

Attendees

AMBS—Rebecca Slough; Bethel—Bob Milliman (recorder); Lamar Nisly—Bluffton; CMU—Jonathan Dueck (host); Conrad Grebel—Marlene Epp; EMU—Fred Kniss (chair), Deirdre Smeltzer (coordinator, virtual via Zoom); Goshen—Ken Newbold (virtual via Zoom); Hesston—Brent Yoder.

Organizational Notes

- Fred Kniss is chairing the meeting in the stead of his EMU colleague and Marpeck Deans coordinator, Deirdre Smeltzer, who is joining the meeting virtually.
- This meeting is the last one for both Rebecca Slough (retiring) and Marlene Epp (leaving the deanship).

Meditation

Jonathan Dueck led the group in a meditation centering on the theme of “warmth.”

Minutes

- From the meeting of November 4, 2017
- Correction—Page two, second bullet—“Course Development Institute”—, first circle: The following words should appear at the end of the sentence: “funded bi-annually on the year there is no faculty conference.” (Note: See revision to this action recorded below)
- Minutes approved by consensus with the preceding change.

Details on the Faculty Conference Beginning Tomorrow

- Jonathan gave an update on the events previously distributed via email. One of the goals for the conference is to provide the opportunity for the “warmth” about which Jonathan just spoke.
- Question raised: What will center the dean’s discussion at the scheduled roundtable? Answer from Jonathan: Stories of what impact collaboration efforts have had on the participants’ institutions and what possibilities for collaboration exist in the future. Before the roundtable, two points of introduction should be made: (1) Each dean should give a one-minute introduction of the institution they represent and (2) An explanation of the Marpeck Deans group and the Fund they manage should be given.

Budget Report

- A question arose on the identity of the activities funded prior to 2008.
- Research **task** for liaison, Bob Milliman
 - The origin date of the Marpeck Deans
 - The projects funded prior to 2008
 - The governance relationship between the Marpeck Deans and the Faculty Conference

Review of Proposal Guidelines

- Reminder: Due dates for proposals are now March 1 and September 1.
- Question for discussion: Are we satisfied with the review criteria?
- Issue from last meeting was raised again: To what extent should projects be funded that involve sponsoring institutions that are not Marpeck institutions?
- This led to a discussion on the nature and future of the Mennonite Higher Education Faculty Conference (MHEFC).

Nature and Future of MHEFC

- Idea: Consider an arrangement in which the Marpeck Deans meeting is held along with a combined meeting of the MHEFC and the Mennonite Graduate Conference, both conferences currently being held bi-annually. Deans, then, would still meet bi-annually at CIC.
 - If this were to occur, participation in the Graduate Conference may need to be broadened beyond the typical theological emphasis. So, if this direction were pursued, the first step would be to consult with TMTC.
 - Next Graduate Conference is at EMU; next MHEFC is at Bluffton.
- Questions were raised on the future of the MHEFC in light of constrained resources and the fracturing of the US and Canadian dominations.
 - Formerly MEA was the driver of the conference and Marpeck joined as a sponsor. MEA has backed off considerably over the years to virtually no participation at all.
 - Consequent questions:
 - Should the Marpeck Deans keep/assume “ownership” of the Conference?
 - Should the Marpeck Deans appeal to the newly formed Mennonite Higher Education Association (MHEA) for assumption of leadership for the Conference or for its assistance to the Marpeck Deans in conducting the Conference? (Note: See action below on memo to MHEA)
- One of the goals of the MHEFC has been to orient new faculty members into Mennonite Higher Education. This purpose still seems available.
- Fred moved the group back to the original discussion on review of proposal guidelines.

Review of Proposal Guidelines, continued

- Concerning the words “cooperation” and “attendance” in the grant proposal “review criteria”
 - In the first sentence, change the word “cooperation” to “collaboration.”
 - Add the following parenthetical phrase behind the word “attendance”: (face-to-face and virtual).
- Change the date at the end of the application document to June 4, 2018.

Review of final reports from grantees

Sent previously as email attachments by Deirdre Smeltzer

- Mennonites and the Holocaust—Bethel
- Centennial Histories—EMU

All reports approved as received.

Joint Course Development Institute (CDI) in Spring 2019

Questions

- Does Marpeck funding require a new proposal?
- Does Goshen continue hosting CDI, or does it rotate?

