"Spirit Is Never without Matter, Matter Never without Spirit"[1]

A Narrative Examination of a College of Teachers

Liz Beaven

What makes a school a Waldorf school? This apparently straightforward question evokes a range of responses that embraces both physical aspects of our schools and the less tangible forces that frame and shape our work. A College of Teachers is often identified as one core characteristic that makes a school "Waldorf." Standing at the center of many of our schools, the College forms an essential part of the organizational structure, assuming a wide range of practical and less visible responsibilities and tasks. A College of Teachers is thereby continuously confronted with the challenge of balancing the spiritual and practical life of the school, a challenge that individual schools have met in a variety of ways. An examination of the function and role of a College can shed considerable light on the history and development of a school, its values, and the method by which it meets the challenges of mission, time, and place.

What follows is an attempt to focus attention in some depth on the College of Teachers of a particular school. This study grew out of discussions with colleagues from a number of schools as we all confronted organizational and governance challenges, and my resulting belief that it could be instructive to examine the inception and evolution of one College. Despite the influences of geography, biography, and personality on each school and the necessity for each one to develop its own unique form of organization and governance, Waldorf schools, like other institutions, display lawfulness and commonalities in their development. They pass through predictable phases as they move from fledgling impulse to mature, established schools. Therefore, although there is no standard model or template for the creation or development of a school's governance and College, it is likely that most will encounter shared issues and challenges and therefore the lessons of one may help clarify process for another. It is hoped that readers of this study will find both helpful insights and cautionary tales in threads that are instantly recognizable to them, as well as aspects that are truly unique to the biography and destiny of one particular school. In this way, both commonalities and differences will allow schools to reflect on their own evolution and form.

The following description is centered on the College of Teachers at the Sacramento Waldorf School. The school has several features that make it a good candidate for such a study. It is a mature, established K–12 school—in its fifty-third year—and, aside from one night, has had a College of Teachers for forty-two of those years. The school re-founded its College over ten years ago as part of substantial changes in governance arising from a crisis brought on by growth and changing needs. The re-founding resulted in a much greater separation of the practical and spiritual aspects of College work than had previously been the case. The school has continued to refine and explore this separation as further questions have arisen, additional lessons have been learned, and needs have changed.

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The story of this College of Teachers commences with a brief history of the school and the founding and development of its College. It describes the conditions and process

that led to the re-founding, experiences since re-founding, a summary of lessons learned and questions to be answered, and a look to the future. Content was drawn from unpublished memoirs, many years of College minutes, governance documents and reports, conversations with current and former College members, and my own involvement for almost twenty-one years with the school. Although I made every attempt to check statements and validate the picture as they emerged, the resulting description is inevitably subjective and incomplete, as it is viewed and reported through the lens of its author. As author, I have a personal attachment to this story: I have been a member of the school's College of Teachers since the late 1990s and was very actively involved in the process of re-founding. I have served as the school's administrator since 2001. My perspective of the College's story changed when I joined it in the late 1990s, and this change is captured in the article through a change of voice, from third person observer and reporter to first person participant.

Beginnings: Foundations and Growth

The Sacramento Waldorf School was founded in 1959, opening on October 7 of that year as a two-child kindergarten. Early records and individual recollections suggest that there was not a great deal of anthroposophical knowledge among the founding parents and board members; rather, with the exception of one anthroposophist, the founding impulse and primary focus was to establish a viable alternative education for their children. Even for many of the early faculty members, anthroposophy appeared to be a new and rather unfamiliar path (as reported in unpublished memoirs and conversations).

The school initially grew quite rapidly, expanding "from two to forty-two in less than a year."[2] Hermann von Baravalle, a Waldorf teacher from Germany who was involved in the early years of several schools in the U.S., guided the school's pedagogy and teacher training during its founding and early years but, although its guiding principles were imparted, the word *anthroposophy* was seldom mentioned. Within a short period of time, despite an early, encouraging pattern of growth, dissension emerged as to the orientation and purpose of the school and there were signs of division and distress. The fledgling school lost many students as a result of this tension and looked to be in danger of collapse. The Board, seeking to save the school, turned for advice to Stewart Easton, another leading figure in the early days of Waldorf education. (Easton had previously visited the school and was familiar with it.)

