

Response of the Religious Life Framing Team

1. College's Purpose:

Martin Methodist College, as an institution of higher education related to the United Methodist Church, has as its mission to:

*provide undergraduate educational programs grounded in the liberal arts and sciences that are designed to prepare students for future careers and lives of continued learning.

Is it time to rid ourselves strictly of the undergraduate label?

*promote a diverse learning community that nurtures intellectual, spiritual, social and personal growth;

Is spiritual/religious a better phrase than just spiritual?

*serve the region and church through educational, spiritual, social and cultural programs.

Again spiritual/religious phrasing

Is region appropriate or is it Tenn. or is it southeast?

Add continuing education programs

2. College's core values:

Theological Virtues come into play in terms of key values with concepts such as Tolerance; Truth; Non Violent; Open mindedness; Global Citizenship; Faith; Ecological Sustainability; Justice; Mercy; Healthy Relationships; Nurturing etc..

3. Key Opportunities:

One of the concerns of this committee was how to continue and sustain our "church relatedness" which was deemed as very important by this committee. Martin has been recognized as a leader in this area even as many within the Martin community don't view Martin as being all that "church related." Listed below are the recommendations coming out of the committee, many of which are already occurring at Martin Methodist BUT not at many other church related institutions.

We are excited by the concept of themed housing that has recently begun at Martin

4. Key Challenges:

A concern of this committee was the lack of intentional religious space. The committee urges the institution to try and address this situation given all of its other needs by building a Chapel.

Another concern of this committee was the growing need for significant counseling and therapy for students that cannot be provided by the chaplain. We do not believe the chaplain should become strictly a therapist.

Keeping current Thursday Chapel Time as “sacred time.”

5. Methodology of Engaging Identified Key Opportunities and Overcoming Key Challenges:

Admissions

- *Continue the recent push toward identifying and recruiting more United Methodist Students, esp. from Tennessee
- *Have someone in Admissions responsible for recruiting UM students and working with UM agencies and organizations, such as local churches
- *Continue the support of the Ben Alford Scholars program AND look toward enlarging it with the addition of more scholars (work toward 4 to 5 Alford students a year. Add a special scholarship for Hispanic UM students.

Financial Aid

- *Continue to give UM students significant financial aid, including expanding the \$2,000 grant to larger amounts, such as ¼ tuition or ½ tuition.
- *Publicize better our children of UM clergy person discount (50%)
- *Continue to keep financial aid personnel up to date on all available UM financial aid

Trustee

- *Make sure at least ½ of all Trustee members remain active UM clergy and/or lay persons (currently 40 of 44 Trustee are United Methodist)
- *Keep the Bishop of the TN Conference as a voting member of the Trustees, as well as any retired Bishops that reside in the TN Conference

Key Positions

- *Continue keeping UM in key positions at the institution including: President; Chaplain; Director of the Center for Church Leadership; And at least one member of the Religion Faculty

Center for Church Leadership

- *Continue the support, including financial, of the mission of the Center for Church Leadership and encourage them to continue to develop networks and relationships with leadership within the UM Church and esp. the TN Conference.

Development

- *Continue the support and expand the Church Partner Plan

Convocations and/or special observances

- *Ongoing support of convocations that lift up our UM relatedness including Religion and Race, Christmas Service, Baccalaureate etc.

Religious Services

- *It is the belief of this committee that intentional worship ought to be provided on a weekly basis. This may necessitate the claiming of a weekly time (not just bi-weekly) when classes and other meetings are not schedule.
- *Explore the development of religious fraternities and sororities on campus

Academic program

*The ongoing attention to the needs of the church and how the academic program might be able to address those needs and concerns such as a Church Music program or a Pastoral Leadership degree or perhaps even Masters Programs.

Summer Programs

*The committee believes the opportunity exists for a tremendous expansion of the summer programming related to the church. However, this may mean a restructuring of the priorities of the summer program from previous programs to a preference for UM related programming.

Religious Freedom

*Continue the idea that all persons, whatever their faith or lack of faith, continue to be admitted to and/or allowed to work at Martin and supported in whatever ways appropriate

For immediate consideration is the “reclaiming” of all “chapel” space on campus, however small that space may be.

We encourage the exploration of the development of a large chapel where religious life might be based, as well as many of the gatherings of the institution such as commencement.

The development of such traditional religious space such as labyrinths should be explored and developed.

We would recommend that the college move toward a full time counselor on the staff

That more than the current three sessions be provided for free, perhaps as many as six

That students can get the counseling service themselves – this may have occurred with little fanfare this fall (without the recommendation of the VP for Student Affairs or the Chaplain as is currently the situation).

Currently we have Thursday Chapel seven times a semester and while one is not suppose to schedule meetings, make-up tests, athletic practice etc. at this time it is often ignored. We would like to recommend chapel time on Thursday be considered sacred time where even maintenance staff can have that time off and not have to make it up. Perhaps even the front desk phone can have a message simply saying the college community is current at worship, we will be returning phone calls at 10:15.

6. Broad Goals:

There was also considerable conversation about the need for Martin to move toward more technology in its teaching and in providing computer lab space that would be available at least until midnight most nights. Additionally there was concern that our “remedial programs” needed to be expanded. These concerns were a little outside of the preview of the committee but we want them to be noted.

7. Financial Implications Associated with Goals: