

Philadelphia 11-12-06.
Meeting summary by Toby Delrahim '95

Philadelphia Chapter Meeting Nov 12, 2006 at Chappy Graf's house: -Format: mingle and light lunch buffet from 1-2pm, then remarks and questions from 2:30-4:30pm

-Introductory remarks by Joy Abbot Inkemp '92, chapter president for Philadelphia. She mentioned that this is a difficult time for the alumnae, the college, and the board. She seemed to attempting to maintain neutral role as organizer, and then turned over the momentum and control of the meeting to Jolley Christman, president of board of trustees. Approximately 28 alumnae present. I've replaced particular alumnae names from the audience with just the word alum and their year, since didn't tell them in advance their comments may be distributed on a listserv. If anyone needs particular names, you can contact me - Toby Delrahim (tdelrahim at yahoo . com) or Chappy Graf.

-Jolley Christman (abbreviated going forward as JC, class of 1969)

--1) JC commented on the difficulty of finding chapter presidents and thanked Joy for her work. She said participation in alumnae leadership waxes and wanes.

--2) JC said that this meeting is to address the context of the alumnae, people from the college, and board of trustees to met at this difficult time

--3) JC stated that Ginger Worden could not be in Philly for this meeting, as GW was in Boston earlier this week and flying to the west coast for another set of meetings. JC also stated that Skip Kughn and Heather Garnett (1969) needed this weekend as a break from the many meetings they were attending. JC indicated that she has lived in Philly since she graduated from RMWC, has been on the board as a trustee for 10 years, president of board for 3 years, mother also an alum from class of 1944 (living in South Carolina). JC indicated that she is a social scientist for a living and works in education.

--4) JC stated that she is asking alums much to eliminate what is considered distinguishing features of the college including the name, and single sex, that she was there to ask about and talk about the future, and ensure a viable institution in the future. She indicated that she does not represent the opinions of everyone on the board, but that based on the amount of money needed to fix the college, that she preferred to pursue a viable college for more than 5 to 10 years, and that she thought that single sex was not a good investment.

--5) JC introduced some of the other trustees and former trustees in attendance. Elizabeth Maffey (1983?), a trustee for 3 years, co-chair of the strategic planning committee with JC. EM seemed very pro-change, not much on building consensus. Two former trustees - Madeline Miller - first female president of board of trustees (also responsible for changing the title from chairman to president), and Amanda Jefferson (1964). MM made comments later in the meeting about the difficulty of serving on the board, but how it was a noble struggle, since you felt you were serving an important role as trustee of a women's college.

--6) JC stated that she was asked to talk about how we got to this decision, and that there is "a lot of info on RMWC website" related to that, including KGB's presidential report about financials of the college.

--7) JC said enrollment has been an issue for a good while, peaking in 1960s, with 800+ students on campus, that there are about 600 residential students right now with Full Time Equivalent (FTU) of 715 students including non-residential full-time students but that less income is derived from non-residential students. She stated the last "good" year of enrollment/recruiting was 1985. That Lambeth Clark (interim president after Linda Koch Lorimer) commented on the challenge of enrollment as top issue. Former trustees also aware of challenge that enrollment a problem. She stated that the current context is more challenging, that there is debate if enough women are available to keep all the women's colleges open, with chilly climate where only 3% of women on SAT marked that they would consider a women's college. She said enrollment was down from 1960s with 800+ students down to high 500's residential students, even with the closure of many women's colleges. The remaining women's colleges are struggling with enrollment - all struggling except top tier - needing to attract high GPA and top SAT, larger endowment to be considered top tier, that all 2nd tier facing enrollment problems

--8) JC indicated that they have been doing all that they could, including practice of tuition discounting to maintain enrollment. She indicated that 10 years ago they were deep in conversation regarding strategic goals - i) increase visibility to promote admissions outside of Virginia, ii) attract more diverse students thru tuition discounting, and iii) keep academic excellence. RMWC engaged top marketing companies to do marketing and used tuition discounting to get students. Students are paying less, therefore RMWC is not getting the three-legged stool of endowment/annual giving/net tuition revenue.

--9) JC indicated that she has been asked how RMWC can have a strong endowment yet be in financial crisis. JC stated that the endowment is strong and exceeding benchmarks for growth in the past 2 years. Annual Fund has been traditionally strong - 2.5 times stronger than Mary Baldwin College or Hollins College.