Observations

- Rotation question: Rotation would likely promote a better geographical distribution in attendance over time, especially due to costs incurred in transportation.

However,

- Goshen is happy to continue hosting it.
- Driving could help keep costs low.
- Utilizing Zoom-like technology could eliminate transportation costs.
- Funding question:
 - Deirdre Smeltzer will write a proposal for a 2019 Institute, which the Marpeck Deans will fund.
 - However, we will review the results of that conference before committing to an automatic bi-annual funding. This conclusion involves a possible departure from the decision reached November 4, 2017.

Institutional Updates (in reverse alphabetical order)

Hesston

- First year of new president
- Also this past year, filled one vacant vice president position (advancement), yet another was vacated (student development)
- Planning for fall review by HLC for bachelor's of aviation. However, even with this addition, the two-year program will be retained.
- No plans to become a four-year college, but will continue to explore four-year programs that make sense for them
- Ended the two-year program in childhood education. It was the last (with the exception of aviation) of a number of two-year programs once offered. The institution will now focus more on educating students for transfer to four-year schools with baccalaureate programs.
- Only 23% of students are Mennonite, therefore, students, in general, are less likely to transfer to Mennonite schools.
- In the face of these changing demographics (fewer Mennonites), the institution is struggling with ways to deal effectively with students on a spiritual level. For example, most student reviews on this aspect of the school are negative.

- Many faculty searches—20% will be new this coming school year.
 - This item raised the possibility of making a collective attempt among the Marpeck schools to help one another recruit faculty.
- The new president wants to bring back interterm. Reason: It provides an opportunity for cross-cultural travel at a reduced cost.

Goshen

- New president
- Will be bringing in a new Academic Dean, who is also the CAO, in July
- Other changes as well:
 - Human Resources director left; Athletic Director is leaving.
 - VP for advancement left; so there is an interim.
- Two new faculty hires
- Launched Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) with EMU; first cohort begins in January.
- Working on marketing to generation Z
- Growth: Graduate programs, including Master's of Science in Nursing; RN-BSN; Environmental Learning
- Fall: 50th anniversary of SST, international education
 - This creates an opportunity to study its future shape.
 - Suggestion from Jonathan Dueck: Possibility for inter-college collaboration exists here.

EMU

- Launched DNP with Goshen (see above)
- Approval of aviation concentration, in cooperation with a flight school in Lancaster, as part of the management degree program
- First Academic and Creative Excellence Festival, marked by presentations, was a success.
- In the midst of CFO search; possibly will end up with an interim for a year
- Fred Kniss currently is interim dean of seminary, a role that will end June 30.
- This past year, downsized the faculty by 13 FTE (and also the staff), done collaboratively with the faculty senate, using AAUP guidelines—
 - A team of faculty and administrators created criteria to guide the reduction process, with input given by the larger faculty. For example, priority was given to strategic decisions and to diversity versus to seniority.
 - People were helped to land on their feet, e.g., with a generous severance
 - Eliminated some majors and minors
 - Going forward, tenure-track hires are still in play.
 - Merging seminary faculty and Bible and theology undergrad faculties—will merge some courses as well. Direction is fewer and better offerings.

- Lesson: In the end, eliminations are less troublesome than reductions.
 - Input from Rebecca Slough: These situations call for working with the understanding of people's view of institutional culture. Cf. *Engaging the Six Cultures of the Academy*
- Extensive curricular revision underway, moving to four-hour courses—major motive here is to reduce faculty work load
- Considering a divisional structure (with three divisions) to replace the current graduate/undergraduate structure
 - There then would be one dean of students for the University
 - A single faculty will compose each division; and there will be no departments. Instead there will be program directors.
 - Administrative support will work across divisions.
 - Goal: Eliminate duplicated energy, e.g., that created by multiple departments with few (like two) faculty members
 - There will be a dean of graduate and seminary programs in the interim.
- Shift to one convocation every-other-week, based on core values, and worship opportunities on alternate week.

