Inside...

President Christ  
Get Fit Smith  
Staff Council News  
Wellness/Benefits  
Campus Center  
Montage  
The Last Page  

Upcoming Events:

April 18 - Weinstein Dedication  
April 27 - Poetry Center Dedication  
May 13 thru 16 - Commencement  
Reunion I  
May 20 thru 23 - Reunion II
Staff Council Chronicle

When Laura Rauscher invited me to write a letter for the Staff Chronicle, I thought long and hard about what I wanted to say. We are now in the midst of a financial planning process to restore equilibrium to the college’s budget. It is in many ways a painful process—a process that creates anxiety as we weigh cuts against one another, each with consequences for programs and people.

I am committed to solving the budget problems that we face this spring. Although the medicine is bitter, we will take it in a single dose. We can then begin our next academic year with the assurance that we have restored equilibrium to our financial plan.

The plan is more than a way to eliminate the deficits we face. It supports Smith’s priorities: the continuing excellence of the academic program; the financial aid that provides access to Smith for a diverse student body; market-competitive compensation for faculty and staff; and the renovation and repair necessary to keep our facilities in excellent condition.

At its February meeting, the Board of Trustees had a series of intensive discussions of the proposed financial plan. It made several decisions that are routine at the February meeting. It set the comprehensive fee for next year at 5% above this year’s level; it approved salary increase pools for faculty and staff. It discussed a proposed new benefit—a retirement health insurance program for faculty and staff—about which we hope to reach a decision by the May meeting. It approved the plan and a budget for a new science and engineering building across Green Street, and it approved an allocation of $3 million for subsidies for building projects to replace the affordable housing displaced by the new building. The Board felt confident about these investments because they felt confidence in the college’s financial plan.

This plan has emerged from the work and counsel of many of you as we have thought hard both about our priorities and about the details of how we do business. That kind of rethinking is difficult; I am grateful for the creativity and good spirit that staff and faculty have shown in challenging times. Our former Board Chair, Shelly Lazarus, wrote to me recently, “Retrenchment is not easy. It requires more creativity and energy than managing in buoyant times, although you can often get more fundamental change.”

I thank you for your help as we confront these challenges together. Although they are hard, our success in meeting them will make Smith stronger.

THE NEXT 3 STAFF COUNCIL MEETINGS WILL BE:

Thursday, April 1, from 12-2, in the Mary Maples Dunn room.
This meeting will be devoted to a training session “Leading Through Change” led by Carol Bevan-Bogart. Staff who would like to join us need to contact Merrilyn Lewis by March 29 to reserve a place. mlewis@smith.edu ext. 2630

Thursday, May 13, from 1 - 2:30, in Neilson Browsing Room.

Thursday, June 3, from 1-2, in the Mary Maples Dunn Room.
Joint meeting of old and new Staff Council members.
Olin Fitness Center Facts

- **1600** Square Foot Skylight
- **33** Aerobic Machines
- **4816** Square Feet of Space
- **40** Light Medium And Heavy Weight Lifting Machines

The $4 million Olin Fitness Center doors are open thanks to the generosity of the Spencer T. and Ann W. Olin Foundation in honor of Barbara Olin Taylor ’54 and Judy Olin Higgins ’58. The new facility, designed by Leers Weinzapfel Associates of Boston, bridges the gap between Scott and Ainsworth gymnasiums and is a sight to behold.

Director of Athletics Lynn Oberbillig is thrilled with the new center. “We had a chance to reach for the stars and build for the future, and that’s just what we did.” The fitness area is filled with high-tech video options to go along with the state of the art machinery. At least 30 pieces of aerobic equipment will have individual TV screens. The wall leading to the skylight will double as a very large video screen, and two large flat panel televisions will feature cable television, training videos and demonstrations.

Along with the much needed improvement in the facility, Oberbillig had another plan for the Olin Fitness Center, to attract and retain first-time exercisers, whether they be students, faculty or staff. “We want it to be friendly, open and welcoming, because people are often intimidated by exercise equipment. Getting them over that barrier is important,” she says. After a conversation with Judy Olin Higgins, it’s easy to understand why the Olin Fitness Center will not only improve and maintain healthfulness, but will also be a meeting place for the entire Smith community.