--10) JC indicated that the \$100 million capital campaign included many gifts that are deferred, joking that more people can extend their lives by pledging the college a deferred gift since they seem to be healthy/long-lived. She said that most donors prefer to go towards faculty development, scholarship, and financial aid, not improvements to buildings or PER, that they were unaccomplished/ unmet by the recent campaign. She stated that sports are now stronger than ever and the dance program also strong, that they need the new PER building for the women as well as the men.

--11) JC said "if going to invest this much money then ensure it is a viable institution" to wanted the best research, put together a steering committee composed of faculty, staff, and trustees (including president of the alumnae association on the board). The trustees wanted market research and engaged Arts & Sciences firm which specializes in higher education research to get a strong identity for the college and find out what is distinct/marketable . A&S, based out of Baltimore, was given a "client committee" including a group of faculty, staff, and trustees regarding avenues to investigate. A&S was engaged in fall 2004 and came back with "reported prospective inquiring student respondents" . The news was mixed - identities for global, challenge/rigours academics was appealing but not out weighing single sex as a negative. JC said this was unexpected result/undesired result. JC said the next step for global honors/experiential learning for RMWC was also to look at coed option and do another phase of research. This 2nd phase for "distinct identity" and stay women's college and also look at coed with that identify and ask men and non-inquiring pool

respondents. October 2005, conducted numerous telephone calls during the application process. They could have gotten research that coed was also not viable, so during that time they also looked into what would happen if they closed the college and start a foundation or explore merging with another women's institution, talked about coed. They embarked on case study research and looked at 10 schools - 5 stayed single sex and 5 moved to coed and how doing now, talked to faculty & staff at those institutions in peer to peer relationships - ie admissions staff to admissions staff in departments that would know what types of questions to ask. JC indicated that 1) market research by A&S, 2) case study by faculty and staff, 3) financial model by Chris Burnley - which went thru numerous iterations - all three pointed towards coed, with single sex road not viable after 5-10 years. People looked at this data that wanted to stay single sex, no one in the groups wanted to eliminate single sex.

--12) JC and Elizabeth mentioned their role on the strategic steering committee - that they met face to face every month last year and five times during the summer. Trustees thought that merger may be the answer but that they would lose the campus, lose assets, uncertain commitments to faculty and staff. The "tipping point of this as non-viable option" bumpup of institutional resources with decline in enrolment to pre-merger levels.

--13) Result of that process - vote on Sept 9, 2006, 25 to 2 for adopting new strategic plan.

--14) JC said that she had been asked about her personal journey towards this decision - how did you feel that this was the right decision. She stated the "body of evidence" that they had, work in public education, was that the mission was education, not just women's education, and that the mission is education as a central feature - how to keep this kindof education going, the coed students will have as meaningful experiences as JC and JC's mother had as RMWC students - that is what made the research acceptable to her. She gave a personal experience with her two daughters - one went to Barnard - women's college near Columbia and other daughter went to unnamed small coed college in midwest. She related that her daughter who went to a small coed college had a transformational experience and made many close friends despite always being coed, no women's college background, and that her daughter was elevated regarding women's leadership. JC said she could talk to this daughter and had some shared college experiences, despite not a women's college.

Start of Questions -

-alum (1976), her class secretary, Q1) if the college is in such a critical state, why no town meetings on that subject were called, Q2) consider the nature of trends, that what is popular in surveys now may not be sustainable due to fads, Q3) is the board aware of huge alumnae percent ready to mourn the loss of RMWC rather than embrace something replacing RMWC, comparison to removing the saltiness of a dish that removing the distinctness can ruin the recipe - receives many emails as class officer that indicate alumnae are angry/pulling support. JC - Q1) Perspective on why no townhall meeting prior - the trustees assumed that everyone saw that single sex overall was in decline and recent reports that resurgence for certain populations in primary and high school have not matched college level interest. JC indicated that it was a communication issue - they assumed that people understood that media, children, trends, and the A&S research of random sample of alums. JC - Q2) many may decide not to give in the future (ie, younger grads), decide not to continue to give, or may give more to support the change. Do trustees know the percentage of alums that will decrease - no, but hope that people change their minds, some came back, especially at men's colleges that went coed. Murmurs from audience that many know of folks changing their wills. JC said hope that some will change their minds, other said could be too late. No response to the nature of fads.