As a result of his interest, the school recruited and invited a group of five young teachers, each of whom had participated in various anthroposophical teacher training programs and were experienced Waldorf pedagogues, to move from the East Coast to Sacramento and take up work at the school. They in turn were seeking a setting in which they could deepen their anthroposophical studies and work more fully and directly from Steiner's indications. They agreed to the move on condition that the faculty would be granted full control over all pedagogical matters and that the Board would pay off a debt incurred by the installation of some prefabricated buildings. Both demands were agreed upon and these young teachers, known in the school's history as the "Kimberton Five," arrived in 1965, essentially to re-found the school. Several teachers who had left returned soon after this point and enrollment began to build once again. The "Kimberton Five" would be extremely influential in the direction and growth of the school and in determining its spiritual and philosophical orientation.

Francis Edmunds, the founder of Emerson College in England, visited the young school each year as part of a grand sweep of the seven mainland American Waldorf schools in existence at that time. Edmunds had taught two of the young teachers and, along with Easton, was a trusted mentor and

advisor. During one of his annual visits, he recommended the formation of a College of Teachers to further develop foundational anthroposophical work and thereby add vitality and depth to the school. Records suggest that this was still an unusual step for the young North American schools at that time, but in 1969 under his guidance and in his presence, the first College of Teachers was formed. Membership of this new group was open to any full-time member of the faculty who felt called to take up a new level of spiritual work as part of a circle of colleagues. The "Kimberton Five" and several others teachers stepped forward and began the tradition of College work on behalf of the school.[3]

The College of Teachers immediately became a core element of the school. From its inception, it was an integral part of the school's leadership, linked to the Board of Trustees through representative membership.[4] Bylaws from that time indicate that the Chairman of the faculty (soon redefined as the Chairman of the College of Teachers) and two faculty members nominated by the new College would serve as Trustees—comprising almost one-third of the Board's membership. During those early years the Board was busy supporting the physical needs of the growing school and was much occupied with site questions, building campaigns, and the management of inadequate budgets. True to the commitment made to the "Kimberton Five," the College maintained oversight of all pedagogical matters and engaged in developing program and curriculum, eventually pursuing the path to the foundation of a high school fifteen years after the school had opened. A search for a permanent home, the establishment of a high school, the constant need for more space, efforts to balance budgets and build enrollment—familiar terrain for those of us who have been involved in the development of Waldorf schools—fueled a great deal of common striving that united Board and College into the 1980s and inspired members to actively address critical questions and work side by side.

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During these years of intense, often physical work and growth, the College continued to steer the pedagogical life of the school and to manage many of its practical business aspects. In those early years, support staff was limited; formal administrative support beyond basic clerical support was added in the early 1980s, and a more comprehensive administrative staff grew from that time forward, offering some relief to both College and Board. Despite this step, the scope of the College's work remained considerable. Several individuals who were members from the 1980s into the early 1990s highlighted similar themes in their recollections. Members experienced the weight of their huge responsibility for the school. College work was, in the words of one member, "fraught with struggles" as they wrestled with challenging decisions about matters of personnel and the future direction of the school. Discussions ran to great length; meetings, held after school on Thursdays, generally lasted several hours. A core of members "steeped in anthroposophy" steered spirited debates of many, often diverse opinions and depth of philosophical thought. Throughout these years, the College felt the imprint of a number of forceful personalities and leaders with strongly held opinions and, at times, heated interactions. Recalling these times, one member stated: "You had the sense that karmic streams had brought us together and karmic struggles were being worked out." Despite the obvious workload and responsibility, the College remained large and vibrant, and these years evoked warm memories in members who were active during that time. There was a sense of vital work being done, work that had direct impact on

the course of the growing school. College work was perceived to be essential to the life of the school.

Crisis—and Opportunity

By the mid 1990s, over twenty-five years into the College's life, the mood had begun to shift and there were increasing signs of stress. Many of the founding leaders had by now left the school. The climate of strong personality was at times overwhelming; clashes led to wounded feelings and, on occasion, individuals walking out of meetings or even threatening to resign. Discord in the College mirrored general unease in the school. Demographics had begun to shift as a result of decisions to raise tuition at the end of the 1980s. Most of the founding families had by now graduated from the school. There was significant dissension regarding the future direction and identity of the school. This showed itself in actual splintering—in separate and competing parent organizations, in factions on the Board, and in the College (for a short period of time a small group met on weekends as an "alternative" College to discuss their opinions on the school's current condition and future course). Within the College, administrative duties and personnel issues were becoming a significant burden, requiring large amounts of time and consistently derailing the group's attempts to deepen its work. One member recalled that they would optimistically commence the year with a plan of study, only to have that plan sidelined some time in October by a looming crisis, often concerning an issue of personnel. As a result, the College seemed increasingly divorced from the faculty at large. The College Chair had become a lightning rod for a range of community concerns, and College members were experiencing burnout. Increasingly, small groups of College members and non-College members gathered independently to discuss their concerns and to ponder solutions.

