

ALUMNI COUNCIL  
Fall Meeting

Friday, October 5th, 2012  
Powell Campus Center Knight Club  
Alfred, NY

Present: Kathleen Benzaquin, Bradley Berwald, Michael Birmingham, Michael Christakis, Michelle DeRitter, Jessica Empestan, Cindy Lewis-Black, Laurie McFadden, Seth Mulligan, Daryl Murray, Elizabeth Reina, Christopher Robinson, Susan Rozak, Matthew Washington, Lori Wellman

Absent: Garrick Ackart, Scott Brenner, Laurie Cama, Carolyn Clark, Sheila Flanagan, Brenda Glasse, Kellee-Sue Henry, Nathan Kisselburgh, Stephen Levine, Seth Richard, Alex Toribio, George Walter, Jessica Webster

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Brad Berwald at 10:08 a.m.

Brad opened the meeting by announcing that Stan Colla has retired from the position of Vice President of University Relations, and Sue Goetschius is acting in that position now.

**Approval of June, 2012 Minutes**

Brad Berwald called for a movement to approve the minutes of the June meeting. The minutes were approved.

**Treasurer's Report**

George Walter was unable to attend the meeting so the budget was not handed out. It will be send via email shortly.

Brad Berwald discussed the June wine tasting event and its overall impact on the council's budget. Due to the unforeseen circumstances before June's wine tasting, the council did not make any money from the event. The council discussed how to avoid this happening again in the future.

The events committee is working on plans A - F, including the following:

- Charge a higher price per person for tickets
- Capitalize on alumni who are attached to local wineries
- Consider including beer
- Consider using current stock of wine and wine glasses
- Focus more on advertising - either in-kind, or via publications about the event and wineries

Lori Wellman verified that the move of the Alumni Council's bank account will be finalized after a few checks clear from the old account. Additionally, she verified that the account will not be swept at the end of each fiscal year.

## **New Business**

### **A. Awards Update**

The council discussed that the picnic might not be the best venue for the awards ceremony, due to audio system issues, the fact that most people are there to socialize with each other therefore not much attention is paid to the recipients and weather issues since the picnic is an outdoor event.

Brad Berwald asked the councilors to consider incorporating the awards ceremony into the president's address held in Nevins Theater. The council discussed pros and cons of this idea. Pros included having control over lighting and sound, while cons included concerns about attendance.

The rest of the discussion included making sure the council continues to recognize the awards recipients at the picnic through creative ways such as a photo montage and announcement of winners.

It was also discussed that the council might consider creating a task force or an ad-hoc committee to look at the entire awards process. A suggestion was made to divide up past alumni magazines and have each councilor identify alumni who might fit an award.

The motion was made, seconded, and passed, so the awards ceremony will now be held in Nevins Theater.

### **B. Events Update (Including Student Leader Reception)**

The wine tasting event was discussed, and Jessi Empestan, Second Vice President, confirmed that the Paul DeRitter band has been confirmed for the event. Jessi reiterated the earlier discussion about wanting numerous backup plans in place for the June event in case the council runs into a similar problem as this past June.

The Student Leader Reception was also discussed. Informal feedback indicates that last year's reception was excellent. The reception scheduled for just after this council meeting is to include 42 student leaders.

### **C. Governance Update**

Elizabeth Reina, Secretary, discussed the current council membership, in that the council has more councilors than the Constitution allows for, so membership (attendance and committee participation) are being looked at. She also discussed her concerns that councilors are

sometimes elected without being fully informed that council meets twice a year on Fridays in Alfred, which poses a challenge for a number of people

Mike Christakis, Past President (Ex Officio) brought up that the current term expirations document isn't one hundred percent accurate, so that document needs to be fixed before any other changes can be made.

A sign-in sheet is being used from now on for official record keeping purposes, and to get a sense of stagnant members (those who have not been to at least one of the last two meetings, and have not been participating in committee work).

Membership will be looked and discussed again in June.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to amend the By-Laws to reflect the current committees. That document will be updated and posted online.

### **President's Update**

Dr. Edmondson stated that the university currently has the second highest freshman enrollment rate in its history, but is struggling with four-year retention. He attributed this to a number of factors, including the overall state of the economy, the lack of academic preparation, adjustment to college life in general, and cohabitation issues.

Overall, the university continues to remain financially stable, though some cuts are likely to happen.

The university is engaged in long-term planning, which was discussed, and questions were answered.

### **New Business (Con't)**

#### **D. Middle States Self-Study**

Laurie McFadden, University Archivist, informed the council that the university is in the two and a half year Middle States Self-Study process, which takes place every ten years, and includes 14 standards with which the university must be in compliance in order to maintain accreditation. There are seven working groups, and the Alumni Council might be contacted for information.

Laurie McFadden then informed the council that the Fiat Lux is no longer being printed due to losing its funding from the Student Senate. However, the Fiat Lux is now posting stories to Twitter and Tumblr, and is using AURA, an online repository for campus publications.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to post the Constitution, By-Laws, and council meeting minutes to AURA.

**E. Alumni Events**

Brad Berwald hosted a Cinco de Mayo event at his home in May, and talked about what he learned from the event, including what he did right, what he did wrong, and what he could have done better.

Each councilor was asked to review the two page AU Alumni Event Toolkit in their folder, if/when considering hosting an event.

Lori Wellman discussed her role in alumni-hosted events, and answered questions from councilors.

**Committee Breakout Meetings**

The councilors broke out into their committees for discussion and planning.

**Announcements**

The spring Alumni Council Meeting is on Friday, June 7th, 2013 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the Powell Campus Center Knight Club.

The Annual Meeting of the Alumni Council (including the awards ceremony) is Saturday, June 8th, 2013.

John Dietrich invited the council to take a tour of the new Ade Dining Hall at 4:00 p.m.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:32 p.m.

Submitted by:

Elizabeth Reina

Alumni Council Secretary