

In the spring of 2014, three Alumnae Trustees served as representatives of the AAMC Board of Governors on the Mills College Board of Trustees:

Melissa Stevenson Diaz '91 served on the Trustees' Education Policies and Personnel Committee and the Campus Planning Committee.

Diana Odermatt '60 served on the Trustees' Advancement Committee, Enrollment and Financial Aid Committee and served as Vice Chair of the Student Life Committee. Diana completed her terms of service as an Alumna Trustee in June 2014.

Molly Fannon Williams '75 served on the Trustees' Advancement and Enrollment and Financial Aid Committees.

In her role as AAMC President, **N.T. Lucy Do '75** also serves on the Board of Trustees and on the Advancement and Student Life Committees.

The full Board of Trustees met on Thursday, May 15, 2014 at 9:00 am. The central focus of board discussion was an in-depth consideration of the College's financial condition.

A number of routine items were approved at the meeting, including the appointment of Grant Thornton as both auditor and tax partner.

The new brand platform for Mills was presented by the College's branding firm, Ologie. Ologie began partnering with Mills in December 2013, meeting with more than 100 individuals to explore how the positioning strategy recommended by the market research firm, SimpsonScarborough, could be expressed in a way that would be authentically Mills. Ologie also led creative workshops with students, faculty, staff, and the Cabinet to identify the best-fit student for Mills and the right creative tone and personality for the brand platform.

Ologie developed the following creative brief to inform the college's external communications:

Mills College brings intelligent students together with accomplished faculty in an environment that is *highly individualistic* yet *intensely inclusive*. The elements blend to develop *creative, independent thinkers* and *powerful communicators* who *inspire action* as leaders in their careers and communities.

From the brief, Ologie recommended a creative phrase for Mills, “Make a statement.”

Reports were heard from board committees: audit, advancement, campus planning, committee on trustees, enrollment and financial aid, finance, investment, student life

Of interest to AAMC was the introduction of Tanya Hauck as vice president for institutional advancement who spoke about her goals, including the development of the alumnae database, expansion of the prospect pipeline, focus on the Bay Area philanthropic and corporate communities, and outreach to internal and external stakeholders. It is her intent to help make people understand the “secret jewel of Mills” and to be sure that we are marketing Mills effectively. Her focus will be on opportunities to promote general engagement and effective communication with alumnae.

Current Campus Planning Committee projects include the ADA/DOJ compliance audit; annual maintenance under renewal and replacement work; Lisser Hall renovation; the Art Museum grant; the campus farm; the Laurel Access to Mills, MacArthur, Park and Seminary (LAMMPS) project; and public safety.

The Committee on Trustees facilitated the following actions:

- Re-election of Kathleen Burke, Mei Kwong, Maribelle Leavitt, John McDonnell, Irene Panagopoulos, and Linda Cohen Turner for terms beginning July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2017.
- Election of Lalita Tademy to the Board of Trustees as a Trustee for a three-year term beginning July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2017.

- Ratification of Judith James '74 as an Alumna Trustee for a three-year term beginning July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2017.
- Election of board officers for the 2014-2015 year: Kathleen Burke, Chair; Karen May, Vice Chair; Marianne Sheldon, Secretary; Carrie Milligan Hall, Assistant Secretary.

The Enrollment and Financial Aid Committee voted to approve the new transgender admission policy which has subsequently attracted positive media attention to the college for leadership on this issue.

The Finance Committee facilitated an important vote related to the colleges fiscal state: The Board of Trustees authorized the Finance Committee to continue to work with the administration to bring forth a balanced budget for FY15, based on financial best practices, to the Board of Trustees for approval by June 30, 2014.

The Board reconvened by teleconference on June 3, 2014 at 10am to review financial actions for the college which reflected a balanced budget by June 30. Discussion included enrollment, compensation, staffing, effects of budget cuts on student life and curriculum, and alternative revenue opportunities. Following discussion, the Trustees approved the recommendation of the Finance Committee to approve the FY2014/15 operating budget.

Following the May and June board discussions, email updates were sent to all Trustees from President DeCoudreaux. The first, sent on Tuesday, July 15, shared news that due to the impending budget restructuring, much uncertainty and concern existed on the part of staff and faculty, and campus morale was low. A memorandum was sent out to the campus on Friday, July 11. Once the news had been communicated and the restructure and budget decisions explained, President DeCoudreaux reported that she received many comments that the decisions are logical, and there was a general sense of relief that the work of the layoffs, eliminated positions, and budget cuts was behind the campus community and that they could now move forward. A memo summarizing the actions related to the budget restructure is available to be shared with the Board of Governors.

President DeCoudreaux also reported in the July email:

- Exciting progress was being made on planning for our Women in Public Service Project Institute on “Women, Water, and the World: How Women Can Solve the World’s Water Crisis,” to be held at Mills from April 11-20, 2015.
- On May 14, 2014, our adjunct faculty voted to be represented by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). As such, the College is required to engage in collective bargaining negotiations this summer with the union.
- The Wayne and Gladys Valley Foundation responded to the college’s proposal for renovations to Lisser Hall with a grant of \$1,250,000. This represents the largest gift from Valley that the College has ever received. “While this is less than we had hoped to receive from the foundation, I am pleased that our project inspired this tremendous investment from the Valley Foundation and am grateful for the role each of you played in positioning Mills for success with this important solicitation.”
- Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students Eloise Stiglitz informed President DeCoudreaux over the summer that she will be retiring effective the end of October and a search for her replacement was scheduled to begin as soon as possible. Eloise has been at Mills since February of 2013, following an extensive career in academe.

Also during the summer, Liz Parker ’85, chair of the board’s advancement committee, shared via email the final results for the College’s FY14 fundraising efforts total \$9,472,221 – we surpassed our goal of \$8,500,000 by 11.4 percent.

In August, a second email update was issued by President DeCoudreaux on the subject of staff salary reductions. She reported that Mills will not have furloughs this year as we have had during the last two and a half fiscal years. Instead, we have decreased the salaries of all staff members by 1.2%, beginning on September 15 and continuing through the end of the fiscal year. Staff members will have three additional days off, with pay, during which they are not to perform any work for Mills.

Again, President DeCoudreaux shared that morale was very low in view of recent layoffs and the salary reduction. She stated that she and the Cabinet members were working to manage the situation as best they could, and that an update will be provided at the October Board meetings.

In late September, Trustees received the unfortunate news that enrollment was not as favorable as had been expected and that Mills' enrollment reversed the overall growth trend it was enjoying for the last few years. The total headcount dipped to 1,548, retreating to the 2012 level, mostly due to smaller incoming classes and lower than anticipated retention of undergraduate students. The retention rate for first to second year was 71 percent, which for Mills is a significant low.

The total fall 2014 headcount is comprised of 922 undergraduate and 626 graduate students. These figures represent an overall enrollment decrease of 4 percent from last fall—a 7.5 percent decrease in undergraduate enrollment and a 2 percent increase in graduate enrollment. Of the entering undergraduate class, 188 are first-year students, a 13 percent decrease from last fall, and 109 are transfer students, down 7 percent. The graduate headcount of 626 exceeds our budgeted goal and includes 291 new students and 333 continuing regular students, one student here on cross-registration, and one auditor taking a graduate course. New graduate enrollment decreased 3 percent from last fall, but continuing graduates increased 8 percent. Unfortunately, this lower than expected total enrollment will have additional implications for the budget.

Report submitted by Molly Fannon Williams '75