Judy arrived at the Smith campus via Miss Porter’s School (Farmington, CT) in 1954. During her time at Farmington, she was an active participant in interscholastic athletics - concentrating mainly on field hockey. Judy was amazed to find that Smith did not have intercollegiate teams, but instead, had house and class competitions.

In order to satisfy her need to be on a team (as she lived in Tyler house, very close to Scott Gym), she decided to join Lifeguards (the Synchronized Swimming Club) which was a source of great enjoyment during her four years at Smith. In fact Judy was awarded an “S” pin in her senior year for excelling in both athletics and scholarship. Judy went on to earn a master’s degree in teaching and special education and embark on an 18-year career as a teacher and developmental learning program coordinator in the Lower School at Greenwich Country Day School in Greenwich, Connecticut.

When asked how athletics fit with the educational mission of schools, Judy explained her thoughts on this issue are based more on the athletics experiences of her children, rather than her own. Judy and her husband Bill have six children. Their son Michael is currently at Concord Academy, coaching and working in the Admissions Office. He was a superb athlete who also happened to have a learning disability. “You can see all sides of a student through athletics,” according to Judy. “It [athletics] teaches one to be a team player, teaches discipline, and puts one in good stead.” When asked what motivated her to give this generous gift, she responded, “My husband and family are very active and I understand what a difference having fitness as a part of their life means to each of them.”

She believes fitness facilities offer a great deal to everyone particularly for non-athletes, not only for the healthful effects but also the social aspect. “A fitness center is a great place to meet people and to gather. It does great things, especially for the needs of schools and colleges.” Mr. and Mrs. Higgins have also funded facilities and equipment at the Loomis Chaffee School and the University of Vermont.

As Judy approaches her 50th reunion at Smith College in 2008, she is amazed how far the College has come in terms of athletics—from house and class competitions to success at the intercollegiate level. Times have changed, and thanks to the Olin Foundation and the Higgins family, Smith College athletics and recreation programs are soaring.

“**We had a chance to reach for the stars and build for the future, and that’s just what we did.**”  

Lynn Oberbillig
Early spring greetings! As one who has tired of winter’s cold, slush, and ice, I am eagerly anticipating the change of seasons. Although I welcome this change, it is not without its unpleasantness (mud, April snow storms, cold rains) like all changes in our lives, whether welcomed or not.

Interestingly, at a recent Umass workshop I learned that with change there is a beginning, middle, and end, but the order is reversed. We experience the end first—the end of the situation as we know it, the end of the familiar. As with any ending, we also feel a sense of loss, usually several different types of loss. The most common ones are security, competence, relationships, territory, identity, and sense of direction.

The middle is often the most challenging period because everything is ambiguous. Final decisions have yet to be made, questions are still unanswered, and plans cannot be firmed up that permit people to move forward. Anxiety may feel like a constant companion or at least a frequent guest. Once we work our way through the transition, we arrive at the beginning of the new phase with all its possibilities. Optimism, a positive attitude, and recognizing there will be a period of adjustment (a learning curve) serve us well as we complete this cycle.

Of course, life is not linear and does not unfold neatly. So, we may move in and out of these periods several times. One day all will seem fine, we have a good attitude and things seem under control. Then the very next day anxiety can return full force, and a sense of uncertainty or loss of a relationship may hit us hard.

I explain all this in a (very) roundabout way of encouraging us all to be kind to one other during this time of change. We each struggle with this process in our own way, and some days are better than others. Understanding and compassion coupled with patience and an ever-present sense of humor will benefit us all.

Thanks for the good work you do on behalf of Smith. It’s a privilege to work with you.

Merrilyn Lewis
Chair of Staff Council

What issues do you think Staff Council should be exploring in this year ahead?
Make Comments to: mlewis@smith.edu
Or
Merrilyn Lewis
Alumnae House Ext—2630

Throughout the year the Nominations Committee has been actively involved in identifying and forwarding names of individuals to serve as representative on various campus committees. In September, the Nomination Committee nominated Michelle Finley and Ann Finley to the Committee for Sustainability and also nominated three individuals to CCCP, Patricia Swan, Jan Cole, and Carrie Hemenway. Recently the committee received many excellent nominations for a position on the Campus Center Advisory Board. Sabrina Marsh was nominated and accepted. The committee is preparing for Staff Council elections in May. Nomination forms will be sent out in March for individuals who would like to become a member of Staff Council.

