felton provided guidelines for meeting conduct via teleconference.
- Opening Remarks: Bishop Ricken spoke to the historic and unprecedented times that the COVID-19 pandemic is presenting. Encouragement and gratitude extended for everyone's efforts to support safety, alleviate hardship and address challenges. Connecting in new ways is enjoyable and remains imperative as we "Move forward together in Christ".
- Office of Catholic Schools Update: Todd Blahnik reported on work addressing the dynamics caused by the pandemic including hours of instruction, future audits, communication, etc. The Office is receiving updates regularly from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, School Choice and Wisconsin Council of Religious and Independent Schools (WCRIS). GRACE School System pivoted quickly to continuous online learning for which positive feedback has been tremendous. As emphasized by National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), this is our opportunity to show the value of Catholic schools to the community. The GRACE Strategic Plan has made headway and GRACE curriculum integration was commended. A second year of enrollment growth in Diocesan schools has been experienced. The Diocese continues to support larger marketing efforts, communication and sharing of best practices. Catholic schools are in a good position to get through this crisis and looks to an exciting future.
- GRACE President's Report: Kim Desotell presented her report and highlighted the following.
 - Continuous Learning: The learning mode is going well. The timing of Spring Break prompted an early launch. The initial phase of Continuous Learning was tactical involving logistics such as revising lesson plans, deploying materials, etc. At this time, work is transitioning into a phase of walking together with our families. Collaboration, sharing of best practices, crossing disciplines, professional development and excellent teaching and learning despite hardship is happening. A GRACE-wide virtual Mass will take place next week and appreciation was extended to Fr. Reynebeau for his involvement. Financial aspects were summarized. The GRACE Finance Team and Committee meets frequently. Discussion followed including opportunities for virtual fundraising.

- Ten-Year Anniversary: GRACE's 10-year anniversary will launch with the 2020-21 academic year. The anniversary's key messages and timeline were shared.
- Enrollment: Enrollment for the 2020-21 school year continues and statistics on its current status were summarized.

Discussion ensued concerning Hispanic outreach and ongoing efforts to address not only language but also aspects involving technology and culture. Family-focused programming will onset in the future enabled by the outreach grant received from the Bradley Foundation.

- GRACE Board of Trustees Report: Bill Micksch presented his report.
 - Consultors: Continued fruitful conversations continue with this group. Consultors membership was presented for approval. Motion made by Fr. Lucas and seconded by Fr. Ingold to approve the Consultors roster. Motion carried.
 - Parish Investment Summit: Bill Micksch provided a brief introduction after which Fr. Vander Steeg proposed that a parish investment summit of the Directors be held to further discern parameters, formula and guidelines. The Summit will allow for frank conversations among the Directors, provide transparency and support partnership. Upon positive and collaborative feedback on this proposal and further discussion, Bishop Ricken approved proceeding with the summit. GRACE will coordinate the event.
 - Strategic Plan: Good progress has occurred and examples of Focus Area accomplishments were reviewed: Increased consistency with religion instruction across all campuses; better technology in the classroom (which was fortuitous given Continuous Learning), creation of a Facilities Taskforce and exploration of a birth to three-year old Catholic child care program. Discussion followed concerning the Facilities taskforce.
 - Catholic Classical High School: Bill Micksch recapped the Study Team's ongoing work and relayed that a recommendation is being formulated concerning the expansion St. John Paul II Classical School through 12th grade, adding one grade per year. Enrollment and financial projections have been discerned. There will be no increase to parish investment. Kim Desotell expanded on the Study Team's work involving family survey feedback and evaluation of a curriculum model via the Chesterton Network. The school would not compete with Notre Dame Academy and NDA Principal, Patrick Browne, is part of the Study Team. The Study Team is analyzing the financial model, staffing and facility resources and fundraising needs. Work is on track to present formal recommendation to the Board of Trustees and Board of Directors for approvals after which a Proxy would be delivered to Bishop in May. Bishop Ricken encouraged all pastors to weigh in on this initiative.
- Notre Dame School of De Pere Facility: Marv Wall provided an update on the school's construction which continues in earnest with safety protocols in place. Facility is taking shape. Contractors are responsive. Donors remain informed and involved and are happy with the progress.
- Financial Report: Marv Wall presented the current financials. Gerry Faller provided explanation of reclassifications and frontloading of fees. Increased cadence is taking place for managing cash flow as monitoring has become even more diligent. The protocol involving expenditures has changed and work is taking place with department heads and principals to defer, reprioritize or not pursue. Communications are ongoing regarding parish investment and exploration continues on different ways to seek funds via grants and donations. Fr. Felton reviewed the steps and imminent deadline involving the CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program. Discussion followed.
- Bishop Ricken's Closing Remarks: Bishop Ricken encouraged all to persevere and keep moving forward. Concern of losing loved ones is paramount. Reach out to those that are suffering. Pray for health care professionals and all those on the front line. Pray for the sick. All these things need our

attention and pastoral care. It is hopeful that in this year dedicated to St. Joseph that our families learn to pray again at home and learn to be the domestic church enabling our homes to be schools of holiness and discipleship. We are here, and it is a gift.

- Adjournment: Motion made by Fr. Vander Steeg and seconded by Fr. Reynebeau to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 3:31 p.m. Bishop Ricken provided a closing prayer.

Next meeting: December 2, 2020, 2:00-4:00 p.m.