

Loma Linda Opts for Single University With Two Campuses

by Ronald Graybill

In a three-day meeting at Palm Springs' Wyndham Hotel, the Loma Linda University board of trustees voted 33 to 3 to maintain a single university under a single name, but to give each campus greater autonomy. The meeting, held August 27-29, voted for a slimmed-down board of trustees that will meet twice a year to handle major policy issues. Two smaller executive committees will meet monthly, one for the Loma Linda campus, one for the Riverside campus. Two chancellors selected by the board will be the chief operating and academic officers on their respective campuses. The reorganization, which will take effect January 1, 1990, will allow the campuses to apply for separate accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

The board unanimously re-elected Norman Woods to the presidency of the university, but his job description will change as he takes on greater fund-raising responsibilities and becomes less involved in the day-to-day operations of the university. The university's chief financial officer will be the only other administrator positioned above the chancellor level.

The board's decision was something of a surprise since key members had earlier spoken of the prime importance of protecting the entities on the Loma Linda campus, where sentiment for separation was strongest. Norman Woods, in his report

to the Loma Linda campus faculty, explained the board's decision as an outgrowth of the Adventist emphasis on Christian unity and cooperation. Given those values, he said, board members "just couldn't get their minds around" the idea of separation. Other board members indicated their concern about the impact of separation on the Pacific Union, which already has difficulty carrying the debt burden of Pacific Union College.

Riverside campus provost Dale McCune, in comments made to his faculty the day after the board meeting, said he believed a meeting between Neal Wilson and the Riverside campus administrators prior to the board meeting played a role in the decision. The administrators pledged to help end the constant gossip, suspicion, and criticism that has plagued the university in recent years.

On its first day of deliberation, the board received a detailed report from a consulting team headed by Gordon Madgwick, executive secretary of the church's North American Division Board of Higher Education. The report listed the pros and cons of six different options ranging from the status quo to separation. Ironically, opinion surveys and interviews revealed that a majority of the faculty still favored consolidation as an "ideal," but most said it was politically impossible at this point. Several board members credited the near-unanimity of their vote to the Madgwick study, even though the study made no specific recommendation on which option should be chosen.

In his report to the Riverside faculty after the board meeting, Woods described the past three years as difficult ones for him and his family, especially because of criticism from the Riverside campus. He said that before the board meeting he had believed that separation was the only viable option left for the university, in part because past decisions involving the two campuses had usually split the board nearly in half. Nevertheless, Woods said he was optimistic about the future of the Riverside campus, both because of the potential endowment bonanza from property

Ronald Graybill, associate professor of church history and religion at Loma Linda University, was elected by the faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences on the La Sierra campus as their moderator. He also served on the university-wide strategic planning committee reviewing all plans for consolidation.

holdings, and because of the strong mandate from the board in support of a single university.

The board asked Woods to set up search committees on the two campuses to make recommendations regarding chancellors. The committees are to report to a special board meeting called for October 4 to meet in Silver Spring, Maryland, during the General Conference Annual Council. The search committee on the Riverside campus was selected and set to work immediately. Chaired by Woods, it contains four other administrators, as well as four faculty representatives, from the various Riverside schools.

The process of selecting a chancellor on the Loma Linda campus will be slower, since the post must first be defined in relation not only to the president and the deans, but also to the medical center, the medical and dental faculty practice groups, and the vice-president for medical affairs. According to Woods, these relationships will be important in the future because financial realities demand that the health science schools be more closely tied to the medical center.

Riverside campus' reaction to the board's decision was predictably favorable. There had been widespread fear that total separation and the loss of the university's name would lead to serious loss of students and faculty. On the Loma Linda campus, reaction was more restrained. A departmental chairman spoke of a "sense of heaviness" as he contemplated the delicate task of working out the details of the board's action. Practical decisions must be made concerning the future of entities presently located on both campuses, such as the graduate school, school of religion, records office, and library. On the other hand, one Loma Linda campus administrator was "enthusiastic" about the future, believing that the board's mandate gave the university some long-needed direction.

The school of religion's potential fate is illustrative of the difficulties. The school has thus far been based equally on the two campuses, with the dean's main office on the Loma Linda campus. Faculty meetings are held alternately on the two campuses, and many professors teach on both campuses. If the campuses are to be separately

accredited, where will the school of religion find a home? One administrator suggested basing it on the Riverside campus and allowing the Loma Linda campuses to hire its professors on a contract basis as they were needed. The school of religion opposes that concept because it would consign religion to a "hired-hand" status on the Loma Linda campus and could lead to a decline in the role and viability of religious training there.

Whatever presence the school of religion has on the Loma Linda campus, comments from vari-

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ous campus leaders indicate that they want it to be distinctly related to the health sciences. Areas of emphasis, they believe, could include chaplaincy, spiritual growth for health professionals, medical ethics, science and religion, and the Adventist heritage in health and healing.

The driving force behind the reorganization move has been the decision by the accrediting body, WASC, to place the university on probation. The new configuration is meant to address several of the WASC complaints. The smaller board of trustees for the entire university will be chosen so as to avoid conflicts of interest, meaning primarily that the members of boards of competing institutions will not sit on the university's board. There is also talk of decreasing the size and constitutional authority of the constituency, since WASC believed the constituency held powers that should reside in a more responsible and active board of trustees.

WASC also cited Loma Linda University for paying most of its professors on the Riverside campus at parity with their external peers, while others, primarily on the Riverside campus, were paid some of the lowest university salaries in the state. Separate accreditation will address that issue to some extent, but WASC also said in its report that such low salaries made it difficult for the Riverside campus to attract qualified professors.

Since low salaries are a problem shared by all

Adventist colleges, the General Conference called a meeting for September 11-12 to study pay scales at North American Adventist colleges and universities. One suggestion was to sever professorial from ministerial pay scales. Another was to peg Adventist college faculty salaries at the 40th percentile for private, church-related institutions. Yet another idea was to allow for area-specific cost-of-living adjustments. Loma Linda University would profit from the latter since the cost of housing is so much greater for its professors than for those in the Midwest or South.

The financial outlook of the university was

brightened in recent weeks by the maturity of two multimillion dollar trusts and by a sooner-than-expected flurry of bids to purchase a parcel of residential land the university holds in Banning, California. A substantial portion of the recently acquired trust funds has been used to swell the university's endowment. The potential infusion of funds from real-estate developments, the prospect of a president working nearly full time to build the university's endowment, and the willingness of the General Conference to restudy salary structures all inspired hope that the university's financial problems were on the mend as well.