The Great Conversation

Part I

I would like to determine how much time our teachers need to put into understanding the the broad topic of the great ideas in order to relate their specific field to those ideas. Following this, I would hope to have a couple of teacher training Saturdays on which we help teachers reach the level of understanding required.

Part II

Reduce a discussion of the the great conversation to a 15 minute talk. This will involve distilling the guiding ideas to a manageable number and choosing the vocabulary with which we will discuss these ideas. I have in mind the average Mars Hill parent and hope to give a simple explanation of how these ideas guide both our civic and religious life. I hope to educate rather than intimidate with our vocabulary.

Part III

Beginning with literature and history, I would like to have a master plan that develops the very clearly defined ideas from 7th Grade through graduation. This would include specific modules in each grade level which reinforce and elaborate on the ideas. For the history classes, this would mean identifying the places and times in which the ideas were in play. For example: Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address is powerful because it appeals to universal truth. It is very similar to the Periclean Eulogy recorded by Thucydides. It takes the opportunity to recast a nation in the midst of eulogizing fallen heroes. Specifically, “These United States” becomes “this nation.” The founding and refounding of nations is the subject of most Epics.

An example of literature would be “The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come.” This Kentucky novel is a great introduction to the universal questions of who am I and how should I live? “I hain’t nothin’ but a boy, but I got to ack like a man now.” It was first published in 1903 when Fox was well aware of the aftermath of the war and the transition brought about in Kentucky as a result. Themes include agrarianism, Appalachian studies, the civil war, cultural roots, education, and individual, as well as national, cultural transition.

Part IV

Help our Science and Math teachers develop lectures which relate the

Quadrivium to our Worldview and literature.

Part V

Develop the Art and Music departments, synthesizing them with our history of ideas.