

REGISTRY SEMINAR 2006
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
NOVEMBER 10TH -12TH, 2006

*** * * RECORD OF MEETING * * ***

INTRODUCTION

This year's Seminar, the fourteenth, again attracted a large attendance, about the same as last year at 78, including members, spouses, and guests. The famous Gaylord Opryland Resort provided excellent facilities and services. The theme of the conference, "Global Entrepreneurship", was carried out very well through a panel on international higher education opportunities, a keynote address, and a panel of members describing their new interim assignments. Another panel reviewed the nature of the power that an interim brings to an institution. There was open time for members to interact, and a good number of attendees went as a group to enjoy the Grand Ole Opry radio show on Saturday night at the historic Ryman Auditorium. A closing review by attendees and the printed evaluation forms endorsed the success of the Seminar, and offered suggestions for future meetings, including theme and site.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Jim Fisher, well known nationally and to Registry members, gave the Keynote address entitled "The Role of the Interim President in Setting an Entrepreneurial Culture; Preparing for the Permanent President". As background and follow up on the subject, each member of the Registry was presented with a copy of Dr. Fisher's recent book, The Entrepreneurial College President. For those who wished, the author signed the books.

Some notes on the presentation will appear below also in connection with the description of two of the panels at the Seminar, these being the theme panel on Global Entrepreneurship, and the other, the Inherent Power of the Interim. The entrepreneurial president today, as Dr. Fisher sees it, requires that he/she possess the responsibility clearly known by the governance documents, and respected by both board and faculty. Properly defined, the fit president should be able to develop an entrepreneurial spirit throughout the institution. The key to success, Jim says, is that the president, while setting up solid involvement of faculty solely in an advisory role, with proper delegation to the administrators, clearly must be the voice to the board at all times, and clearly defined. This makes it possible to hold the president accountable for the administration of policy, with the opportunity to present policy recommendations to the board. Jim's underlying assumptions in presenting what he deems to be a good governance situation are several. These are:

- 1) The status quo is always wrong;
- 2) The effective president works ahead of the facts;

- 3) There are many situations, which merit a change in presidential style;
- 4) The condition of higher education in the United States is from poor to lousy.

He related this poor condition to enrollment, finance, curriculum, technology, and governance. Changing these things, he said, requires a strong president. From his research he defined the effective president today as being older, more experienced, mission driven, socially distant, given to new ideas, does top-down planning, is a risk taker, is married, and tends to try micro-management.

In summary he indicated that the successful president today is transformative rather than transactional. In addressing the above in relationship to interim service, Jim indicted his strong support of the logic and potential of interim service. The outside interim comes in with objectives known (we call that expectations); is able to make the board take as much heat as possible; and is able to challenge the situation if the faculty is a part of the decision process, but not held accountable. Bringing that accountability, Jim said, is in line with the 1966 AAUP statement on governance. There was little or no chance to have a dialogue with Jim on his opinions at the time of his presentation, but there was a breakout session chaired by Craig Willis, in which he analyzed the thrust of Jim Fisher's presentation, and elicited some discussion of the implications for the Registry. Later in the round Robin session, there were opinions of various differences with Dr. Fisher's point of view, while at the same time endorsing the need for clear governance documents with clear accountability standards.

THE PANELS

There were three panels, and each touched on the Seminar theme in various ways:

- *Global Entrepreneurship*

Introduced by George Matthews, and chaired by Bryan Carlson, the following presentations were made:

Tom Chionos, who came to the Seminar from Athens, Greece, shared his experiences underlying his current challenge as the Provost of New York College in Athens. There is great need for American style colleges especially in Eastern Europe, and he called upon the need to get help from the Registry and CES. His dramatic presentation made the point that while it is doubtful that American higher education is number one in the world any longer in some ways, it is apparent that the higher education system in the United States has been emulated throughout the world. The efficacy of that testifies to a wonderful worldwide attainment, and one in which we are yet sought after around the world.

Richard Ferrin, who now heads Global Placement Specialists, Inc. in Washington, DC, spoke to the activities in which he is involved. This includes helping American colleges and universities find more students, working in what he called B schools. His group is working to get agreements between China and U.S. colleges, giving emphasis to strong 2X2 programs.

Tom Oates, a new member of the Registry and recent president of Rocky Mountain College in Montana, described his current consulting with Ohio Dominican University. He believes that US higher education needs to get back into Central America, the Caribbean, and Latin America; as well as the Middle East, for example in Amman, Jordan. He stressed the need for college partnerships, which could yield recruitment; institutional agreements for programs, e.g. 2x2; distant learning; collaborative programs, and faculty/student exchanges. Tom also recommended available resources from the U.S Department of State, the U.S. Agency for Institutional Development, and the Organization of American States.

