



NORTHFIELD MOUNT HERMON SCHOOL

April 21, 2004

Dear Northfield Mount Hermon Community Member,

It has been just three months since the NMH Board of Trustees made its decisions about long-term directions for the school. Please take time to read the enclosed paper that contains additional information about the context and reasons for the board's decisions and how they support the school's ongoing commitment to educating the head, the hand, and the heart. It is not designed to recapitulate all the previous communications. Please refer to them also.

I have been traveling extensively in recent weeks with Pete Ticconi '65, dean of development and alumni relations. We've listened carefully to our alumni, parents, and friends and have heard a range of opinions from all quarters. So many of you have voiced strong support for our new course, based on the understanding that institutions inevitably change and evolve, and the belief that a single campus community will serve young people well.

We have also been asked for reassurance on several points: First, please do not lose what is so special and unique about NMH, and make sure we raise the scholarship funds to keep that education affordable for deserving students. I absolutely agree.

Also, please be good stewards of the Northfield campus. In fact, we are moving deliberately to assess alternative uses (particularly educational), hire an experienced firm to support our consideration, and create an advisory committee and timeline. We are also working with the town of Northfield to consider what will be good for the entire community. You can imagine this is a complex and sensitive issue. Stay tuned for updates.

We have also heard from alumni, students, parents, employees, and friends who feel a particular sadness and sense of loss. I understand those feelings. They are natural, and I share many of them. There are some who are discouraged or even angry. As we make the transition to an outstanding and distinctive NMH on one campus, I believe most of you will be proud of our school and will want to support it over the coming years. We absolutely need and truly appreciate your support!

There have been specific questions about how the decision will impact our programs, people, and facilities. There is keen interest in shorter-term plans, from construction of the new dorms and arts center to fundraising news and successes.

We are moving steadily ahead and will send information regularly. We expect soon to tell you more about our two new dormitories. We have hired Sasaki Associates of Boston as our architects; each dorm will have a cottage-like feel and house about 30 students in a family-style arrangement. They will be placed on the upper side of the road just beyond Memorial Chapel as an extension of Cottage Row. Designs will be coming shortly, with groundbreaking this summer so we can occupy them by the opening of school in 2005.

Similarly, we are drawing up program requirements for the arts center and expect to begin interviewing architects this spring. The center will be located on the lower edge of the campus between Holbrook Hall and Forslund Gym. This summer we are launching renovation projects of Holbrook Hall (to house our admission office), Crossley and Hayden dorms, and Forslund and James Gyms.

You may also know we have created seven on-campus, faculty-staff-student committees to work on transition and futures issues.

**Facilities:** Considers the nature of all renovations and new building plans relevant to modifications of the Gill campus.

**Arts Facilities Subcommittee:** Applies the mission and needs of visual and performing arts programs to developing an arts facility on the Gill campus.

**New Dorms Subcommittee:** Suggests necessary components of new residential facilities at a one-campus school.

**Academic Curriculum:** Confirms the school's academic mission, values, and priorities. Will work closely with the schedule committee.

**Schedule:** Recommends a new schedule upon confirming the values, mission, and priorities of an NMH education.

**Community Transition:** Explores ways to preserve the spirit of the Northfield campus as well as physical elements (archives, etc.). Seeks to elevate unique aspects of Gill campus while focusing on ways to merge campus cultures.

**Honor Northfield:** Plans and facilitates rituals, closings, and celebrations around the transition from a two-campus school to a single campus.

We have had extensive, ongoing advice from school constituents. Alumni Association President Will Melton '67, who also serves as a trustee, has actively participated in discussions about strategic directions, and many alumni leaders and volunteers have asked how they can help and have supplied suggestions about how to best communicate our decisions and plans. Our Parents' Council has contributed invaluable ideas, and fundraising efforts so far have been promising.

Thanks to all of you for your long-standing dedication and your interest in supporting NMH now and into the future.

With warm regards,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard W. Mueller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Richard W. Mueller '62  
President of Northfield Mount Hermon School