Hillside’s Sweet New Deal

By Emily Bauman
Staff Writer

In an attempt to deal with the persistent popular opinion that Hillside Suites are more accessible to certain groups of students, Student Life has revised the housing application process.

In the new application, a questionnaire will replace the formerly required “creative project.” Ellen Miller, director of housing, denies the rumor that Hesston graduates were favored in applications to live in Hillside Suites. “The Hesston transfer issue is a myth. Their students do not do anything different from the others in the application process.” She also believes that the current housing situation is not entirely out of proportion. This year, Hillside houses 42 juniors. Of these juniors 30 percent transferred from Hesston College. Currently, the application is a point based system in the form of a survey. This survey distributes points on the basis of age, GPA, activities and a creative project such as a photo portfolio or video that demonstrates applying suitemates can work together. After totals are added up, the groups with the highest point values are selected for living in a suite. Those who don’t make it must live in a dorm or find other arrangements.

Part of the frustration with the application process was a lack of communication. Many students do not know how they measure up in the point values. “Last year people wanted to know what the cut off was. This is very hair splitting,” Miller said.

This year, the student life office decided to drop the creative project section of the application. Instead, applicants will fill out a questionnaire dealing with many issues that suite mates might face during their stay. “Our plan is for students to fill out these forms together. I want them to think about what this living together will really be like.”

“Hillside’s Sweet New Deal”

Reaction to Trustees’ Statement Varied

By Paul Yoder
Staff Writer

The EMU Board of Trustees spoke on Nov. 9. There have been many responses to their statement.

In the statement, the Board confirmed the official agreement between EMU and Mennonite Church USA (MC USA) on Mennonite statements of faith. They went on to state that “persons who publicly advocate positions contrary to these statements...are not abiding by their commitment and thereby jeopardize their positions as employees of the university.”

Academic Provost Beryl Brubaker stated that what the Board addressed was “not a new issue, but an ongoing one; that is, how does an institution be a church related university?”

There have been a variety of responses to the Board’s statement. University Accord sponsored a faculty forum to discuss the issue. Various groups have issued statements in response to the Board of Trustees; some in support, others in objection.

The Student Government Association issued a statement to the Board of Trustees (see pg. 8). They also formed an education council. The committee created a display for the Campus Center to inform students on the Board’s response kindled the dialogue around sensitive issues in the surrounding issues. The display, currently exhibited in the Campus Center greeting hall, presents a variety of reactions and opinions, as well as the history behind the statement and its possible implications.

The voiced criticism is that the Board’s statement amounts to censorship and curtails academic freedom. “It is a clear threat not only to the academic freedom, but professors should be allowed, but also to the very heart and soul of what a liberal arts education is,” said Michael Kniss, a first-year student. “If this freedom is squelched on our university campus, then this college has ceased to be a credible academic institution.”

Kniss’ voice is not alone. Said Junior Roxy Allen, “My personal thoughts surrounding the Board’s statement is that censorship and silencing opinions is no way to deal with conflict. It’s especially not Christian.”

First-year Kevin Beachy expressed a different understanding of the Board’s statement. “If teachers say something against the school policy or beliefs and then other people read those statements without knowing what the university believes, they will get a false understanding of the university’s stance,” he explained. “Personally I think that the teachers should not be allowed to express an opinion that differs from that of the university.”

Brubaker said that the Board’s response kindled the opportunity for discussion. “What is needed on campus is an open dialogue around sensitive issues in ways that are constructive and not destructive,” she said.

Kniss and Allen are among a group of students circulating a petition among the faculty and staff regarding issues that tend to divide us, as well as the how to dialogue around sensitive issues in ways that are constructive and not destructive.”

The petition calls for the preservation of freedom of speech, including extending such rights to professors.

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See RESPONSE pg. 4