-alum (1949), stated that based on her experience as educator from 1974 to 1984, that the best students from her school went to Wellesley, Vassar, etc but that by the end of her time teaching that only 2nd tier students were going that couldn't get into ivy league. I commented that the question should not be on the quality of students recruited, but on the outcome of what is achieved with students that enroll - with high production rates of PhDs and students especially appreciating the benefits of going to a women's college by upperclass years. Several people talking, also mention that tough to enroll top students.

-alum (1969) - long comment regarding her experience as professor at RMWC from 1992 to 1999. She related that during a reunion while visiting RMWC, she found out there were no faculty members to teach voice lessons for the following school year. She graduated with a degree in music and had gone on as opera singer and educator, and worked as a part-time faculty member, with no consideration of her status as alumna, commuting back and forth from Philadelphia down to Lynchburg, little support as out of town coming down to teach. She stated that when she was a student there, there were up to 8 full time music faculty and that it had dropped down to about 2 part-time faculty based on impressions from administration that few faculty were needed. When CSG and other faculty wanted to go out and recruit students in the arts, they drafted brochures but were not supported to get students for their program. She indicated that talented voice students at Sweet Briar, where she would go out to teach master's classes, could have been recruited for RMWC. She had to lobby for them to create a full-time position at the college for the music department. She then related experiences with a visiting artist from Africa that stayed at the college one year, regarding the fiscal irresponsibility of the college - that it provided the president a mansion, that Linda Koch Lorimer also had a nanny, a driver, a cook, a housekeeper - stuff that a potentate in Africa would not have, excessive for a small liberal arts college. She indicated that LKL was not a struggling administrator, her husband was also a well-paid lawyer, that he chose not to commute and they divorced. She indicated that she had access to world class vocal coaches when she was at RMWC, but that due to less enrollment that therefore less faculty, but they did not allow the faculty to attempt to recruit more students. CSG and concert pianist Ray Luck put together brochures and asked to go to fairs and recruit but were not supported. She then asked a question - Q1) Please confirm that the operating deficit has been \$3-4 Million, above 5% of endowment for 2006, numbers she had from emails. JC said those numbers sound about right. CSG then stated that she had a New York Times article from July 5, 2006 regarding international students at RMWC and the 10% of overall enrollment that most of these students had discount rates of 50% or higher (article available with her for people to read). If prospective enrollment is 1200 students and 20% male, how will that be accomplished and how is Sweet Briar and Hollins doing better. JC replied that Hollins and Sweet Briar also fragile with endowment below \$100Million - they had just raised over \$110Million but still not raised overall endowment above \$100M due to high spending rate and deferred gifts, relying on new programs like engineering program, equine science, with enrollment moving in the right direction. She "admires their president and faculty, wishes them success", not wanting to make an investment like them. she stated Hollins has a very different history due to graduate programs - spending rate also high. Agnes Scott has the Coca Cola endowment money and located in Atlanta which is a bigger market.

-alum (1970, former trustee) - Q) How many years for men, how much to spend on gym/dorms to get value from the change? She then gave a strong resonating speech that had many alums clapping and assenting. The college is dying and what to do with the future of the college - could the trustees have acted faster. They had a role as watchcarers - now saying that RMWC is dying rather than try to

revive it. She believes the trustees must honor that dying or dead organization, to support that school/identity, while groups, the curriculum, rather than competing with even much larger top tier coed colleges and still the drawback of being in Lynchburg. She iterated that she went back thru all her college mailings, to see if she had missed something, some signal that this was coming, wanted to see if there was some indication they would go coed, but had seen nothing. If RMWC is closed down, this group of trustees with no intravenous support or treatment will have killed the college, said "you are dead." Is the will to value the entity and now have those values or goals take our money/assets/ curriculum - what assurance that the problems in Lynchburg are resolved - what share with you that gives comfort level this will not occur again in a few years. JC - research that A&S did does not predict number of students that would enroll - just predict number of applicants, not yield rate. We looked at the low/medium/high scenarios, compared middle scenarios and the middle and high scenarios for coed were better than single sex. She said they hope to get 25 males for next year, then in 5-8 years, have 25-30% male, but that these males would increase female applications.

