

Charles Bergmann Architect

[REDACTED]
South Newfane, Vermont 05351
[REDACTED]

RECEIVED

APR 16 2020

STATE OF VERMONT
ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE

April 13, 2020

*Vermont Attorney General's Office
T.J. Donovan
109 State Street
Montpelier, VT. 05609*

*I Believe in Marlboro College
P.O. Box 503
Marlboro, VT. 05344-0503*

Attached are some emails sent to Marlboro College related to the decision of their Board of Trustees to close the college.

They convey some of my observations and beliefs related to what I believe is a tragic direction which I fervently hope will be reversed.

The emails are printed with the most recent ones on top, then going back to the earlier ones.

Sincerely,

Charles Bergmann

Attached: 8 pages of emails.

Fw: Challenge Response

Charles Bergmann <[REDACTED]>

Mon 1/20/2020 12:28 PM

To: Marlboro College Office of the President <presidentsoffice@marlboro.edu>

A Few More Comments:

I am sure that many are disappointed that Marlboro College does not appear to be willing to allow Will Wootton and his team to examine in detail the background to Marlboro's decision to donate the college and its' assets to Emerson College. I write to again urge you to let that happen in a cooperative way as it could likely lead to Marlboro College being saved where it is for present and future generations.

I have looked at the financial data which has been released but it is so general as to be almost useless in value towards finding a new direction.

Observations:

The 2019 financial statements show Net Tuition and Fees of \$1,980,701. for an average received of about \$12,000. per student.

The Expenses list Instruction, Public Support, Academic Support, Student Services, Institutional Support and Auxiliary Enterprises, creating Total Operating Expenses of \$13,895,306., but one has no ability to find out how this really breaks down, where it might be reduced, what might be changed, so these figures are almost useless for one trying to find a new path.

My sense of Marlboro's situation is that the college could continue for another five years if these Total Operating Expenses were reduced by about 40% to about \$8.3 million a year and Income achieved to cover that. As an example, Income could be made up of Tuition and Fees of \$2. million plus Donations of \$2.3 million plus Endowment Income of \$1.5. million plus use of Endowment of \$2.5 million for five years. It would be a small, very lean college. After five years a decision could be made to continue Marlboro College or end it.

Another concern that I feel is whether the consulting firm EY - Parthenon may be influencing your decisions too much. In my own life I have observed that experts often have an agenda and also are often missing part of the picture. As you may know, in the early 1950's Emerson College was near to closing, but was saved by alumni including very active Helen Rose, whose daughter Jane is a friend of mine. They did not give up and neither should Marlboro.

All good luck towards saving Marlboro College where it is.

Charles Bud Bergmann

From: Charles Bergmann <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Tuesday, December 31, 2019 2:20 PM

To: Marlboro College Office of the President <presidentsoffice@marlboro.edu>

Subject: Fw: Challenge Response

A Few Further Comments:

As I expected you have not permitted Will Wootton to further examine the background of the decision to give the assets of Marlboro College to Emerson College and consider other

options. I ask that you allow Will Wootton and his team to do this in a reasonable manner to his reasonable satisfaction.

Since there was a press release around April 2019 to the effect that Marlboro College was not in danger of closing, but one can recognize that perhaps you were then optimistic for a merger (the merger with the University of Bridgeport was announced in July, 2019 and the failure of that merger was announced in September, 2019), one presumes that the process and decision to give the assets of Marlboro College to Emerson College occurred after September, 2019.

Apparently in making their decision, the Trustees of Marlboro College did not engage in the traditional Town Meeting form of governance associated with the running of Marlboro College.

Apparently there was little or no effort to draw the greatly affected Town of Marlboro into the process. The town might be a possible source of support, possibly somehow related to the public school system or contributions.

It would greatly help to better understand this if you released more information on the processes Marlboro College used to try to save the college over say the last five years, particularly as related to efforts to engage more students, curriculum changes, faculty and staff changes, etc. My guess is you worked hard.

It would be helpful to know something of the 80 or so institutions of higher learning that Marlboro approached about a merger, what was offered and responses. Could any be approached again with the given that Marlboro remains in Marlboro?

The role of the consulting firm EY - Parthenon should be described.

In looking at Emerson College in Boston and also its' new "campus" in Los Angeles, I am not encouraged by its' hardly outstanding architecture and physical presence - particularly as a future home for a Marlboro Institute that is intended to reinforce the humanities, which should include a love of beauty which the present Marlboro campus does have.

Board of Trustees Chair Richard Saudek has been on the board for over twenty years and has over that time probably had to deal many times related to the survival of Marlboro College. While he has been a dedicated servant of Marlboro, one wonders if he just finally wore out of trying.