Tom Voss, who has had twenty five years of experience in China, described the opportunities for American colleges and universities by presenting a series of statistical graphs, each of which represent official Chinese government numbers. Taken together, they give testimony to how rapid the growth of China is when considering possible higher educational opportunities there. These reports have been duplicated and are being included with this report along with the other items that were passed out at the Seminar for those of you who did not attend. They represent a mind-boggling situation facing the development and growth of more American /Chinese higher education ventures.

- *The Inherent Credibility of the Interim*

This panel, chaired by Tom Langevin, brought together the combined experience of three Registry members, whose combined services amount to more than twelve Registry interims. They have faced a variety of challenges, including rebuilding governance completely at one place; educating a campus community to get ready for a new president after the service of long standing, successful presidents; serving as interim VPPA/Provost to make strides where there had been languished academic leadership; and saving an institution from closing its doors.

All agreed that the key elements are that the Registry interim comes from outside the institution, has a strong record of accomplishment, will be there only for a short time in order to set the table for the permanent person to come, and comes without any baggage at the school being served. These attributes together offer a great deal of evidence that our Registry members by and large come into an interim placement with inherent power, that is not having to earn trust upfront as would be the case for a permanent person coming in. Each of them described what they did as they began their service with the institution. All stressed the importance of widespread realization at the school of why they were there; making the personal connections very soon; and getting solid communication established with the administration or the board, as the case may be, and moving things along by using the evident power to advance both long term and short term goals in making a clear effort to set things up for the new administrator or president.

- *Reports of Current Registry Assignments*

The panel, chaired by Dick Green, who has done several interims, consisted of members currently serving an interim assignment. This format has been a key ingredient of every Seminar since the beginning. It gives to other members a feel for what each is experiencing in his or her assignment, and how each is meeting the expectations that had been agreed upon by the Registry, themselves, and the institution.

Three members had just begun their services, Bob Miller, Interim Provost at Roger Williams University, Rhode Island; Dick Green, Interim Vice President Academic Affairs at Midland Lutheran College, Nebraska; and Hannah McCarthy, as Interim President of Newbury College, Massachusetts. David Marker, on the other hand, has been the Interim Vice President Academic Affairs at Assumption College, Massachusetts for two years, now going into a third and final year.

Included in the list of challenges involved in meeting expectations for the interim were deep financial, leadership, and governance issues, along with some other dysfunctions. A report of these things is not carried here, because those giving reports were addressing their colleagues with their problems or issues, and their reports are confidential within the discussion. It should be mentioned here that Registry members have agreed to consult with each other by phone or mail and email with our charge to each other, so members on an assignment can call on a colleague deemed to be helpful. The time and program made impossible the exchange that might have been possible, so consideration is being given to how to make the reports more immediately discussed in true seminar fashion within the collegiality of the Seminar. It is agreed that these reports are valuable to the Registry and its members. Various dysfunctions were described in two of the reports, and one emphasized the need to reactivate a faculty. One on the panel voiced the opinion that perhaps the Registry should make some periodic assessment interchange with the person who is serving.

THE ROUND ROBIN

At the concluding session, attendees were asked to fill out the assessment form that had been placed in the registration packet. In addition all present were asked to say what they thought of the Seminar. While there was a strong consensus that the Seminar was very good, here in capsule form are the comments:

- “Substantive and getting better each time.”
- “The interim spouse is important to social interaction.”
- “Very favorable about the program and its substance.”
- “The specific quality of the case studies is of real value.
- “The Keynote address was important and called for more discussion with the speaker”.
- “I appreciate the last two days very much”.
- “The case studies were the central part of the meeting and were excellent”.
- “Always have the case studies to help in candor, and also have an outside speaker on a topic of immediate importance to the Registry members”.
- “I appreciated that this time there was enough time to socialize with colleagues”.
- “There is information and data from the Seminar that should be published”.

- “There could have been more interaction with the case studies, so we could advice the persons reporting on their problems”.
- “There were very valuable diagnostics that could be put into issue form”.

CONCLUSION/ FINDINGS

The Registry principals feed off of the Seminar. It was evident to them that this was great meeting. There was a call for moving the Registry and CES more into the global stage. The examples given in the presentations indicate increasing the movement of global higher education as a response to the reality of our emerging global economy. So it is obvious that the Registry and CES need to move out into this international arena. Jim Fisher’s presentation calls for a leadership style that focuses our interim service in providing excellent transitions to the incoming new presidents or vice presidents. The realization of the implicit power that there can be in interim service was demonstrated in the reports of seasoned members who have served numerous interims. The orientation of new members, while brief, indicated that the new members realize the added incentive the Registry can provide to maintain the high success rate it has earned. It can continue to improve the activity that makes it indeed the premier organization to provide effective interim service that gives it and its members a sense of worth in having brought effective leadership transitions that have improved institutions.

**It has been decided to hold seminar 2007 in San Antonio, Texas!
Details and dates to be sent to you soon!**