

Report of the Guild Chair

Linda Deal, 2009 Guild Chair

How blessed we are to have a gorgeous day to enjoy these beautiful surroundings in the Boerner Botanical Gardens. I enjoy gardening at home, so I can appreciate something of what it takes to have such glorious gardens as the ones surrounding us this afternoon. It takes planning, nurturing, and patience to achieve a healthy garden, and the results are realized over time, not overnight. The VU Guild is similar to a perennial garden that is in the process of maturing. Several years ago, plans were made, we've been nurturing the organization in its new environment, and we are now seeing some fruit of the efforts we have put forth in the past few years. In the next few minutes I'd like to focus on the fruit that is evidenced in membership involvement in the organization.

Voting: 380 ballots were cast this summer for Guild board members and the Guild Campus Gift Grants, representing 58% of the membership. That percentage is significantly higher than we had been achieving prior to 2006 when members had to come to campus to vote.

Participation in national activities: There are a number of ways Guild members are involved on the national level apart from serving on the Board of Directors. National committees for the Bylaws, the Christian Women's Conference (CWC), Nominating, Parliamentary Advisors, Tellers, and Web Conferences involve about 25 members, not including board members who also serve on some of those committees. Members were also involved as participants in the CWC and the August web conferences. Fifty-eight Guild members attended the CWC, which represented 36% of the participants. And nearly 20 Guild members joined in on the August web conferences. Members participated by nominating other members to serve on the Board of Directors. Finally, each one of you has chosen to actively participate in

the Guild today by attending this Annual Meeting.

Participation in local activities: There are also many local events that occurred this past year throughout the country. Here are some examples: Guild members were involved in each of the University's regional 150th events as planners, presenters and attendees. There were 6 Summer Send Offs with a total of about 50 Guild members who volunteered. The various pecan projects were organized by 24 members with around 100 sellers. The wreath project in the Pacific Northwest involved 55 members. The football stand at Valpo involved approximately 60 members. Student care packages were assembled by 12 members. 35 members in the Valpo area baked cakes for students. And in the Milwaukee area, the cookie sale, basket luncheon and wine tasting activities involved over 60 volunteers who are Guild members.

One thing I would like to stress in terms of local activities is the need to keep track of both dollars raised, if applicable, and volunteers. An evaluation form for Membership Originated Activities is available on the Guild website and is the place to document this important data.

While we are seeing much fruit in the Guild, as with any garden, there are also some areas that need more work. In our gardens we sometimes find that the plants we chose weren't quite right for the conditions of the spot in which we planted them. Sometimes environmental factors impact the ability of our gardens to flourish. We have a few areas like this to work on, and one of them is membership growth.

Membership: We welcomed 44 new members to the Guild during the 2008-09 fiscal year, with a total membership as of June 30 of 648 women and men. Unfortunately that does

Report of the Guild Chair

Linda Deal, 2009 Guild Chair

represent a decline from 720 at the end of the previous year, so we clearly have work to do. The economy played a part in that loss, but we need to understand what other factors may have contributed.

Gardeners also like to try new things from year to year, and we are no different in the Guild. I would like to share some new ways Guild members can be involved in the months ahead.

New opportunities for involvement: We are expanding the committee that reviews the Guild Campus Gift Grant proposals. We need people to share their gifts and experience in the Life Skills Seminars for students, which Julie will explain in a few moments. We are looking for hosts for upcoming web conferences. The Career Center wants to network with Guild members to share their career expertise and help students with mock interviews. And we will be seeking your feedback regarding membership engagement and communication.

As we strive for the continued growth and maturity of the Guild, I challenge you to consider how you will contribute to the overall health of this organization this year. One of the most important things you can do is pay attention to the information you receive about the Guild and the University. If you are going to Valpo's Homecoming this year, be sure to tell others how the Guild is supporting students. Perhaps you will participate in the Nov. 1st web conference to learn how to talk about Valpo to potential students and their families. Maybe one of the national committees sounds like a place where you would like to serve. If so, please talk to a board member or contact the Guild office. How about organizing a local event that promotes the mission of the Guild to enhance the student experience at Valpo? Just complete a Member Originated Activity form,

found on the Guild website, and submit it to the Guild office so we know how we can help you. And who will you invite this year to join the Guild and support students at Valpo?

Your involvement in the Guild really makes a difference, so I encourage you to find your niche in this organization through some specific activities and by spreading the word about the Guild and how it makes a difference in the lives of Valpo students.