

## **Los Angeles Meeting Notes, 11-16-06**

### **Notes By Roxy MtJoy '04**

Attended: Ginger Worden, Heather Garnett, Skip Kuhn, Elizabeth (trustee), and Chris (Burnley?), and 15 alumnae.

As promised, here are my notes/impressions from the LA meeting last night. I apologize if they are lengthy; I just wanted to be thorough.

First, there were 5 official college reps there: Ginger, Heather, Skip, Elizabeth (a trustee), and another guy I think was Chris. I surprised how many came. There were about 15 alums (not counting the college reps), about half of which were personal friends of the official delegation, including one woman who only attended for 2 years before transferring out. The remaining alums were all against the coed decision. I think only about 3 alums (myself obviously not included) knew of either the PEC or the listserv, which surprised me. Many were surprised (pleasantly) that lawsuits had been filed.

Now, onto the actual talk. Ginger started off by giving a timeline of the strategic plan and then she took questions.

- 1) The first question was from the alum-hostess who wanted to know how supportive alums could help with New U. Honestly, I didn't exactly write down or care much about the response, but if you are interested in helping, Ginger said to watch the website.
- 2) An alum asked how much money it would take to save the school and the response was 250 million dollars. Another pro-coed alum said that that would be pointless because it would just be an investment in a bad business plan (single sex education). Hmph.
- 3) Someone pointed out that our attrition rate has always been high and Ginger countered that, while that was true, it was for different reasons. It used to be when someone left they still felt tied to Macon and would give \$\$, but now when people leave they never look back. I found that interesting given the rather young alum who was there that left after her sophomore year. Seems she still cared.
- 4) I pointed out (in response to some remarks that Elizabeth made that RMWC has always been the best and we had the opportunity to be the best at making this transition) that certainly, we did have that opportunity, but they failed in that regards. I stated that while I and many other alums would always have been heartbroken at the thought of coeducation at Macon, we could have grown to accept it had the process included us and had been open, if there had only been a genuine call to arms. If we had been given the chance to fight for our school and bring innovative ideas to the table and still coed was the only option, we would grieve but we would also accept. Ginger and Elizabeth apologized again for their methods and said they'd endeavor to do better in the future.
- 5) When the subject of adding more practical majors came up, Ginger said to do that with the school as it is now, they would have to shut down other departments.
- 6) There was some debate with Skip as to whether or not alums at Macon give at a high rate.

- 7) Regarding the art: Ginger and Elizabeth said they were taking a hard look at every asset to how they best could be used in the education of students. Ginger said "we are not a museum." They also said the riding program is safe.
- 8) They tried to explain global honors, and the general consensus among the alum is that is basically applying a label to what we already do.
- 9) When asked about the traditions, Elizabeth said no one thing defined RMWC and that "nothing is sacred." Meaning, while she valued our traditions, they couldn't let them prevent them from moving forward.
- 10) When asked about potential ramifications on the Honor Code, they said they hoped and believed it would remain intact and that only the PEC said otherwise.
- 11) Ingrid (our chapter president) pointed out several major flaws in our marketing to students and many others chimed in. We also gave numerous examples of alums offering to volunteer and never hearing back. Heather and Ginger seemed genuinely surprised to hear this.
- 12) Finally, the new name will be announced 12/9 at 2pm EST. Ginger says she is hopeful the new name will include either Randolph or Macon.

That wrapped up the remarks/questions. They brought handouts about global honors and their response to the PEC's 20 Reasons (most I think have never read the original document, though). All in all, a generally respectful and impassioned evening. I don't know that I really learned anything and the large official delegation certainly surprised me. If you have any questions, let me know.

[Here is the follow up to the name issue]

According to Ginger, here's the deal with the name:

- 1) We can't use BOTH Randolph and Macon, but we can use one or the other.
- 2) Initially, according to some research by a professor (who is actually very much against going coed, btw), Misters Randolph and Macon were not upstanding fellows, so the naming committee did not want to name New U after them. However, alumnae wrote in and said that was ridiculous, that there were other people by those names AND that has been a part of our name for 115 years. So, the naming committee reconsidered. Hence, Ginger being hopeful that one of these names will be used.