Merrilyn Lewis
Chair of Staff Council
Feeling Overwhelmed, Anxious, Stressed?
The Smith College Employee Assistance Program can help.

By Charissa Maguire

What is the Employee Assistance Program or EAP? It is a free benefit provided by Smith College to help employee's work through life's challenges. The program, offered by The Wellness Corporation, is a confidential and voluntary counseling referral service provided free to employees and members of their family household. Employees and their dependents are each eligible for six sessions, per issue, per calendar year.

The EAP helps with issues like: anxiety, grief, communication problems, drinking or drug use, domestic violence, marital/family concerns, mood swings, depression, parenting, stress (at work or home, or financial), work issues, suicidal thoughts, etc. You can call The Wellness Corporation toll free at (800-828-6025) and identify yourself as a Smith College employee or dependent. The staff will help you set up an appointment with a licensed counselor near your home or workplace. You can call during regular business hours, Monday through Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. and 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday, or if the matter is urgent, call anytime, twenty-four hours a day, even on weekends and holidays.

If you think you may need more than six sessions and you have Tufts Health Plan, you may ask The Wellness Corporation to help you set up an appointment with a counselor who is also a Tufts Health Plan provider. Then after six sessions through the EAP you can utilize your Tufts Mental Health benefit and continue to see the same counselor. (If you have questions please contact Tufts Member Services 800-462-0224 or Human Resources 585-2270).

The Wellness Corporation has recently added a new comprehensive work/life website, which covers a multitude of subjects from physical and mental health, college planning, automobile and home, financial questions, child and elder care and much more. The site is: www.wellnessworklife.com.

To log in to the website, register by clicking on the box on the left that says, new members register here and choose a user name and password. For registration purposes, your Company Name is: Smith College. Once you have successfully registered, you will be granted full access to the site. You will only need to register once. This site is Voluntary and Confidential.

If you have questions about the EAP please contact Human Resources at 585-2273.

Activities Committee

Activities Committee has been busy planning and conducting a variety of events throughout the year. Some of the highlights included a New York City bus trip which was attended by 47 people, many of whom were Physical Plant staff. The Holiday Cookie Swap was a success, though busy holiday schedules kept attendance lower than anticipated. While the Halloween Potluck did not take place this year, it is being considered again for next year. The book exchange and food drive were both successful this year. A casino night is planned for sometime in the spring as well as additional bus trips to Mohegan Sun in April and NYC again in May. Planning group volunteer activities is also a priority for this spring and several proposals are being considered.

Personnel Policy Committee

The personnel policy committee has been meeting with HR on a regular basis to discuss the impact of budget cuts on jobs. Concerns were raised about limited term employees and their lack of eligibility to apply for internally posted positions. Suggestions were made to extend the time during which employees who leave the college could apply for internal postings. Timelines for all employees to find out about their employment status is targeted for May. Committee members also discussed limitations and advantages of the severance package that is guaranteed to all full time employees. Some feel it is limited while others noted that it is generous relative to comparable employers. To explore the feasibility of possible enhancements, senior staff is reviewing the severance package. HR is creating an information packet for staff whose jobs are being downsized or eliminated to assist them in navigating through the internal posting process, providing information about CDO support in job search and writing resumes, and also providing resources from Franklin/Hampshire County job retraining.
**Rumor Buster**

**Rumor:**
The Smith Club charges a user fee for events held at the Facility that does not include RADS catering.

**Busted:**
There is not a fee to use the space—only the Rads catering costs.

Betse Curtis
Catering Manager
Dining Services

**Contributors**

Writers:
Kim Allen
Charissa Maguire

Group Photographs:
Judy Roberge

**Special Thanks**
Peg Pitzer
Merrilyn Lewis
Dennis Crommet
Chris Gentes
Lori Nault

**Cover Exposure**
The Staff Council Chronicle editors are calling all artist to submit their work for cover consideration.

