

January 19, 2017

Colleagues—

The Board of Trustees meeting was held last Friday and Saturday in Chicago. Friday's plenary session was a presentation on the place of athletics in higher education, and specifically of the place of athletics at Drake. While my understanding was that this was to provide the foundation for making informed decisions about priorities going forward, there was some speculation among BOT members that this topic was a way of setting the stage for either discontinuing the football program or investing more heavily in men's basketball or both. Conspiracy theories aside, it was a good presentation for raising the question of how athletics fit within Drake's mission.

The BOT held their business meeting on Saturday. This was preceded by an executive session which was scheduled to go from 8:00 until 9:30 but which didn't end until 10:45. Apparently there was some contention. Since I was not privy to the discussion, I fact-checked my speculation with President Martin and he confirmed the following statements:

A minority of BOT members are displeased by what they perceive as a leftward tilt to the campus environment.

Part of this displeasure is occasioned by the sanctuary resolution passed by Faculty Senate.

Part of this displeasure is occasioned by a perception that we as a campus are not inclusive of conservative viewpoints and opinions.

The majority of BOT members are supportive of recent actions and directions on campus.

President Martin will make reference to this discussion at Faculty Senate on the 25th but as a preliminary comment Marty has said that "all of this is not surprising given the fractious political environment in the country and there is no call to action necessary. I am confident all will be well on the board."

During the business meeting, the BOT approved bond issuances, approved a building site, and heard reports from several committees. For me, the most remarkable report was from the Board Affairs committee to the effect that the Board has identified several potential members who will add diversity to their membership.

Nancy Reincke
Faculty Senate President, 2016/17