

**THE BISHOP JOHN S. CUMMINS INSTITUTE  
FOR CATHOLIC THOUGHT, CULTURE AND ACTION**

**Board Meeting, Tuesday, 13 December 2005**

**MINUTES**

Present: Bishop Cummins, Frances Sweeney, Carole Swain, Alexis Doval, Dan Cawthon, Sister Ingrid, Jeannine Chavez-Parfitt, Zach Flanagan, Patrick Downey [ for Henning], Jennifer Pigslet [for Janet Luce], Ron Olowin, Steve Woolpert, Brother Donald.

1. Brother Donald opened the meeting with a prayer at 3:10pm.
2. The Board reviewed and approved the Minutes from the November meeting
3. Anna Nabokov, Pamela Thomas, and Father Thomas McElligott reported on the Cummins Institute sponsored conference: "A Sacramental Community: Women, Spirituality and the Arts. They reported that the primary goal of the symposium was to provide an opportunity for the College to join as a sacred community and acknowledge scholarship, explore contemporary perspectives and honor creative achievement. Nine faculty and staff joined ten additional symposium presenters. There were over one hundred SMC students. A written report was submitted.

Several Board members who attend some or all of the symposium sessions praised the organizers for their good work and celebration of Mary. The Board also encouraged the organizers to consider a similar event in the future.

4. The Board reviewed the application for assistance from Sue Fallis, January Term Director. After a lengthy discussion, the Board unanimously decided to award a grant in the requested amount of \$2,750.

It is worth noting that some of the discussion focused on the amount the Institute has contributed to social justice activities. Frances Sweeney remarked that social justice is a strategy which animates the Catholic intellectual tradition as well as the core traditions of the College. Perhaps, she suggested, it would be worthwhile to engage in a dialogue on social justice, what do we mean by social justice? Bishop Cummins noted his concern for social justice, but that it must be more than simple activism; it must include an intellectual component. Several members noted that perhaps the reason the Institute sponsors so many social justice activities is that there are more members of the College community who are interested in social justice than other type of activities and have taken responsibility for organizing events. If there is a concern, perhaps it should be that there has not been satisfactory responsibility taken by the College community to organize other types of activities.

5. The Board broke for Christmas refreshments and conversation.
6. The Board discussed the recommendation that from David Gentry-Akin that the Institute organize and sponsor a conference similar to the one sponsored in June 2005 with Monika Hellwig as the principal speaker. David suggested Larry Cunningham as the principal speaker for June 2006. The Board agreed, in principle, to organize a conference in 2006 and asked Brother Donald to pursue the matter but with the concern for curriculum development as a possible focus of the conference. Depending on the final focus, the principal speaker will be selected.
7. The Board reviewed and discussed the responses to the Spring 2003 Questionnaire. Brother Donald distributed a list of some of the remarks from the Questionnaire to begin the conversation. Comments included:
  - + How would we respond to the questions now, in 2005?
  - + Would we ask the same questions now?
  - + How are we helping the College to promote its Catholic identity? What are we doing other than supporting activities with funds?
  - + Can we be resources for departments, Program Review Board, Rand & Tenure as they assess work being done by faculty and staff to promote the Catholicity of the College?
  - + What can we celebrate and build upon?
  - + How can we provide the occasions for campus-wide conversations about the Catholic identity of the College?
  - + How can the Institute influence curriculum?
  - + How can we be intentional about faculty development?

In discussion these points, it was agreed that:

1. The Institute is ready for an office space. Brother Donald will pursue the matter with Brother Ronald
2. The February meeting will be devoted to each member sharing what s/he is doing and how it relates/promotes the Cummins Institute's mission. The Board will also discuss the appropriateness of awards for those who have advanced Catholic higher education/Catholic social teaching at the College. This meeting will be an extended meeting:
  - 3:00pm Begin Meeting
  - 5:15pm Join College Mass
  - 5:45pm Join SMC Brothers' Community for Social
  - 6:15pm Dinner
  - Continue sharing and discussion

3. In light of the five year assessment on *ex corde ecclesiae* which will be conducted by the American Association of Catholic Higher Education, the SMC Board of Trustees, and the Christian Brothers, the March meeting will include time for discussion on the apostolic letter.

Brother Donald adjourned the meeting at 5:00pm after wishing everyone a safe a blessed Christmas holiday.

There is no January meeting. Next meeting is Tuesday, 14 February 2006; with the extended schedule noted above.

Respectfully submitted,

Brother Donald Mansir, FSC  
Chair