-alum - she indicated that it is a daunting job to be a trustee, never been an easy job. She said it had a noble purpose when a women's college - change the mission of the school that profoundly. She believes passionately in women's college benefits and indicates that other alumnae had children with poor experiences at coed and former women's colleges including Goucher. She said RMWC had something important - hates to see this college become a 3rd tier college. She said that a huge percentage of giving alums are upset that assets of the college are squandered, many already changed wills. There is a will to make it better and better presidential leadership is needed, look at the incredible publicity. Elizabeth Maffey (1983) from board of trustees responded. EM indicated that she had assessed that the culture and value of the institution, and challenged herself to attribute the benefits to being a small college with good faculty, not a women's college, and that if coed is a problem elsewhere, they would do it better or right, and had some statements about how women deserve resources for their athletics. JC talked about cost of going coed - how to integrate. She said the initial costs are low except sports, which is mostly the cost of coaches. I commented that the cost of the proposed changes for athletics amount to \$10k or more per male student, with diverted resources from academics, some other comments regarding providing tuition discounting for 3rd tier males, lowering standards. Some murmurs about selling assets that are educational/ academic to support going coed including museum art. Discussion that is only under consideration by the board, but that is similar to double-speak when coed was a prime consideration but masked as an option.

-alum (1995) - had some comments related to books she had read that indicated many other colleges that were considering going coed and had gone coed considered and planned more thoroughly and opening, working with key stakeholders. Alum mentioned that that resources devoted to RMWC to stay a women's college exceeds the endowments of numerous existing women's colleges, including many that have better enrollment, and that it is wrong of RMWC to take the money and assets donated and switch to coed without attempting to save the college. Alum said that "I would rather have those assets distributed to save many other women's colleges," that importance of women's colleges is the impact they have on women students in their outcomes, not reliance on incoming student assessments of SAT/GPA, that RMWC is highest PhD producing institution in VA per capita for women. That women would not get the same result in a coed environment. EM stated that with the same faculty, a coed college should get the same academic preparation. Alum stated that academic experience is not just from professors but from peers and exposure out of class in activities and study groups and that this would result in lesser experience for women students in

coed entity. Q) Asked why the strategic planning process is not open with comment/review and 80 page planning documents and meetings and open committees like other colleges. JC indicated that the college is run by the administration and board and that other parties are not involved in running the college.

-alum (1976) - She stated that this is a trust issue, that there is no sense that the board of trustees have acted as trustees in the interest of the college. That it was their job to let us know that they were in dire straits, that she attended a reunion in 2004 where this was not mentioned, just some info that some of the buildings needed repairs but not the enrollment issues or endowment etc. KGB had addressed that infrastructure that things were falling apart in buildings, the college neglected alums as a resource. She works at a school and had emailed admissions that she could volunteer without any response. JC responded that it is "a huge disappointment to all of us that this happened on our watch," but that the level of support for the college has been so high, that extra resources would have been marginal since alums already supportive.

-alum (1972) - talked about 1970s about recruiting , fairs, book awards, that they only made an incremental difference, as many women entered the workplace that there is less time to help, few of the 3% women that consider a single sex college due to minds closed.

-alum (1957) - stated that she has told many friends that she attended RMWC and talked about the college, but has slipped in its ability to attract best students, that she would accept change if proud of the college otherwise close the doors rather than be ashamed of what it turns into. Said that better to try something now with resources, as women do not go to women's college, she would be disappointed if people pull the plug on donating to the new entity.

-alum (1960) - Stated that she has seen a lot of data from the board and from PEC - you say enrollment for Full-time equivalent in 1988 versus 1994 and other data can be interpreted many ways, why can't the board not step back and give all these other ideas a chance? Is that the board things people will think less of them if they allow more time for inspection and working together? Why is the board afraid to say let's give it some more time, let the folks that feel passionate to give them a chance. She then talked about how her daughter applied and got a fabulous unsolicited scholarship, but enrolled at Goucher College due to a boyfriend, and what a soulless, mixed up institution that is - with young men setting fires to furniture and disrespectful, no identity. She stated that we have to target the right women, the college used to thrive on alumnae support. EM stated that the college has had a balanced budget for 2-3 years running after \$1-2 million cuts "to the bone," that there is misinformation on administrative costs and how many administrative costs are related to development offices. She stated that the cost of raising money is approx 14 cents per dollar at RMWC, while the cost at peers is approx 17 cents per dollar. JC indicated that RMWC retained the increased development staff after the last capital campaign to continue fundraising.

-alum (1998) - stated that much of the high discounting is related to international students. She said she had never received a response to requests to volunteer for admissions, is there a model for what the new college will do better? JC - stated that financial situation needs marginally higher discount rate, that the higher retention rate for international students results in a better net tuition revenue despite their lower revenue per year. JC said terrible that no one followed up with her to volunteer and made a plug about the involvement of alumnae in a program called "ACE". JC said that they are looking to schools like Wheaton (Mass), Vassar, some coed colleges, some former men's colleges, visiting their colleges to gather info

-alum (1979), host of the party and multiple generate alum family, Q1) What is the relation between the college as a financial institution and the alumnae? 2) What is the relationship from Muriel Casey House, who owns it - the alums or the college?, Q3) Please speak to Jane Houfbourger' s resignation letter that she could not support possible move to an administration-run "office of alumni relations" to replace the alumnae organization. JC - wish that "Allison" was here to provide more info. Muriel Casey house is owned by the college based on money donated to the college. EM - there could be two alum associations - depends where your heart is, people have their memories. The lack of a campus for reunions was part of her reason against a merger, what if that place is not there. She seemed concerned with the physical structure of the campus in relation to memories.

-alum - is the college on tract for new president? JC - hope to have someone with experience with change/transition. Difficult process due to financial challenge of the college, not just change to coed and lawsuits etc. She stated that they hope to have some hired by summer 2007.

-alum (1968) - asked about Linda Lorimer on the steering committee and what is her stance. Several people said she knew the landscape is difficult but is not a supporter of this decision.

-alum (1958) - Is there a reason that we could not wait and begin in 2008 to plan and find way to act? JC - once interested in going coed, it is "done the next year" due to recruitment. JC implied that no one plans this out and implements more than a year away.

My thoughts on the meeting - I was not impressed with the comments that JC was convinced by a "body of evidence" that has been kept secret. The comments that they have made regarding financial statements and declining enrollment at the time of the decision have not matched research and mixed messages at the meeting where they stated that they have balanced the budget for two years running, the endowment is performing above benchmarks, and Full-Time Equivalent levels of enrollment are higher than several years ago. Still seems like a marketing/admission s issue to me, where tuition discounting is substituted for marketing on strengths/distinctiveness. No apparent support for idea that by tapping into resources with alumnae and faculty and friends of the college that anything could possibly be done that has not been done, or do anything better. No acknowledgment of the publicity opportunities that RMWC has received in the national press, unwillingness to take anyone up on offers to help.

I saw no ideas originating with this group of trustees - all their ideas revolved around visiting other institutions and copying what they see or are told. The market for coed applicants to small liberal arts colleges is even more cluttered and competitive, and I don't see then acknowledging problems with their curricular offerings or accommodating the growth market in older female students and non-traditional students.

These particular board members were intransigent, not willing to work with alumnae or other people on any topics. The style of "leadership" is hierarchical, with messages imparted to possible donors, not participants in the life or survival of the college. This is one of the things that I am most ashamed of this group of "leaders" - no sense of the importance of working together, openness, trust, collaboration. Examples of women's colleges that are adapting and meeting their goals - Wellesley, Mt Holyoke, Sweet Briar, Hollins - all have processes open to improvement and change

to meet new challenges while preserving the missions of their colleges. This group seems more concerned with their own status associated with a tier 2 academic college than the adaptive strategies to preserve or save the college. They are willing to kill the college to "save it", changing the name, the curriculum, going coed, hijacking the assets and faculty of the college, without realizing that what they are doing results in changing all the key distinguishing characteristics of the college. Within another 3-5 years, when the Reading program is gone, the riding center, and the Maier, with new buildings, new names for buildings, maybe they will realize that even they have nothing to go back to - when they are invited to a homecoming filled with sporting events, have alumni bulletins that have a new name all over them. When female daughters of alumnae transfer out due to the soulless character of the college - similar to daughters that have attended Wheaton, Goucher, etc where the new institution is so different from their mother's stories and expectations that they have left.

I will rely on the lawsuits by PEC to make a difference. I've already made multiple contributions to the legal fund, and look forward to seeing the results of those efforts. A fair number of people wore the carrot pins and signed Charlotte's petition statement. I think the time has passed for any metaphorical "carrots", and that we have moved into definite "stick" territory. In the meantime, I don't think that there is anything that can be done to reason with people that cannot be engaged in negotiation. I encourage people to give generously to the legal fund. If you were going to give any money in the near future to RMWC, I recommend you give that amount directly to the PEC legal fund now while it can make a difference in the outcome.

People going to the future BOT roadshow meetings may also want to bring a visible dichotomy of some carrots and sticks and ask the board which they would like to take at the end of the meeting.