I remain optimistic that Marlboro College will be saved where it is. The situation is a long way from being hopeless. Please change your direction and commit five years towards saving Marlboro College where it is.

Sincerely,

Charles Bud Bergmann
South Newfane, Vermont

From: Charles Bergmann [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, December 27, 2019 10:00 AM

To: Marlboro College Office of the President <presidentsoffice@marlboro.edu>

Subject: Re: Challenge Response

A few comments on your "Challenge Response" and information:

The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (IPEDS) and the National Census Data are useful but it should be kept in mind that there were still about 19.66 million college students during 2017 and the projection for year 2028 is 20.31 million college students. More importantly, these sorts of figures are not that relevant to Marlboro College where only about 400. students are needed to stay afloat. With sincere energy it should be possible to find 400. students for Marlboro who would benefit from Marlboro.

From the Financial Statements, it is noted that for the years 2015 thru year 2019 that Annual Net Income steadily dropped from \$4,808,517. to \$1,980,701., a drop of \$2,827,816. and a percentage drop of 41%.

During the same period Annual Operating Expenses dropped from \$15,372,946. to \$13,895,506., a drop of \$1,477,440. and a percentage drop of 10%. While one recognizes that cutting annual operating expenses to try to relate to the drop in annual income may not be easy, it appears that the college did not address this discrepancy with enough vigor.

On the Accreditation and the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) letter, while I can follow that such a commission would offer concerns and some advice, it seems odd to me that they would go so far as to strongly recommend a particular arrangement such as the proposed merger with Emerson College, which I do not think of as a truly academic institution as its' course offerings are largely in the area of job training. Also the President of Emerson has stated "it might be easier to think of the prospective agreement more like a \$40. million donation to the Boston school" which does not sound like a true merger.

On Further Reading I perused the offerings and they struck me as designed to support a position taken rather than offering insights that would encourage Marlboro College to try to save itself where it is. One example noted of a college having trouble is Willamette College in Oregon, a college that Emerson College President M. Lee Pelton was President of until the current Willamette College President took over. Current Emerson College President Pelton appears to be spending a lot of money to grow Emerson and this could lead to financial problems for Emerson in a few years, often the case when institutions try to expand too fast. If that should happen, the Marlboro College donation of endowment and property to Emerson may disappear into helping to save Emerson.

Further Reading should have included the process that Marlboro used to try to increase enrollment and save the school and some examples of success over adversity. A few examples of the latter which I am familiar with:

The successful effort led by T.A. Wilson and William Allen to turn Boeing Company from almost failure (at the time there was a large billboard in Seattle with a light bulb and the message: "Would the last person out of town please turn off the lights!") to a very solid company again. At real risk they "bet" the company, primarily on the Boeing 747 and succeeded.

The successful effort led by Professor Victor Steinbrueck and a few others to save the Pike Place Market in Seattle which many city leaders wanted to tear down in favor of high rises and parking. Eventually a city wide vote created the formal direction to save this magical place which is really the soul of Seattle.

The successful effort led by Ralph Anderson and a few others including myself to save the Pioneer Square District from the wrecking ball being pushed by City of Seattle leaders, the creation of The Pioneer Square Historic District, renovations of most all of the buildings there and it becoming a prosperous neighborhood.

The successful effort led by myself and a few others to turn around the redlined and very deteriorated Madison Valley District in Seattle which many thought would be impossible to accomplish. Today it is an integrated and vibrant neighborhood.

The successful effort to deal with the unexpected resignation of Trinity College President Tom Gerety, to become President of Amherst College, at a time that Trinity was just starting a major capital campaign to significantly grow endowment and make serious efforts to improve its' deteriorated neighborhood. It was a devastating blow for Trinity but Trustee Alfred Koepel and others rallied support. What happened is described in a Harvard Business School case study which cites it as a great example of beating probable failure.

The successful effort led by Leon Botstein to grow then struggling Bard College. When my daughter enrolled in Bard (because her letter of acceptance stated "we believe that Bard College will be a better place by having you") and some annoying parents complained that Bard had problems, it was a joy to watch President Botstein turn criticism to advantage such as pointing out that Clare College of Cambridge University had struggled, had only about 500 students and went on to list the great scholars and others produced by that distinguished school. I think Bard had an endowment of about \$30. million at the time - today (with Leon Botstein still there) Bard has an endowment of almost \$300. million.