Conrad Grebel

- New president—comes out of the business and legal environments
- Marlene Epp will finish as dean in December.
- A building project on campus is underway.
- This time period is one of heightened tension between the University of Waterloo (UW) and its church-based colleges, including Conrad Grebel. Cause: Faculty of Arts, within which Conrad Grebel resides, is operating below budget, and during a time that UW fashions itself to be a STEM University
- Several program anniversaries occurred this past school year.
- Graduate programs continue to grow; but this growth creates funding issues.
- The College is working with major issues related to Reconciliation Commission recommendations.
 - Many involve symbolic changes, e.g., land statements on syllabi.
 - But, the recommendations also effect curriculum, pedagogy, and research methods.
- United Nations HeForShe initiative—University of Waterloo has been invited to participate. An example of the initiative is a call for allocating resources for more women in faculty positions.
- Curricular change: Students in the arts may now participate in the co-op system.
- Academic Freedom/Free Speech issue at Conrad Grebel: Debates over hosting speakers

CMU

- Jonathan served his first year as dean, and things went well.
- Enrollment around 1,000 for combined campuses, highest ever for this campus—this coming year should be again the highest ever

- A little less than 50% of the students on this campus are Mennonites and the trend is for this number to move downward.
- CMU is involved in an extensive curricular revision following an in-depth process.
- Launching first BS degrees, two in math and two in biology, the latter characterized by inter-disciplinarity—growth in the latter is constrained by available lab space, so the University will likely enter a capital campaign or adopt a selective admissions policy.
- CMU has designed an M.Div. and will offer it in the fall—first one in the Prairie. Opportunities now exist to collaborate with other schools, including AMBS and EMU.
- New Resilience Center on the north campus—It is architecturally noteworthy and gives the University curricular opportunities.
- Have introduced a new method for teaching writing—This result came after following a long development process conducted by the faculty that culminated in a week-long institute focused on teaching writing.
- New hires: Music, Psychology
- MC Canada has dissolved and Prairie Churches—a regional unit—will probably take its place in the life of CMU with a budget line to continue supporting CMU.
- There was a controversy that arose from hosting a Palestinian liberation theologian for a speaking engagement. The result, however, has been the building of relationships with the less-liberal Jewish community in Winnipeg.
- Reconciliation issues (cf. item in Conrad Grebel update): Still need to hire an indigenous individual.

Bluffton

- Lamar Nisly is at the end of his first of two years as interim dean.
- Jane Wood is the new president, starting in July—first non-Mennonite president at Bluffton. She is a Methodist.
- A big general education revision occurred this past year—it started with a provisional proposal last year.
 - It centers around four enduring values, one for year of attendance (i.e., freshman, sophomore, junior, senior).
 - Big addition is the sophomore experience—a five-hour interdisciplinary course
 - Community engagement feature
 - Received a grant for a conducting a pilot of the course
 - Based on ten competencies
- HLC visit in November; so have been drafting the assurance argument over the past two years
- Three new faculty hires for next year
- Theme for the coming school year: Speaking and listening. It will be connected to the summer reading for students as well as to the first-year seminar

Bethel

- There was considerable change under the direction of interim president John Sheriff.
 - New hires: VP for Advancement, VP for Student Life, and Athletic Director
 - Capital campaign initiated for a new Student Wellness Center
 - Actively opposed ceding any independence under the proposed MHEA
- New president, Jonathan Gering, began working on January 29.
 - VP for Advancement, new president's brother-in-law, resigned; so that position is now vacant
 - New president has initiated a process for revising mission, vision, and values.
- New initiatives
 - Center for Teaching and Learning began this past year. Focus currently is on expanding online education offerings.
 - New coaches have been hired; whose recruiting values are more in line with the College's values.
 - Office of Diversity and Inclusion has been approved for startup this coming school year.
- New Academic Programs
 - Criminal and Restorative Justice Certificate was approved; it will offered next school year.
 - Mechanical Engineering is being explored for likely startup in 2019-2020.
- Accreditation site visits for this coming school year: HLC, Social Work, Teacher Education
- Hires: Twelve new hires this past year; two for next year
- Affiliate Director hires (VPAA serves as the College liaison for these affiliates)
 - Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (KIPCOR)—hired this past school year
 - Kauffman Museum—currently vacant
 - Bethel College Academy of Performing Arts (BCAPA)—currently vacant

AMBS

- Rebecca is serving her last year. Successor is Beverly Lapp from Goshen, a music faculty member with administrative interest, skill, and experience.
- Search for Biblical Studies position resulted in two hires, one for 2018, and another for 2019. This search brought to the fore a tension with seeking someone with Mennonite credentials while also seeking to increase diversity in the faculty.
- Agreement was reached with Conrad Grebel for transferring credits earned in obtaining an MATS at Conrad Grebel towards earning an M.Div. at AMBS.
- Increase in international students—there is now a student-couple from every continent
- New academic calendar
 - Eliminate interterm; replaced with two intensive terms, one in May and another in June
 - This schedule lines up better with Goshen and allows for some cooperation.