As a new millennium approached, it became increasingly apparent that the existing structure was no longer serving the school and that significant changes were needed. The College of Teachers had shrunk to a very small size; the handful of members who remained felt beleaguered, yet stayed on out of a sense of duty to the school and a desire to maintain the etheric space of the College, doing their best to keep alive a flame that had by now dwindled to a small flicker. The "them versus us" dynamic, powerful throughout the mid to late 1990s, had somewhat diminished; yet its replacement was hardly encouraging. To many members of the faculty, the small College simply appeared to be irrelevant to their concerns and work. A particularly bitter personnel issue divided the community, sapped strength, eroded parent trust, stretched relationships with the Board, and generally left people exhausted. Searching for next steps, the school did what many schools do in such circumstances: called for help in the form of an outside consultant to clarify the situation and suggest a new direction.

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Torin Finser, at that time head of the Waldorf teacher education program at Antioch University New England, was asked by the school to assess its governance and recommend changes. His first visit in June 2000 was preceded by a considerable amount of preparatory work by members of the College, faculty, and Board. His initial report described an unhappy situation of fractured leadership, "them versus us" dynamics, overlapping and inefficient responsibilities, cumbersome decision-making, and a high level of general

frustration. Individuals acknowledged doing things "outside the system"; action often arose from personalities rather than policies. Additionally, he found concerns about inadequate teacher evaluation, a lack of consistent professional development, and an unclear and inadequate administrative structure. In this climate, leadership could not flourish; potential leaders were elevated, only to be chopped down. The school lacked a strong sense of a whole, focusing instead on meeting the day-to-day needs of separate sections of the school rather than building a collective future.

One of the gifts a consultant offers is the ability to reflect what an institution may have already intuited or known, but in a form and with an objectivity that allow the message to be heard, understood, and accepted. This was our experience: There was little in this initial assessment that was truly surprising or unknown, yet there was much that had either never been stated or had been spoken outside of meetings or in private conversations. Reassuringly, the report also noted that, despite the many serious concerns, there was much in the life of the school that appeared vibrant, healthy, and successful—especially as regards work with the children and the curriculum. The crisis of leadership and governance had not yet filtered into the primary work of the school, but without intervention, this would probably have been only a matter of time. Through each finding and recommendation sounded the theme that the school's governance and leadership structure had run its course and was no longer be capable of meeting the needs of the school as it entered the twenty-first century. This conclusion was now inescapable, laid out starkly in black and white. A different type of action was required of us.

We agreed that we would need the ongoing help and support of an outside, objective party. Torin agreed to continue working with us but emphasized that any process of restructuring should be "highly participatory" and collaborative in the early stages to restore confidence in leadership and process. Several months of work by all faculty members, guided by Torin and in full consultation with the Board, led to a number of decisions, including a renewed commitment to the principle of a College of Teachers as an essential core of the school. In order to support this commitment, we recognized that a revitalized College would need structural and practical support. This support was initially focused in three major areas:

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- Issues of personnel were identified as a major obstacle to the College's primary work and a factor that had led to alienation and division; therefore we would form an Executive Committee mandated to handle these matters.
- These issues often arose because of a lack of timely or effective evaluations and from inadequate professional development or training; we would form a Teacher Development Committee to meet these needs, providing early intervention and thereby reducing the possibility of crisis.
- A stronger and more empowered administrator would be needed to provide essential support to the College and to these two new committees; the role of administrator was redefined, a new job description crafted, and a search begun.

Re-founding

By June of 2001, we had thoroughly worked through this new structure in the full faculty circle and in smaller groups including Board members, College members, and faculty representatives. Through this process, the proposed structure had gained support and

consensus. Preliminary mandate statements for the committees and for the College itself were crafted and agreed upon. These mandates spelled out the membership of each group, major tasks, and meeting structures. There was general acknowledgement that further refinement would be required once the groups were up and running. I was appointed as new administrator and began work that month with a revised and expanded job description. Even with these changes, we agreed that, if the renewed vision of the College of Teachers were to be realized, a radical step would be required to change the habits, patterns, history, and expectations associated with it. After consultation with the full faculty, with several former teachers and College members, and with current and past members of the Board, the existing College members decided, with some trepidation, that the College of Teachers as it had existed for over thirty years should disband and that a new College should be founded in its place.

Once we had made and agreed to this decision, a small group took on planning for the transition from one College to another. We continued this work over the summer months and addressed many questions, including how to:

- provide a clear, evident separation from old forms to new ones
- best honor and provide continuity in our relationship with the Being of the school
- go about building confidence in the faculty and school community that this was, in fact, a new endeavor, not simply a continuation of business as usual

Given that concern, should the new body even be called a College of Teachers? Was there another, more appropriate name that would clearly signal a fresh start?

A number of decisions resulted from this questioning. We would indeed continue with the title "College of Teachers;" to us, this signified an alignment with the principle of pedagogical leadership, a reaffirmation of the commitment made back in 1965 that the faculty would be charged with responsibility for pedagogical and spiritual matters, and an endorsement of the years of dedicated collegial work that formed so much of the history of the school. We determined that we would respectfully and formally close the old College and allow a short pause before re-founding. Ultimately this pause would prove to be for only one night: we all sensed that we were at a vulnerable point in the school's biography and we wanted the Hierarchies to see concrete evidence that we were sincere in our striving and intent and that we wished to rekindle a stronger relationship with the Being of our School.

We informed former College members, the leaders of AWSNA, and members of the Pedagogical Section Council of the school's decision. We were very conscious of the rich history of the College and of the colleagues who had carried its work on behalf of the school. In late August, a week before the school year was to start, the few remaining active members of the "old" College gathered in the school's garden just before sunset and proceeded to the bluffs overlooking the American River. There, we each voiced gratitude for the extraordinary contributions of all College members who had preceded us and for the source and foundation of our work, Rudolf Steiner. We voiced our hopes for the new group and for the future of the school. We read a verse and planted rosemary as a symbol of remembrance, then quietly dispersed, but that night it was hard to sleep. There was a sense of keeping vigil and an anxiety and vulnerability as we waited for the next day and the re-establishment of this core body.

The next morning, the entire faculty and staff gathered, along with invited guests including former faculty members, a representative of the Pedagogical Section Council, and representatives of AWSNA.

Together, we entered a space that had been prepared for a simple ceremony and formed one large circle. There was an air of expectancy and subdued excitement; this was a new venture and no one quite knew how it would unfold. After a reading of Rudolf Steiner's words to the faculty of the founding school and recitation of a verse, those faculty and staff who had reflected on the mandate and membership of the new College and felt drawn to serve as members of this new group stepped forward and signaled their intent by lighting a small taper from a central candle. A small circle of light slowly formed, held by the surrounding larger circle of colleagues and guests. It was a thrilling experience to step forward, to witness the membership of the group forming, and to feel the support of the larger circle of colleagues. We concluded with a song of celebration. A new College was born!

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Becoming Established

The first meeting of the re-founded College was held just over a week later on Wednesday evening, September 5, 2001, when members gathered to read the College Imagination and begin our work. We had made a number of practical decisions to support this new group and to shift the habit life around the College. We shifted the meeting time to Wednesday evenings rather than the traditional time of after school on Thursdays. Initially, we made sure to keep Wednesday evenings free of any other meetings or school events. The resulting stillness of the campus lent a mood of focus and quiet concentration. The evening schedule made for a long day (we hold meetings of the full faculty after school on Wednesdays), but members agreed that its benefits outweighed the disadvantages. During the first months, colleagues who had not joined the College provided dinner before meetings as a wonderful gesture of support.

Initially, we focused on developing a better understanding of our mandate. Without the imperatives of business and administration, what would "responsible for the pedagogical and spiritual health of the school" through pedagogical and spiritual study actually look like? At first our work focused on establishing a structure for meetings and infrastructure for the school, with oversight of the formation of the two key support committees. We debated decision-making and agreed to adopt a consensus model within the College. We explored meeting format, selected a facilitator and agenda-setter, and created a third position, a "navigator," whose task was to witness the work of the College and to warn us when, as we agreed was likely, it was veering back into old territory of personnel issues and school management. We decided that the new group would not have an individual leader; the position of College Chair was no more. We made this decision because the position had become highly charged and vulnerable to community frustration or upset. It was no longer a position that anyone would step into willingly. In its place, we attempted collaborative leadership by appointing agenda-setter, facilitator, and navigator. The greatest challenge to this model proved to be the practical task of finding a time during the week for the group to meet and plan. Many tasks that previously lived with the College Chair fell to me as administrator; this transition was facilitated by the fact that I was a College member and former class teacher. We appointed College members to key committees to help strengthen relationships and ensure direct communication.