In my heart I think what is driving me to oppose the Marlboro/Emerson merger is its' importance to the Town of Marlboro and the people I have known who are connected to Marlboro College. Let me mention Dan Darrow, a Marlboro graduate and neighbor, who was an inventor, started the Olallie Daylily Farm, served on our Select Board and in the Vermont Legislature and a wonderful human being. Based on Dan alone the school would be worth preserving. Some other people connected to Marlboro College who cause me to want it to survive include former trustee and Boston Globe Editor Tom Winship; Sara Coffey, who created Vermont Performance Lab; Dan De Walt, a teacher, writer and musician who has added greatly to our community; Tom Redden, a professor and former Dean at Marlboro College; Holly Peters, who worked for us while a student at Marlboro. All exceptional people connected to a wonderful, small school.

Please change your direction and work for five years to save Marlboro College where it is.

Sincerely,

Charles Bud Bergmann
South Newfane, Vermont

From: Office of the President <presidentsoffice@marlboro.edu>

Sent: Friday, December 20, 2019 1:07 PM

To: charlesbergmann [REDACTED]

Subject: Challenge Response

Dear Charles,

Re: Fw: Important news about Marlboro's future

Charles Bergmann <charlesbergmann@hotmail.com>

Fri 12/20/2019 2:11 PM

To: Marlboro College Office of the President [REDACTED]

Dear President Quigley:

Let me try to change your mind:

To start with, I think all agree that Marlboro does have assets which include a large campus worth at least \$10. million, an endowment of about \$35. million, 150 or so students, some fine faculty and other staff and some wonderful alumni. It took time and effort to create this and it would be a tragedy to throw it away.

If 80 educational institutions were approached about merging with Marlboro and only two responded that would seem to indicate that a merger is not the way to go. And giving away the school to Emerson, for almost nothing in return, is hardly a merger. My guess is that only some of the faculty and very few of the students will transfer to Emerson and the proposed Marlboro Institute at Emerson College will be insignificant. It would be better for Marlboro to at least try to succeed even if it comes to fail. If in trying this, much of the endowment is gone, you still have the property to sell.

Those who oppose the proposed Emerson/Marlboro arrangement feel strongly against it and will be very persistent in opposing it. Results will probably include a lot of legal fees and much ill will and negative publicity, no matter which side eventually prevails.

It seems to me that Marlboro College could continue so long as those in charge are willing and able to rather rapidly reduce expenses, continue to obtain donations and draw somewhat on the endowment. I would say that the annual operating budget should be reduced such that the annual operating loss does not exceed the donations received (say \$2. million) plus funds earned from endowment (say \$1.5 million) plus use of some of the endowment (say \$2.5 million) - about \$6. million in total. Many schools have had to do this at some point in their history and many of them have gone on to good futures. I find it interesting that little Eureka College, where President Reagan went, has an endowment of only about \$17. million, but seems to survive. Also, having been involved in several efforts in business and to physically and socially improve neighborhoods I think it is fair of me to say that I believe you are giving up too soon. Perseverance has a way of paying off and sometimes one gets a wonderful "break" as has certainly happened in my life. Please give saving Marlboro where it is a real try for another five years.

Some colleges are suffering today, but not all and this seems to have a lot to do with meeting a demand. For example, new and small Thomas Aquinas College in Northfield, Massachusetts, following a Jesuit based education and no intercollegiate sports, is apparently more than meeting its' student goal numbers. Marlboro needs to find the formula that conveys a belief, makes sense and will also draw enough students. My personal hope is that Marlboro will focus on and advertise a very disciplined and rather traditional classical education with those graduating being highly knowledgeable in English literature, writing and speaking, mathematics and computer science, real proficiency in at least one foreign language, along with reasonable fluency with economics, history, philosophy religion and art. I would drop so-called "soft" courses and teach no knowledge that is not at least 50 years old. Music is present thru the Marlboro Music Festival organization. I would reduce emphasis on student choices in favor of students being educated in the above.

I would create a three (trimester) term school year with the winter portion spent in a foreign country where students could hold a job to pay for it, improve their language skills and become familiar with another culture. The Brattleboro based School for International Training, which has reduced its' Brattleboro presence but continues foreign programs, might be a good partner in implementing this. And partially closing Marlboro for three winter months would save a lot of operating costs. Highly motivated students could probably get their bachelor's degree in three years.

Marlboro College has an observatory. I would approach the Lowell Observatory about some sort of program with them and seek to sell the Marlboro observatory to them. William Lowell Putnam (a wonderful mountaineer and benefactor who was a friend of former Marlboro Trustee Tom Winship) spent years dedicated to the Lowell Observatory before his death and I believe that his son now runs it - my understanding is that this New England family is very supportive of good ideas, particularly related to astronomy.