- Need a director for advancement
- Gave up HLC accreditation—Rebecca is relieved with not having to write two self-studies
- Issue at the seminary: The political implications of the person and work of Jesus vis-à-vis the evangelical message of the saving work of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This issue is highlighted, for example, in discussions on topics like immigration and sanctuary, and bystander training.

Marpeck Deans Membership

- Two schools have both a provost and an academic dean—EMU and Goshen. Are the deans comfortable with both people being members of the group?
- Goshen: Going forward, the dean, who is the CAO, will represent the College. The provost, who is not the CAO, will cover the meeting if the dean cannot make it.
- EMU: Provost Fred Kniss is the CAO. He and the dean, Deirdre Smeltzer, historically have both participated.
- We will continue to function as we have.

Collaborative Opportunities for the Future

- Back office cooperation, e.g., Human Resources, registrars
- Diversity issues
 - For example, with hiring
 - Idea: Sponsor a conference for faculty members of color from our various campuses.
 - They could help us to identify and address structural issues.
 - They also could help us to identify and address teaching and learning issues.
- Cooperative Programs
 - Sociology and MBA are existing examples—they employ a synchronous online delivery mode.
 - Caution: Ongoing work requires significant time and energy.
 - Possible examples for the future: Foreign languages and biblical languages
- Consortial arrangements—Brent Yoder and Bob Milliman shared their experience with Kansas’s independent schools and the College Consortium.
 - The College Consortium provides an electronic medium for the buying and selling of online courses, analogous to Travelocity or StubHub.
 - Member schools can sell “empty seats” in their online courses to other member schools.
 - Completed courses taken from member schools that are part of a Kansas consortium are then transcribed as if they were taken at the student’s school of residence.
 - Online asynchronous mode of delivery
 - This is a potential model for cooperation between the Marpeck institutions.

- Anabaptist Mennonite Scholars Network (AMSN)—Marlene Epp raised this topic
 - This website-based network was reactivated, and notices were sent out notifying people on the mailing list to this reactivation. However, no deans, but perhaps Jonathan Dueck, recall receiving a notice.
 - In the future, the membership fee will be eliminated. So, about \$1,000 per year is needed to maintain the site.
 - Questions: Should the AMSN continue? Is there a champion to keep it going? Would the Marpeck Deans be interested in helping with funding?
- Travel courses
 - Do we need MOUs between our schools to establish student exchanges for these course?
 - Or, perhaps we should simply advertise these courses to students from the various Marpeck schools. These students, then, could take the courses as special students and transfer the credits to their primary schools of residence.

Mennonite Higher Education Association (MHEA)

- Do we need to alert MHEA about the following items discussed at today's meeting?
 - Sponsorship/ownership of the MHEFC
 - Possible advantage to collaborating on back-office staff efforts
 - Joint efforts at facilitating the hiring of new employees, especially for reaching, attracting, and hiring from diverse audiences
- Conclusion: An informative memo will be drafted for consideration by the deans to send to the members of MHEA. **Task:** Fred Kniss will talk with Deirdre Smeltzer about working on this process through email.

Marpeck Deans Mission and Objectives

- It would be helpful to clarify the mission of the Marpeck Deans.
- Goal: A mission statement and explanation of the policies and procedures followed by the Marpeck Deans, and based on founding documents and current practices
 - Such a statement should include current functions such as holding regular face-to-face and email meetings, in order to consider and award grant applications, etc.
 - It could also include expansive functions, such as joint efforts at recruiting faculty and being an advocate for the Mennonite Higher Education Association.
- **Task:** Marpeck liaison, Bob Milliman, will draft a statement for consideration at the next meeting of all the Marpeck Deans scheduled to be held in conjunction with CIC in November 2019.