As we found our way in those early months, we focused on artistic explorations of the Opening and Closing Verses and the College Imagination, which were variously expressed through sketching, modeling, movement,

eurythmy, and writing. We attempted to employ the principles of Goethean conversation in our treatment of a range of topics that, over the course of the first year, included exploration of a nursery program, study of the developmental stages of adolescence and the high school curriculum, questions of stewardship of our campus, and—perhaps inevitably for a College that came to form on the eve of the events of 9/11—robust discussions about nationalism, globalism, the place of a flag on campus, and the nature of our times. These discussions led to us selecting Rudolf Steiner's *Manifestations of Karma* as our first formal study.

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Evolution and Change

Creating new structures and forms did not automatically result in new behaviors. Institutional habit life is strong and runs deep, and it took some time to refine and communicate the new format and new expectations. Recognizing that the school was still in transition, we continued our work towards a renewal of governance through an administrative audit, conducted in 2002 by John Bloom and the Rudolf Steiner Foundation. The audit report summarized conditions at that time, a year after the re-founding of the College: "There is a longing for a kind of renewal in the administrative life that would parallel the renewal experienced by those members of the faculty who chose to reform the College of Teachers." It went on to note the success of the re-founding: "There is an important model in this renewal in that an old 'ineffectual' form had to pass away to allow a new form to emerge. …The theme of renewal or rediscovery of purpose in the College of Teachers, and the positive effect it has had upon the pedagogical life of the school, surfaced in several conversations."[5] Through the audit we began a process of clarifying and strengthening the administration, under its new leadership, to better support the work of the school.

The College continued to clarify its function and form. Evening meetings proved to be a deterrent to some prospective members, precluding their participation. It did allow those involved in the athletic program to participate (there were no practices or games on Wednesdays), but during the first few years, only one colleague took advantage of this possibility. Over time, the sanctity of Wednesday evenings as College-only nights was eroded by the busy life of a K–12 school with competing calendar needs and constant demands for space and time. As a result, the quiet mood on campus dissipated and, at times, College attendance was compromised as members juggled competing demands.

Initially, members made one-year commitments to the group. Unlike the old model, in which there would be a conversation and invitation, colleagues were free to consider the conditions of membership and to decide whether to join. Without the filter of an invitation or conversation process, two founding members quickly discovered that the experience was not what they had expected and resigned rather unhappily from the group. Neither of them had prior College experience and both appeared to be overwhelmed or disappointed by the reality of the new mandate. Otherwise, resignations of College members have, in fact, been rare in the ten years since re-founding.

The formation of mandated committees afforded the College the freedom to take up its work of active research and study. However, it took some years to refine and clarify the roles of these committees; in fact,

this remains an ongoing process as the school evolves. In the early years there was a lot of sorting out of what belonged where. The College retained oversight of faculty hiring and student acceptances. It continued to give input into the budget process as it affected program and personnel. Communication proved to be the greatest challenge to all parties as we attempted to find a balance between ensuring the College was sufficiently informed to be able to make decisions while avoiding replicating the work of mandated groups. Personnel matters continued to present the most complex challenges: what to do when the Steering Committee was confronted with concerns about a member of the College and how to inform the College in a timely and appropriate way of a sensitive personnel issue without re-creating the work and triggering the very concerns about privacy and confidentiality that had in part motivated delegation in the first place.

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The building and maintaining of trust was also an ongoing challenge; trust between the new Steering Committee and the College, between the College and the faculty, and between the Steering Committee and the faculty at large. Relationships tended to become strained whenever the Steering Committee was addressing performance issues with a colleague, and the always-difficult decision to let a colleague go inevitably caused ripples and upset and raised questions about the process, fairness, and work of the Committee. The old "them versus us" dynamic was easily awakened, provoked by the imperative for confidentiality around personnel issues that quickly gave rise to concerns of secrecy, exclusivity, or undue power. These concerns were mitigated to some extent by the nature of Committee membership: three positions were linked to roles (Administrator, High School Coordinator, and Lower School Coordinator) and two positions were revolving (representative of the College of Teachers and pedagogical representative of the faculty at large). As a result, over a number of years several teachers have shared the weight and responsibility of the Committee's work, thereby helping to build trust and support and to mitigate old patterns of mistrust and divisiveness.

It took a long time to shift community perceptions and expectations; there were many years of habit around what the College was supposed to do and what it was responsible for. The Board and community continued to direct questions to the College that more properly belonged to the Steering Committee and, at least during the first years, they continued to hanker after a College Chair. As a result, they would feel frustration and anxiety that things were falling through the cracks—as, from time to time, they inevitably did.