**The Don’ts**
Controversy Photos

**The Do’s**
Good Taste Digitized

All submissions will be considered for the Summer issue of
The Staff Council Chronicle
lrausche@smith.edu
fshelton@smith.edu

---

**From cocoon forth a butterfly, as lady from her door.**
**Emerged – a summer afternoon – repairing everywhere.**

Emily Dickinson – Part Two: Nature

---

**Campus Center Butterfly**

I have to admit, I too was very skeptical. Early on, the tenor of the workplace conversation was disparaging at best. Mild cynicism had been a consistent component from the rejected architectural design at the beginning to serious budgetary considerations toward the end. From this spectrum of doubt a beautiful Smith College Campus Center has emerged.

Days after arriving at 76 Elm Street as a new employee, I oscillated from contemplating an orderly evacuation to yelling out, “run for your lives!” The quaking ground loudly gave way to the foundation and steel skeleton of a new building that consumed what were once valued employee parking spaces. Eventually, a structure began to take shape – and a very different kind of shape indeed.

During construction the Smith community were quite imaginative in describing the new and imposing Elm Street edifice. Some questioned the shape (“it looks like the hull of a ship”), others wondered why there were only portholes and no windows. But when an image of the finished building was posted on Elm Street, it was way different from what we were seeing. At that point most thought either architect or contractor had completely missed the boat.

Yet a change was meticulously taking place - a slow and steady metamorphosis. Just as a caterpillar gives no hint of the majestic beauty it will become, our Campus Center masked its true beauty until the end of summer.

When I returned from vacation in late August, a colleague asked if I was going over to see the Campus Center. I explained I had already done the plastic yellow hardhat tour. After she informed me that the Center was now opened for students, faculty and staff, we walked over. First impression: Wow!

On a cloudlessly clear morning, walking inside the building was not much different from walking outside, if one were to excuse the walls. The ceiling was cerulean blue. Later that day, the sun shone so brightly through the glass topside that some of the students wore sunglasses. I am eager to see what wonderful aesthetics the Campus Center will provide on a clear starlit night.

---

I began to better understand that visionaries see more than parking spaces and windowless walls.

And how might it look with a full, bright near-yellow moon providing its unique and shadowy illumination? Looking up, I wondered what would be the sensation of seeing rain falling or the first snowfall. The bright, colorful cushions and furnishings inside the Campus Center are dramatic when contrasted with the pure white background.

The walkways consist of gentle curves – nothing too abrupt or too rigid. Many doors and interior walls are glass - lessening the private space/public space dichotomy. The tri-level complex is mostly an inviting mixture of new age and retro. The beauty of this Campus Center Butterfly is less evident outside the building.

As we walked out the front, I noticed the chiseled tribute to Ruth Simmons from the Smith College Board of Trustees for her help in building bridges of understanding. I began to better understand that visionaries see more than parking spaces and windowless walls.

Landscaping and finishing touches to the exterior of the building have improved the fit within the community at large. And now walking through the neighborhood, one finds students of all colors from across the country and all nationalities congregated in and around this vibrant center.

The Smith College Campus Center is alive and students have settled in appearing very comfortable in their atrium-like surroundings – some isolate to read a book, while others group for a chat.

Now, I not only understand – I believe.

Ferris Shelton
"Hands that give also receive."
*Ecuadorian Proverb*

"Health is a complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."
*World Health Organization*

"Make your plans for the year in Spring, and your plans for the day early in the morning."
*Chinese Proverb*

"No man is good enough to govern any woman without her consent."
*Susan B. Anthony 1898*

"Good health and good sense are two of life's greatest Blessings."
*Publius Syrus 42 BC*

"...the establishment and maintenance of an Institution for the higher education of young women."
*Last Will and Testament of Miss Sophia Smith, Founder of Smith College*

"Get fit Smith, and stay fit!"
*Judy Higgins ’58, parting remarks at the Olin Fitness Center Grand Opening*

"When I hear birds singing in the morning."
*Jan Morris*  
Classroom / Stat Asst - Registrar

"My Birthday. Because my Birthday is on March 21st."
*Marla Di Carlo*  
Gift Assistant - Advancement

"The first pitch at Fenway Park, on opening day against the Toronto Blue Jays."
*Steve Campbell*  
Assistant to the Director - Physical Plant

"While driving around seeing that first burst of color."
*Dawn Mays-Floyd*  
Director of the Campus Center

"There is a special smell in the air and the days are longer."
*Linda Zeitler*  
Lead Station Attendant - RADS