

Alumni Council Meeting Minutes
October 1, 2010
Powell Campus Center Knight Club
10:00am – 4:00pm

Meeting called to order at 10:00am and introductions were made.

President's Report (M. Christakis):

- Continue to build the Council through the strategic plan
- Wine tasting and ring program are good staples to build on
- AU Pride efforts
- AC giving to Alfred Fund

Treasurer's report (G. Walter):

- Reviewed income and expenses
- Remove apparel purchases
- Update ring sales numbers
- Suggestion to increase budget for Student Leaders Reception to include the WLC Academy, Horowitz Service Learning, Student Senate

UR Update (S. Colla):

- Alfred Fund finished ahead of goal by \$5K & change from previous two years - \$110,000 over last year.
- Overall fundraising was \$12.5 million over \$8.4 million last year
- Context for fundraising in the U.S. remains challenging
- Number of donors to AU is down – participation important symbolically and financially – need the AF to run on a daily basis
- Council's leadership participation goes a long way to training students to take care of their alma mater
- AU Pride – creating pride on campus
 - New AU sign
 - Will roll down through all years to freshman going forward
 - Real world program in place
- Athletics Campaign
 - Replaced turf at Merrill Field
 - Take your seat campaign
 - Addition to McLane to take the place of Davis, hopefully completed in 2 years
 - New softball field
 - Need to find a way to recreate Tucker Field
 - Beautification of that area as last stage of the campaign
- Reviewed Alumni Events
- Discussed lack of Alumni Relations Director
- Communications
 - No printed magazine

- Jessi Empestan started discussion about class notes – updated to fast. Might be better to have quarterly updates.
 - Enews feedback and discussion
 - Soon AU will likely be renting textbooks
 - The trend in the U.S. is digital with Kindle, Nook, etc
- NAFC – conducted informal survey and found that those surveyed felt a strong connection during their time here and since leaving feel disconnected
 - Don't understand the current social structure due to the elimination of the Greeks, decline of downtown bus, lack of emphasis on athletics
 - Don't understand/know the vision of AU
 - Perceived decline in AU's reputation and stature
- Discussion ensued among council about how to engage alumni with many suggestions and ways to fit into the strategic plan

Awards Committee (S. Brenner):

- Everything on track
- Widen the scope discussion – include Student Affairs, faculty, class correspondents, class coordinators, anyone else?
- Marketing – such as the letters to class correspondents
- Timing – making it greener by emailing all information
- Members of the committee at that time: Scott Brenner, Laurie McFadden, Carolyn Clark

Events Committee (M. DeRitter):

- Student Leaders reception
 - Invite more groups such as: WLC academy, sports captains, RAs & RDs, orientation guides
 - Get bios of (?AC Members?) out ahead of time with the invites
- Tailgate
- Ring program to Sheila now
- Wine tasting was wonderful
- Beer tasting – didn't work out for this year, much discussion to include the possibility of having it a different time.

AU President's Update (C. Edmondson):

- 50 more freshman than budgeted
- Less withdrawals this semester
- Overcrowded dorms
- Current junior class is very small – bad retention
- Current sophomore class is small – smaller than planned class as freshman
- Finished fiscal year with 7th or 8th balanced budget
- Student orgs flourishing
- Athletics off to a good start overall
- Hold accreditation in every program

- Phi Beta Kappa is happy with us
- Good standing with Moody's bond rating
 - Almost all private rural college institutions were downgraded – not AU!
- Getting bonded indebtedness down – expect it to be completely retired in 2013
- Gradually getting the debt down from previous overspending
- College of Ceramics is in the second year of surplus so paying back their debt – looks to be another surplus year
- Series of program cuts
 - Decisions have been made
 - Implantation happening
 - Found productive work for the faculty involved
 - Some faculty going into retirement so no layoffs
- AU will not automatically replace vacated positions
- Unprecedented challenging financial times.
- Second straight year of no raises but able to issue bonuses – exactly the same amount to all. All VPs and some faculty declined to accept the bonus.
- Academic quality is source of optimism – faculty are engaged in discussion about new curriculum and new opportunities for offering quality programs
- First significant campaign for athletics will be announced on Saturday
 - Prior to this AU has prioritized academics & student programming over athletics
 - Stronger participation now in athletics, i.e., half of the freshman men are in football
 - We are at a point in AU history where we need to invest in athletics
 - Beautification includes a pavilion
- The Downstate program crossed threshold of 300 students this fall
- Starting similar program in Victor, NY
 - Counseling
 - Specific sections of Teacher Ed
 - Community Services
- In talks with others about very selectively offering MBA program downstate
 - Our program is crafted to be accessible to non-traditional students
 - Working very well for us and we are mindful that as it grows the quality challenge increases
- Conversations occurring to extend into the fine arts – will take some very open and honest communications
- Questioned about upgrading residence halls
 - Right now only safety upgrades being done
 - Some things are happening but slow going and done a little at a time
 - \$21 million in updates/maintenance planned and nearly all is scheduled for the residence halls
- AC Crandall Hook & Ladder is now populated more by students than before
- Questioned about the way the endowment is managed
 - Trustees form an investment committee – all alumni

- They are seriously committed and decide what to do regarding high risk vs. low risk
- AU has mostly true endowment valued at \$86 million at last reporting
- Endowment funds provide annual support to operating budget, foundation for credit worthiness (bond rating) and cover exigent costs, i.e., fire
- NYPMIFA may change the way we have to fundraise

Group breakout discussions led by Laurie Cama. Timelines assigned and ad hoc committees formed:

Priority 1. A&B: Scott Brenner, Liz Reina, Matt Washington

Priority 1. D: Sean Mansfield, Mike Birmingham, Brad Berwald

- Alumni art show during reunion
- More outreach from Art School to their alumni
- Want more advanced notice about senior shows

Priority 2. A&B: Kathy Benzaquin, Nate Kisselburgh

Priority 2. C: Mike Christakis

Priority 3. A: Seth Mulligan, George Walter, Laurie (? Cama or McFadden?)

Priority 3 for disenfranchised: Sheila Flannigan, Scott Brenner to co-chair

- Need to reach out to Sigmas and Thetas
- “Without AU there would have been no (insert Greek house here).
- Letter of “lessons learned” from Scott and Sheila (etc) to other greeks

Next meeting is June 2011. Ad hoc committees to work in between meetings. Laurie Cama to find free conference call/web meeting options.

Meeting is adjourned at 4:00 pm.