Current Form

Our College model has shifted and evolved in the ten-plus years since its re-founding, and it will no doubt continue to need refinement in response to the ever-changing life and needs of the school. Its present iteration can be summarized quite briefly. The College of Teachers continues to be regarded as an essential organ of the school, with overarching responsibility for its spiritual and pedagogical health—a phrase that is relatively easy to utter, but complicated to enact. The College

meets every week but takes a break during the summer months; this year we changed our meeting time from Wednesday evening back to the more traditional Thursday afternoon to open up the possibility for new membership. It is currently thirteen members strong; smaller than the lively Colleges of the 1980s and 90s, much larger than the College of the late 1990s, and the largest it has been for several years of its re-founded life. These thirteen members represent less than thirty percent of the potential pool of eligible faculty and staff. All sections of the school—Kindergarten, Lower School, High School—as well as Administration are represented in the current group. Oddly, the current membership of thirteen has eleven women and two men: the exact opposite configuration of our current Board. It has not traditionally been so gender unbalanced.

We hold an annual re-dedication ceremony prior to which the mandate and membership conditions are reviewed within the College and with the wider faculty circle. During the re-dedication ceremony, colleagues are invited to step onto or off the College. For the first few years we held this ceremony in the spring; more recently, we have conducted a review in June and held our re-dedication in late August as part of our back-to-school work. The ceremony is very similar in form to the one that marked the re-founding. This year, we asked members for a two-year commitment to help build greater continuity; previously we had set a minimum of one year. Although we have conditions for membership, the decision to join remains a free, individual deed. College members may encourage colleagues to join but there is no formal invitation issued. It is not considered to be part of a member's teaching or administrative load. Occasionally this process does not work, but most members remain as active College participants for several years. Two current members have been on the College continuously since we re-founded it; both were members of the "old" College (I am one of those individuals). One colleague recently rejoined the College; she had previously served in the mid 1990s.

Membership is open to any member of the faculty or staff who has worked at the school for at least one year (now revised to two) and feels sufficiently familiar with the school. The considerations for membership have remained largely unchanged since the re-founding. They include:

- What is my relationship to anthroposophy? Anthroposophy provides the guiding star for College work.
- How will a commitment to the College affect my current work in the school?
- Is my family or personal life supportive of this additional commitment?
- Am I building and maintaining healthy relationships with my colleagues? Am I in good standing in my professional life?
- Am I committed to the school for the foreseeable future; am I able to make a commitment for a period of one year (or more) with regular attendance and any necessary preparation?

The College has been fairly successful in holding to its commitment to study and research, and work has deepened over time. We strive to connect the themes of our study to phenomena of the school. For example, last year our study was focused on the Eightfold Path, with texts drawn from Rudolf Steiner, Georg Kühlewind, and the Buddha. We attempted to apply our insights to different aspects of the life of the school and to bring the fruits of our study to full faculty meetings. This year we have returned to basics: taking up study of Steiner's *How to Know Higher Worlds*, striving to build dialogue around our individual inner work, and refining our capacities for observation and sensing of the school. We have become more disciplined about identifying work that is not ours and sending it where it belongs, especially in any crisis or emergency situation. As administrator, and the only

person in the school required to serve on the College, I attempt to provide considerable support through agenda and calendar setting, provision of data, and the implementation of policies and decisions.

To begin, we scheduled meetings to last two hours; more recently we have shortened them to ninety minutes. A typical agenda begins with the College Imagination and Opening Verse, followed by a period of approximately thirty minutes for discussion and reflection on our current "spiritual" study (such as the Eightfold Path or *How to Know Higher Worlds*). We then usually turn our attention for approximately thirty or forty minutes to our current pedagogical study (currently an examination of what is essential in a Waldorf school), leaving a brief time at the end for reports and announcements. We attempt to link our "spiritual" and "pedagogical" studies. Meetings conclude with the Closing Verse. Occasionally we require additional time, but this is rare.

The Teacher Development Committee originally had responsibility for both faculty development and evaluation. We recognized that these tasks could potentially stand in conflict, so evaluation was moved to the Steering Committee (originally named the Executive Committee, but renamed after several years to avoid confusion with the Board Executive Committee). Membership of the Teacher Development Committee includes a representative from the Kindergarten, the Lower School, the High School, and the College of Teachers. Initially, the full faculty nominated these representatives, but we soon realized that ownership and appointment by each separate section strengthened communication and support for the work. The Teacher Development Committee currently oversees mentoring, the creation of individual professional development plans and goals, and the planning and execution of in-service days. Several years ago, recognizing that faculty expectations and needs were changing and that different types of agreements were called for, we instituted minimum requirements for professional development hours. The Teacher Development Committee monitors completion of those hours, providing suggestions and support as needed.

