

Belmont University Board of Trustees Issues

Meeting Summary of January 2023 Retreat

The Belmont University Board of Trustees met January 26-27 for a day-and-a-half retreat designed to take an in-depth analysis of how significant worldwide trends are impacting higher education and examine potential opportunities for Belmont specifically.

Thursday, January 26

Following a vote to approve new Trustees and a devotion led by new Executive Vice President for Aspirational Excellence Dr. Lori Baker, Belmont President Dr. Greg Jones initiated the retreat with an overview of Belmont's history. He described how the institution's past can be viewed in three distinct phases: 1.0 (*founding thru Ward-Belmont's sale to the Tennessee Baptist Convention*), 2.0 (*first 40 years of Belmont College, marked by Dr. Herbert Gabhart's leadership, philanthropic investment and the advent of signature programs*) and 3.0 (*moving from a college to a university along with phenomenal expansion and growth of campus, enrollment and programs*). Belmont 4.0 must demonstrate a similar transformation, not an incremental step, in order to navigate the speed with which the world is changing.



Dr. Jones then welcomed special guest speaker Blair Sheppard, global lead for strategy and leadership at PwC, to share his perspective on the worldwide trends rapidly affecting higher education, including technology, social disruptions, demography shifts and more. Though all of these pose threats to traditional education models, Belmont is in a unique position to not only survive, but thrive, by leaning into its strengths and its assets in Nashville while expanding its focus to create strong alternative revenue sources and more interconnected partnerships regionally and globally.

The afternoon session focused on several new strategic initiatives that will catalyze that transformation by expanding revenue and forging new connections: Belmont Innovation Labs, Educational Innovation/Belmont Online, Story Studio and Local/Global Engagement around academic opportunities, recruitment and new collaborations. The rest of the day involved reviewing the University's Master Plan and the priorities for the next 5-7 years of capital improvements to better serve the current size and needs of the student body, noting that philanthropy would be needed before projects can begin.

Friday, January 27

The Friday morning session involved table discussions around Belmont's next fundraising campaign with all participants considering what God-sized dreams could be made possible in Belmont 4.0 with philanthropic support. All of this came with the recognition that much of Belmont's fundraising over the next decade will come from people who are currently not connected to the University so it's imperative that all campus leaders can communicate the University's mission, vision and aspirational aims in a compelling fashion.

Next steps for the Campaign will be conversations with key stakeholders to determine interest and build excitement around the priorities – anticipating the largest campaign in University history. The Board will next convene on Friday, April 21 in a meeting focused on campaign specifics.

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