

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 14, 2009, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

The Executive Committee (“the Committee”) of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution met on September 14, 2009, at 3:30 p.m. at the Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., to discuss the agenda for the September 21, 2009, meeting of the Board of Regents. In attendance were Chancellor of the Board of Regents John G. Roberts Jr., Chief Justice of the United States; Board Chair Patricia Q. Stonesifer, and Committee member Roger W. Sant. Also present by invitation of the Committee were Secretary G. Wayne Clough, Counselor to the Chief Justice Jeffrey P. Minear, Chief of Staff to the Secretary Patricia Bartlett, Chief of Staff to the Regents John K. Lapiana, and General Counsel Judith Leonard.

Ms. Stonesifer called the meeting to order.

REVIEW OF AGENDA FOR BOARD OF REGENTS’ MEETING

Ms. Stonesifer noted that only the morning of the September 21, 2009, meeting would be devoted to normal Board business. The afternoon session would consist of the Regents’ annual public meeting. Consequently, Ms. Stonesifer noted that the best use of the Committee’s time would be to focus on the most substantive agenda topics the Regents would be considering during the business session and to review the structure of the public session. She stressed that review of the draft strategic plan was one of the most important actions that the Board would take over the next three to five years.

She then directed the Committee’s attention to the meeting agenda contained in the draft meeting book, previously distributed to the Committee on September 10, 2009.

Report of the Chair of the Board and the Executive Committee

Ms. Stonesifer said that in her report, she would acknowledge the great contributions of outgoing Smithsonian National Board (SNB) Chair Hacker Caldwell to the Board of Regents, and welcome incoming SNB Chair Paul Neely. She also said that she would ask the Board, on the recommendation of the Secretary and former Acting Secretary Cristián Samper, to consider awarding the Joseph Henry medal to a distinguished Smithsonian scientist.

Reports of the Audit and Review and Finance Committees

Before asking Mr. Sant to preview the Finance Committee report, Ms. Stonesifer noted that the Audit and Review Committee’s report would contain no action items. Mr. Sant noted that the financial picture of the Institution had improved since the Finance Committee met on August 24, 2009, to approve the fiscal year 2010 Trust budget. As part of his report, he said that he would note that the Committee approved the submission of three alternative budgets to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB): a “requirements” budget, a budget assuming a freeze on appropriations at fiscal year 2009 levels, and a budget assuming a 5 percent decrease in appropriations from fiscal year 2009 levels. He noted that the Executive Committee had approved the submissions immediately following its participation in the Finance Committee’s meeting.

Report of the Governance and Nominating Committee

Ms. Stonesifer explained that the Governance and Nominating Committee would recommend her and Mr. Spoon's reelection as Chair and Vice Chair of the Board, respectively. In addition, the Board would be asked to approve Mr. Neely's election as SNB Chair, and the appointment of a non-Regent member to the Facilities Committee, well as other important advisory board appointments.

Reports of the Advancement and Strategic Planning Committees

Before turning to the report of the Strategic Planning and Programs Committee, Ms. Stonesifer asked whether there were any questions or comments about the Advancement Committee's submission. Hearing none, she then explained that the Strategic Planning and Programs Committee had met that morning to consider, beside the draft strategic plan, the creation of an international museum professional training program, with a pilot center in Abu Dhabi. She asked the Committee for its advice on structuring the Board's deliberations on the topic, stressing the benefit of the Board's position as a "sounding board" for the Secretary and staff on this issue. She said that consideration of the proposed program would benefit from a targeted discussion focused on discrete issues such as ensuring academic freedom, non-discrimination, financial solvency, and reputation. Because of the unique and precedential nature of the proposal, the Committee endorsed exploring the creation of an ad hoc committee to provide specific guidance to the Secretary.

The Committee concluded that the update on the progress of the initiative would be conducted in executive session after the morning session of the Board's September 21, 2009, meeting.

Report of the Compensation and Human Resources Committee

Mr. Sant said that he would present a brief synopsis of the status of the 2010 executive compensation process.

Report of the General Counsel

Ms. Leonard indicated that she would present a short report on the annual submission of Regent and senior staff financial disclosure statements and highlights from her litigation report.

Report of the Secretary

Secretary Clough explained that his report would consist of two parts. The first would be an update of news from around the Smithsonian. The "headline," he said, would be that visitation was up almost six million from last year.

The majority of his report would be devoted to presenting the draft strategic plan. He noted that the Committee was generally familiar with the document and stressed the "great support" of staff for the four "grand challenges" identified in the plan. Secretary Clough then described the framework of the plan and reviewed resourcing information that was

undergoing further refinements. The Committee and the Secretary agreed that the Regents would be asked (in some form) the following questions regarding the directions contained in the plan:

1. What must the Smithsonian be doing over the next five years?
2. What does the Smithsonian need to do it (and where will it come from)?
3. What do we get for doing it (deliverables)?
4. How will we do it (measures and Regent periodic input over the plan's implementation)?

The Chancellor stressed the importance of ensuring the all Regents have an adequate opportunity to review and consider the plan and that the deliberations allow for input on and revisions to the draft. Ms. Stonesifer noted that no motion on the draft would be recommended in advance of the meeting to promote as the broadest possible deliberations.

Afternoon Session

The Committee reviewed the proposed framework for the annual public meeting session. The format would follow that previously used, with the only significant changes being the location and allowing the press to ask questions along with the public. [The media were previously asked at to hold questions for a press conference following the conclusion of the public session.]

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Q. Stonesifer, Chair