

# Dean's Brainstorming Sessions Give Everyone a Voice

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On September 27th and October 4th, Dr. Williams invited faculty, students, and anyone willing to give up a Saturday morning to informal brainstorming sessions discussing the vision of Methodist College and offer input on improving the school.

The meetings tackled such questions as what makes Methodist unique from other institutes of higher learning?

What should the school strive for to obtain distinction? Each group came up with statements the Dean describes as "constructed for our use within the Methodist College community as we seek a common vision for academic affairs." These statements were derived after a long process of listing specific ideas and

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DEAN WILLIAMS

gradually broadening them to become all-encompassing.

The September session described Methodist as providing "a modern, value-based education in the liberal arts tradition, taking place in a nurturing environment, laying the groundwork for career and personal success."

The October group came up with a similar though slightly difference response: "In a caring community, individualized attention results in creative, intellectual, and personal growth through a quality educational experience leading to opportunities for lifetime success in all areas."

Some may say, "Okay, but what's the point? That's just mission statement stuff; we've seen it all before."

However, Dr. Williams stressed that "these sessions do not represent the end of anyone's opportunity to contribute to the process of defining our academic vision. Instead, I view these sessions as the beginning of a



photo by Jonelle Kimbrough

continuing process of discovering and rediscovering our common values."

When asked how he came about the idea to host the meetings, the Dean replied, "What motivated me to hold these sessions was the realization that I was unable to answer some very specific questions about my job that were being asked every day. When a faculty member asked me, for example, why a particular academic department was housed within a particular division, my response was often 'I don't know.'

"After I had answered lots of very intelligent questions with 'I don't know,' it occurred to me that we have such an abundance of brainpower here on campus, why not

tap that brainpower to answer these questions? It also occurred to me that the answers that would result from these sessions would be far better, more inclusive, and have a better chance of success than any answers I could arrive at on my own."

If you missed out on the experience that these meetings of the minds provided, don't worry. Dr. Williams plans to continue pursuing this method of striving for the greater academic good. However, he doubts that he will keep up the brainstorming format.

"My guess," he says, "is that the work produced by those two sessions will now shift to other venues, such as faculty committees, informal discussion groups, and open forums. My goal will be to maximize input from all stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, parents, alumni, donors, 'friends of the college,' and the Board of Trustees."

The ability to voice your opinions to the Academic Dean of a college is unique and empowering, especially for students. Dr. Williams is certainly providing Methodist College with a sympathetic ear and a desire to pursue excellence.



photos Lindsey Tederman

## Weaver Hall A'Blazin'



Left to Right: Jennifer Packard, one of MC's area coordinators, was given an oxygen mask after inhaling smoke from a Weaver Hall fire last Monday. Packard went to the Emergency Room and was soon released. No other injuries occurred; Last Monday Fayetteville firefighters rushed to put out a fire in a Weaver Hall first floor maintenance office. A failed battery charger unit on a circuit board was the cause of the fire.