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Message

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Subject: Dan Kaplan's letter

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December 20, 2004

Dear Al and Antioch Friends,

Thank you for your letter to the Board of Trustees concerning the plans for Antioch University McGregor to move their campus to the west side of Yellow Springs. You raise legitimate concerns, and the list of people who signed the letter reads like a Who's Who of distinguished faculty and alumni.

Let me begin my response by affirming your last paragraph: "we are concerned as you are about the future welfare of Antioch College and the Village that has been its home since 1852."

You and the Board share that common goal. If actions speak louder than words, then the Board's deeds speak at full volume. In the past three

years, trustees (current and former) have contributed \$29 million to the College. The Board's contributions make up 75% of the \$42 million raised to date in the campaign specifically for Antioch College.

As you know, in June 2003, the Board created the Renewal Commission, which spent a year designing a plan for the rebirth of the College. The Plan for Antioch is now being implemented.

The Plan has been described by leaders in higher education as "an opportunity for Antioch to reassert its historical leadership role in American higher education." Ron Crutcher, the new president of Wheaton College, said of the Plan, "This is a bold and innovative plan to transform Antioch College."

What of
Evergreen's?

I share this with you so that you will appreciate my perspective. With a plan, and with the funds in hand to launch the plan, Antioch College is in better shape than it has been in a generation. Our future is far from assured, but I feel good about the huge progress we have made in the past three years.

I know many of the people who signed the letter to trustees have sat in from time to time on Board meetings. You have seen that we literally spend 90 percent of our time on the challenges and opportunities that Antioch College faces. We do so because we believe in Antioch College, and we are committed to it.

At the same time, we are also responsible for five other campuses besides the College. Indeed, we have a fiduciary responsibility to all of the campuses of Antioch University. And so, at its last three meetings, the Board tackled the critical space needs of the McGregor campus. The foundation of these discussions was recognition that McGregor needed more space. In the past few years, McGregor has been turning away qualified students because they were simply out of space to accommodate the demand.

I want to reassure you that Board members asked virtually all of the questions you raise. The Physical Facilities committee and the Finance Committee met numerous times, over many months, spending hours working on McGregor's proposal, asking probing questions and requesting additional background. The concept was vetted.

So, your questions are good ones, and they deserve a response. Below, I want to go through your points, one by one.

Was there adequate consultation with other interested parties, e.g. the administrators, faculty, students and alumni of Antioch College?

McGregor and the College are separate institutions. Their governance is separate, their budgets and administrations are separate. Nonetheless,



the administration of the College (both Joan and Rick) has been fully apprised from the very beginning of the process of examining McGregor's plans. In addition, of course, Village officials and the CIC were engaged in the discussion.

Joan & Rick

With so much open land already owned by the College/University, why go a mile away to the edge of the Village?

The University hired architects and land planners to answer these exact questions. One of the big challenges was that all of McGregor's students drive to the campus, and so parking was a major issue. Even if the space could be found, was it desirable to have to build large parking lots near the College, or to have literally hundreds of cars converging on the College? In addition, the Village of Yellow Springs actively courted McGregor to be the cornerstone of the new "Educational Village" being built across from the High School.

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What will the impact on the College's fundraising in the Miami Valley with McGregor's needed funding to launch the new building?

This question came up numerous times during the course of our debates. We're on the same page with you, that McGregor's fundraising cannot harm the College's campaign. McGregor has and will continue to vet the names of anyone it wishes to approach with the College development office and with the Campaign Cabinet. In the past several years, McGregor has built relationships with numerous corporations in the Miami Valley, relationships that quite frankly the College has never been able to build. So I do not foresee that there will be a fundraising conflict. Indeed, my view is that the doors, which McGregor has opened, are an opportunity for the College to mend relationships in its own backyard.

Why duplicate facilities in a new location when consolidation of existing buildings in the center of Yellow Springs is an available option?

The challenge was and is that the "available" buildings do not match McGregor's needs. Extensive research and due diligence was done on this very question and, in the end, it would have cost significant more to "retrofit" existing buildings to match the needs of McGregor. Interestingly, the Fels building which McGregor will be vacating, may be a good fit for the College's needs in the early years of the roll-out of The Plan for Antioch, because the space needs of Learning Communities can be quite different that the space available currently at the College.

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Why not consider a joint task force to consider the utilization of space on the central campus in the heart of Yellow Springs?

In many ways, this is exactly what the Board did. Because the Board is the "university" board, it must act in the best interests of all the campuses. In this case, the Physical Facilities committee of the Board and the Finance Committee, meeting numerous times, with significant research on this issue to consider, were able to consider exactly what you suggest.

no real info here -

There is a final question which you did not ask, and that is:

How will the McGregor move help the College?

Let me answer my own question by telling you what I said to Dan Young and the Village officials who attended our Board meeting. I reminded them that Antioch College was the Village's largest employer as well as the cornerstone of why Yellow Springs is Yellow Springs. And I added, "I hope that this relationship with McGregor opens doors for Antioch College, with the Village and with the community." And I asked them to consider ways in which they could, as they were doing with McGregor, support the College, either financially, or through bonds. I want the Village to help in the renewal of Antioch College, and I think they will, because a revitalized Antioch College is good for Yellow Springs, for both its quality-of-life as well as its fiscal health.

Dan Young assured me, in front of the Board and the community attending, that he saw the same opportunities and that the Village was very open to working with the College in a similar way.

meaning?

Now, it's up to us – as a Board, as Antioch College alumni and friends – to take the Village up on its offer.

Al, and all the other letter signers, thanks for taking the time to address your concerns to the Board. I hope by this response you will be assured that your questions have been raised, that there are opportunities out there, and that our commitment to Antioch College is shared.

Sincerely,

Dan Kaplan
Chair, Antioch University Board of Trustees