

From: [Ralph Scorpio](#)
To: [BRIDGET SPERL](#); [Anita Duckor](#); [Suzanne Herder](#); [Jean Wincek, CSJ](#); [Jill Underdahl](#); [Kristine Smyth](#); [Gabrielle Rohde \(glbrohde@gmail.com\)](#); [Mary Lydon](#); ["Egan, Katherine E. \(KEEGAN@stthomas.edu\)"](#)
Subject: Update
Date: Thursday, March 25, 2021 3:47:00 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Executive Committee:

Suzanne and I had a Zoom conversation with Sue Gehlsen, SMHC Executive Director, and Steve Lokensgard, SMHC board chair, yesterday afternoon.

It was a very cordial and productive meeting. Our strong relationship is intact.

Bottom line: what I heard was that this was the result of a breakdown in communication and a big misunderstanding. Steve said at our meeting, and repeats below, that the SMHC board was not aware that our board had officially voted on Monica's nomination. (And no one spoke up to announce that during the meeting.) They were discussing the pros and cons of the idea of **a** SMHC board member serving on our board. The conversation was certainly about Monica, but not necessarily *just* about Monica, if that makes any sense. They certainly were not pursuing a board action to remove her from our board (because, in their minds, she wasn't even on the board). Their issues were that while they were not against the idea, they were not sure it was necessary and also unsure of any potential conflicts of interest.

After our conversation, I have no reason to believe that this situation had anything to do with racism or sexism. SMHC didn't even know of our efforts toward diversifying our board. One reason is that because all the three top prospects Sue suggested to me just happened to be Latina, she most likely never made a special mention to the SMHC board of our intent to look for someone who represented the SMHC patient community. Sue hand picked them because of their skills and what they could offer us. I believe Sue and I talked about the MF's diversity focus *after* she suggested them, and not at much length, because I didn't have to.

Steve suggested that a future plan could involve either both board chairs or committee chairs (SMHC Nominating Committee and MF Governance Committee) discuss a plan to go forward that each could bring back to their respective boards. They would also be interested in having a MF board member serve on the SMHC board. Conversations and a plan at that level would formalize this idea, which he repeats is a good idea. I'm pleased that he wants to move forward, and I suggest we do, too.

Sue Gehlsen said she was reading Monica's reaction (via Zoom) during the March 8 meeting and saw her getting increasingly uncomfortable. In a follow-up conversation, Monica (who is relatively new to that board) became worried that she did something wrong and would get ousted from the SMHC board. That's why she emailed me in the moment and resigned. First and foremost she loves SMHC and did not want to jeopardize that.

However, I received this message from her today. I'm not sure if she'll throw her name in the ring the next time, but at least we're still on good terms.

Hi Ralph!

Thank you for your kind message. As you are probably aware, Sue and I spoke on the week after the board meeting. I also felt blindsided and taken back by the pushback to the idea. In hindsight, I should have also communicated this to the rest of the board formally, etc. No use crying over spilled milk!

However, I remain committed to the Sisters and to SMHC, and what happened has no bearing on how I feel towards the mission of the Ministries and my gratitude towards the Foundation.

Monica

Thank you.

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From: Lokensgard, Steve <steve.lokensgard@faegredrinker.com>

Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 4:53 PM

To: Ralph Scorpio <rscorpio@csjministriesfoundation.org>

Cc: Susan Gehlsen (sgehlsen@stmarysclinics.org) <sgehlsen@stmarysclinics.org>; Sr. Suzanne Herder <sherder@csjstpaul.org>

Subject: Cross Board Representation

Ralph – thanks for the call this afternoon. I just wanted to provide my perspective on the idea of a member of the St. Mary’s Board serving on the Foundation Board.

I serve on the Nominating Committee for the St. Mary’s Board. During our meeting on February 3rd it was brought to our attention that the Foundation Board was interested in

having a member of the St. Mary's Board serve on the Foundation Board. We had a brief discussion, and I think there was general support for the idea, though there was a concern raised about a potential conflict of interest with dual-hatted board members. After the meeting I told Carla, the Chair of the Nominating Committee, that I thought we should raise the request with the St. Mary's Board.

In our Board meeting on March 8, we discussed the idea. The general sense of the Board was that Sister Suzanne served on both boards, and could adequately communicate St. Mary's Board activities to the Foundation Board, and that an additional member wasn't necessary. There was a brief discussion of a potential conflict of interest, but overall our belief was that the relationship with the Foundation was strong, and that having cross-board representation to facilitate communication was just unnecessary. During the meeting, we had no idea that a member of our Board had already been selected and appointed to the Foundation Board. Although Monica attended the meeting on March 8, she didn't note that she had already been invited and appointed to the Board.

I apologize for the miscommunication. I should have called you or the Foundation Board chair prior to our meeting on March 8 to discuss the issue so we could have had a more robust discussion with our Board. I can commit to revisiting the issue with the Nominating Committee at our next meeting in May, and with the full Board in June. Sorry about the delay in the process, and the misunderstanding that ensued! Take care, Steve

Steve Lokensgard

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