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The Steering Committee oversees faculty hiring and evaluation. It addresses school needs, performance issues, and a wide range of other concerns. Its mandate specifies that it handles crises and "issues that are not taken care of by any other group"—a category that can be a catch-all for a wide range of topics. The work of the Steering Committee can be weighty and challenging at times, but we have found advantages to having a small, more specialized group addressing these aspects of our work. This frees up the larger circle, and skills can be honed and essential knowledge built. Confidentiality is less challenging with the smaller group. Because of these factors, when the group is working harmoniously it can be tempting to fix membership into place and extend the terms of the College and faculty representatives rather than providing for the rotation of membership. The model requires trust and communication—not always easy to achieve or maintain, but meriting ongoing awareness and effort. A strong administration is needed to support this model; the administrator role as currently defined almost certainly requires someone with a teaching background and considerable knowledge of Waldorf pedagogy.

We have continued to differentiate and delegate. Our high school has over 150 students, and several years ago we recognized the fundamentally different, more complex

nature of a high school's organization and the need for greater autonomy and nimbleness in its operation. This led to the formation of a High School Coordinating Committee, overseen by the Steering Committee and mandated to have significant independence in administering the high school. The High School Coordinating Committee, chaired by the High School Coordinator, is comprised of department heads and the athletic director. This has resulted in a much more harmonious and efficient high school, yet has recently led us to examine what it means to have and to maintain a K–12 program and how to protect and further develop this important aspect of our school's identity.

There has been gradual and ongoing redefinition of the scope of College's responsibilities. We slowly learned that mandating really did mean clarifying, handing over, letting go, and trusting. That was not an easy lesson for a group of teachers accustomed to being in command. Although the College retains ultimate responsibility for the direction of the school, on many issues such as student acceptances, and even in some instances the hiring of colleagues, it is consulted and informed but does not engage directly in the work. Currently, very few decisions take place within the College. We have much greater separation between the "spirit" and the "real practical life" than in former times. The ongoing challenge is to maintain connection and communication, to truly remember that "Spirit is never without matter, matter never without Spirit"[6] and to practice accordingly. In a Waldorf school, although business must be conducted in a business-like manner, if we are to achieve success it can never be disconnected from the impulse that stands behind our work or from relationship to the school's Being and mission. This statement is a given in the pedagogical aspects of our work but is more easily forgotten or neglected when we turn to business and management.

Current and Future Challenges and Opportunities

Communication remains perhaps our greatest ongoing challenge. The primary work of the College is not easy to report on; it is experiential, at times intensely personal, and often there is no "product" to present. Concerns about confidentiality have also had an impact and were one of our original reasons for removing personnel issues from consideration by the full College. We live in an age of requirements for compliance, increasingly complex regulations, and the potential of significant institutional consequences for ignorance or impropriety. As noted earlier, relationships have been most strained when the Steering Committee has confronted serious concerns about a colleague's performance. In a horizontal, consensus-based structure, it is asking a great deal to empower a small group to deal with questions of a colleague's future—and to be unable to communicate in detail about it. We have struggled with appropriate formats for reporting to the faculty, the Board, and the community, yet we know that without clear and regular reporting, trust can quickly erode.

On a positive note, it is interesting that we have weathered the past few years of recession and resulting economic and enrollment pressures with remarkably high morale; one might dare to hope that this is to some extent the result of the somewhat invisible work of the College. We see much less strain among College members and less illness, compared to those troubled days of the late 1990s. A single teacher no longer bears the weight of College Chair duties. Although much of this work now resides with me as administrator, it is compatible with my other responsibilities and duties, and I have found that my membership on the College has continued to provide a source of strength, learning, and centering.

College meetings lack the drama of former times. A College member with long experience of meetings noted that the mood

is generally much more harmonious—and much less intense. She felt that this is in part a reflection of the redefined work of the College; with many potentially contentious issues and decisions removed, the possibility of conflict has been significantly reduced. Comparing present to former times, she also noted that there seems to be less struggling of several, at times competing, leaders. The mood is more horizontal and less charged.

