

Friends Seminary Report to New York Quarterly Meeting
October 23, 2011

“...silence opens us to change; study helps us to know the world; service challenges us to put our values into practice.” (Friends Seminary Mission Statement)

SILENCE

- Meeting for Worship remained the central and defining moment of community for our students and staff who met by division for a total of seven periods of worship weekly and for our alumni who return to Meetinghouse by the hundreds each May for Reunion (and for other community moments like weddings and memorials), speaking of the impact that the School’s education and values have on their daily lives.
- Work on Friends Seminary’s own Faith and Practice continued through the year in an inclusive process. A draft will be presented to the School Committee by the end of 2011.
- The School Committee and its members dedicated much of the year to maintaining an open dialogue and improving relations with 15th Street Meeting and the Quarter and discussing incorporation. We participated in the following committees/meetings:
 - 15th Street/Friends Seminary Care Committee
 - Ministry and Counsel Clearness Committee with 15th Street, Trustees and School Committee
 - Ad Hoc Group for Trustees and School Committee Working Relationship
 - Property Task Group
 - Shared Space Analysis Group

STUDY

- We celebrated our 8th Annual Peace Week, “Educating for Peace: Friends Seminary and 225 Years of Quaker Education,” which included a panel of prominent Quaker educators.
- Continuing to be guided by our strategic plan, “Planning for the Future: Celebrating Friends Seminary’s 225th Year,” we: focused on science, math and technology programs by increasing the amount of time Lower School students spend on these subjects; hired a dedicated Lower School technology integrator, and appointed noted physicist and director of the Hayden Planetarium, Neil deGrasse Tyson, as our Visiting Scholar.
- Welcomed 37 students into the Arabic language sequence, which celebrated its third year.
- Conceived and planned for a pilot program that would put iPads in the hands of all faculty and students in grades Kindergarten, Five and Nine.
- Received the Black Board Award for our Diversity Program, given by a collective of neighborhood newspapers, to recognize successful learning communities.

SERVICE

- Celebrated the School’s 225th Anniversary by focusing on our history, values and place in the City, including a proclamation presented by Mayor Michael Bloomberg, echoing a similar moment 25 years ago when Mayor Koch helped celebrate our bicentennial.
- With the cooperation of Trustees, and taking advantage of historically low borrowing rates, the School consolidated and refinanced debt at a highly favorable long-term rate, allowing for more predictable long-term financial planning. This new debt is guaranteed exclusively by School revenues.

- Friends Seminary welcomed 699 students, our plan to grow and stabilize enrollment is progressing as planned.
- Our student body reflected a diverse population, including 206 children of color, representing 29% of the total student body.
- There were 11 Quaker children in attendance, representing 2% of the total student body.
- It was a privilege to offer 26% of our student body financial aid, for a total dollar amount of \$3,580,900.
- All students, along with faculty and staff, once again participated in a day-long, school-wide service day at over 30 sites across the city.
- We continued to expand our commitment to service learning, including 9th grade history classes that took part in a service-learning project focused on the Millennium Development Goals and the global poverty crisis. After researching and writing about the issue, students designed and taught lessons about global efforts to eradicate poverty to grades (K-5). The entire 9th grade Skyped with Prof. Jeffrey Sachs to discuss the Millennium Development Goals/global poverty. 9th graders then Skyped with a class from the Mansoman School in Ghana.
- We re-evaluated and expanded the job of community service director and appointed our first Director of Service Learning and Public Purpose.
- We increased our faculty/staff recruiting program by attending several job fairs at historically black colleges and by participating in a Philadelphia Area Consortium which included that area's Quaker Colleges.
- And we concluded negotiations with our faculty association, which addressed the length of the Lower School class day and salary and benefits, among other things. A three-year agreement was reached, to mutual satisfaction.

Friends Seminary Mission Statement

*Friends Seminary educates students from kindergarten through twelfth grade, under the care of the New York Quarterly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. Through instruction and example, students follow their curiosity and exercise their imaginations as they develop as scholars, artists and athletes. In a community that cultivates the intellect through keen observation, critical thinking and coherent expression, we strive to respond to one another, valuing the single voice as well as the effort to reach consensus. The disciplines of silence, study and service provide the matrix for growth: silence opens us to change; study helps us to know the world; service challenges us to put our values into practice. At Friends Seminary, education occurs within the context of the Quaker belief in the Inner Light – that of God in every person. Guided by the ideals of integrity, peace, equality, simplicity, and our commitment to diversity, we do more than prepare students for the world that is: we help them bring about the world that ought to be.**

** This last sentence is adapted from Faith and Practice: The Book of Discipline of the New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (1974).*