

To the Board of Trustees of Shimer College:

The faculty supports unanimously the Assembly's recent vote to uphold the current mission statement of Shimer College. In doing so we confirm and uphold our responsibility for the College's mission itself: in a word, education.

The Faculty and Assembly together, rather than President Lindsay by himself, have the standing to define the College's mission. As Chris Nelson [chair of the Board of Trustees] recently wrote, the Faculty and Assembly have for decades labored against "almost insuperable challenges" to save the College itself and greatly enrich its incomparable instructional program. But President Lindsay turns his back to this history, revealing just days ago a proposed mission statement restating "guideposts" that have been resoundingly rejected by the internal community and alumni both.

More trying still, President Lindsay presumes to use his mission statement as a test of the Faculty's continuing commitment to the College. He has indicated to us that if the Board adopts his statement, he would ask us individually to confirm our support of it. The implied alternative was to seek employment elsewhere. Let us be clear: we reject with one voice such tests of our loyalty to Shimer College or to President Lindsay.

President Lindsay has maintained that he wants only to clarify the College's mission, not to change it. An unsympathetic redrafting of the entire mission statement is not a clarification. Further, his intransigent insistence on the rightness of his views on education, even in the face of months of considerate attempts to qualify them and to offer alternatives, only betrays how little he understands or adheres to the College's principles for cooperative dialogue.

Such betrayals strike at the heart of our educational mission. Students complain rightly that they are admonished just to study, while their studious efforts to defend and clarify their sense of the College's mission are repeatedly dismissed. And we hear more and more from alumni troubled by the lack of harmony gripping an institution they helped build on mutual support. For our part, the Faculty has grown increasingly dismayed at the President's and even Board's seeming reluctance to affirm our necessary authority over the College's core educational program and to assure the security and freedom we must have to protect and enhance it.

We understand entirely the Board's need to support the powers necessary to the President. But to define the College's mission unilaterally and without broad approval is not one of these powers. We therefore state again our unanimous backing of the Assembly's present will to uphold the current mission statement. And we trust the Board will help in enlisting President Lindsay to this general will for the greater and lasting good of the College.

The Faculty of Shimer College