At various times, including the current year, we have opened portions of College meetings to any member of the faculty and staff who wishes to attend. Few have taken advantage of this invitation; it can be difficult to step in and out of an ongoing group, yet the gesture of inclusion is important. It remains a challenge to maintain a climate of "us" and avoid fragmentation into parts. This is a school with a long history of division into kindergarten, lower school, and high school faculties. The three groups come together only once each month for a shared meeting. "Them and us" dynamics and competing needs surface easily—between sections of the faculty, College and faculty, and Steering Committee and faculty or College. Knowing that this is a repeating motif in the school's biography, we need to constantly strive to build in shared work, transparency, and regular reporting. It is very easy to forget this in the busy-ness of a school year. Our K–12 identity is a shared value, one that affords many opportunities, and we are currently looking at ways of strengthening cross-school ties and collaboration within the faculty and with other bodies within the school.

A College member with long experience noted that the mood is much more harmonious—and much less intense.

The tendency towards "them and us" is but one of a number of our recurring challenges. In any institution, it is important to note the conditions of birth and early years and the themes that resound throughout the years. Anthroposophy was not strongly articulated in the founding impulse of this school. It was brought to the forefront by the "Kimberton Five" and soon found its home in the College of Teachers. It has been the source of College work ever since. It is interesting to note that the Five had two conditions: They would be granted authority over all pedagogical matters and the Board would relieve the school of a burden of debt. This can easily be interpreted as an early separation of spirit (the realm of the College) and matter (the realm of the Board).

Recently, the College has begun to re-examine the wisdom of this separation and its role in the wider governance of the school. It is likely that this will be a focus of significant work for the next phase of the school's development. Joint College-Board work has been intermittent since the collaboration that led to College re-founding and administrative restructuring and the completion of a major building project in 2007. Both groups have increasingly relied on the administrator as a primary point of contact, intersection, and—at times—interpretation, rather than engaging in the challenge of more direct contact.

Without the intensity of a major joint project, distance between the Board and College has become evident. In 2008, after examining the effectiveness and intent of College/faculty representation on the Board, the College decided to reduce its presence on the Board from three to two members, and to no longer have a College representative serve as Vice-President of the Board. Since then the College has manifested a degree of indifference towards the Board. Without regular, direct communication, it can become easy for "spirit" to disregard the importance of "matter" and for "matter" to disregard the significance of "spirit."

The effects of distance are showing, and as we set the school's course for the next

five to ten years—a recurring task that is necessary in order to navigate safely and with integrity through a new terrain of a changed economy and a new generation of parents and teachers—several old, familiar questions are back before us. What does it mean in practice to have responsibility for the spiritual and pedagogical life of the school? What is the role of anthroposophy in the life of this school? How can the College effectively and helpfully share its work with the Board? How is anthroposophy to be represented at the Board table? How can both groups work collaboratively to shape a shared vision for the school that will protect and nurture the very essence of our work? How can we balance essential business matters, the need for economy, efficiency, and legality of operations with the intangible yet essential aspects of our work? What happens if these two vital aspects of the school—spirit and matter—become disconnected? Important work to address these questions is underway with dialogue currently taking place between the College Steering Committee and the Board Executive Committee.

The Sacramento Waldorf School stands on the banks of a large river; change and motion are recurring themes of its biography. The model of a College described above, with significant separation of spirit and practical, has carried us forward for over ten years. The model continues to change and self-correct in response to the evolving needs of the school. Although it calls for significant separation of spirit and practical, the two remain continuously linked within the pedagogical life of the school by common principles, language, and understanding and by a structure that ensures shared membership of groups to maintain communication and trust. As we enter a new phase of examining relationships among College, Board, and administration, we are likely to need further refinement of our model and to be open to change. Through this work it will be the responsibility of the College "to say to [y]ourselves: We will do everything material in the light of the Spirit and we will seek the light of the Spirit in such a way that it ignites in us a warmth for our practical deeds"[7] Both are essential for the future health of our school, and we need to find new ways of allowing these poles to infuse one another. Through this new phase of our work, it is likely that a commitment to the central importance of a College of Teachers, and its role in guarding and guiding the mission of the school, will remain as a vital core and source of strength for the school.

Endnotes

1. Rudolf Steiner, *Supersensible Knowledge and Social-Pedagogical Life-Force* (Stuttgart, 1919).
2. *Education as an Art*, The Rudolf Steiner School Association, Vol. 21, 1961, p. 14.
3. Historical records and personal correspondence courtesy of Betty Staley.
4. Sacramento Waldorf Schools Bylaws, 1970.
5. Sacramento Waldorf School Administration Audit Report, Rudolf Steiner Foundation, June, 2002.
6. Op. cit., Steiner.
7. Ibid.

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