Marlboro College has a lot of land - a big asset that could generate value. It could be subdivided and lots created that could be transferred to faculty and staff in exchange for a commitment to stick with the college at reduced salaries or sold to others supportive of Marlboro. This would also bring faculty closer to the students.

Marlboro College could benefit from the presence of a house of worship - perhaps a good religious organization could be found to build a chapel and offer a course on religion in exchange for being given a site. A presence of religion could attract students and their parents towards Marlboro.

Marlboro needs to reduce the number of Trustees to say no more than nine people. As anyone who has read "Parkinson's Law" knows, committees and boards actually accomplish less as they grow unwieldy, which is the case here. And many or all of current trustees have apparently "given up".

Marlboro needs to transition to a new president and do so fairly quickly. I am sure you are a very good man but you have not been able to save Marlboro and are connected to a losing direction. I would seek a new, say 35 year old academic, with a belief and the energy to move Marlboro to a new life. I would hope that you might remain in a supportive role for say three years. While you would no longer be the leader, a good and knowledgeable follower can be very valuable.

I wish you and Marlboro well.

Sincerely,

Charles Bud Bergmann

South Newfane, Vermont

KQ



Kevin F. F. Quigley
President



On Sat, Dec 14, 2019 at 4:52 PM Charles Bergmann <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Dear President Quigley:

I was unable to attend the meeting today at Marlboro College but did read a brief report on it. My guess is that the Trustees of Marlboro will not open up their books for review by Will Wootton and others who are seeking to save the college where it is. One result will be animosity.

A need for a \$200. million endowment is mentioned in the article. I would suggest that the immediate need is for sufficient funds to keep the college operating for say five years - probably on the order of \$1.5 to \$2. million per year if careful budgeting. While keeping the college operating, ways can be found for a more permanent solution to Marlboro's difficulties and a way forward.

In looking at the offerings by Emerson College, my reaction is that it is not really a college - certainly not a college in the sense of offering a classical education - more like a trade school. I believe that Marlboro College could succeed by offering a more traditional and very disciplined education with strong four year requirements in English, English literature and writing; mathematics and computer science; proficiency in at least one foreign language; and a mix of subjects in the arts, history, economics, philosophy, religion, etc. It is my understanding that students today are pursuing more disciplined education with less interest in "soft" subjects, which gives them a strong background for participating in the world and being employable. By way of background I hold a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Architecture degree and have practiced architecture in the United States, Switzerland and Holland where my wife is from. We have four fine children who I consider to be well educated and leading productive lives. While living in Seattle from 1968 to 1995 I taught architecture at the university level. designed many buildings including The Governor's Mansion renovation/addition and several university buildings - but more importantly I was instrumental in bringing back to health The Pioneer Square Historic District and the then red-lined Madison Valley District, both of which were very deteriorated and thought by many not worth improving. This was not always easy. Also I watched two great leaders, T.A. Wilson and William Allen, take the then in decline Boeing Company (100,000. workers had been laid off) back to a successful company. These two men worked for \$1. (yes, one dollar) a year during this transition and garnered the deep respect of many. My favorite college president is probably Leon Botstein of little Bard College

who has led that school since about 1988 until the present, improved the school greatly and raised the endowment to almost \$300. million - showing real perseverance.

Marlboro College is a wonderful institution and is well worth saving. I fervently hope that you and the trustees will take a new look at the situation and commit to saving the school where it is in Marlboro.

My hopes and prayers will be with you.

Sincerely,

Charles Bud Bergmann

South Newfane, Vermont

From: Charles Bergmann [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, November 10, 2019 11:11 AM
To: Marlboro College Office of the President <presidentsoffice@marlboro.edu>
Subject: Re: Important news about Marlboro's future

Dear President Quigley:

Who are we kidding? By any measure what is about to happen here is a tragedy for the school and community, for the faculty and students and for the fine people who have been connected to Marlboro College since its' inception. Marlboro College has a great deal of value including a lovely rural campus worth more than ten million dollars and is for many a far more appealing place to be an academic or a student than in Boston. You and the leaders of Marlboro pursued a second rate direction where with courage and effort you could have moved the school on to a great future.

Sincerely,

Charles Bergmann

South Newfane, Vermont

From: Marlboro College Office of the President <presidentsoffice@marlboro.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, November 6, 2019 9:14 AM
To: Charles <charlesbergmann@marlboro.edu> [REDACTED]
Subject: Important news about Marlboro's future

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Marlboro College