

St. John's College Alumni Association
Plenary Session Minutes
April 29, 2007

In Attendance: Michael Bales, Amber Boydston, Dianne Cowan, Dick Cowles, Amanda Dulin, Bill Fant, Mary Fisher, Carol Freeman, Robert George, David Heimann, Sam Kutler, Felix Leslie, Ellen McLaughlin, Lee Mendelson, Joanne Murray, Sanjay Poovadan, Morgan White Smith, Steve Thomas, Daniel Van Doren, Jason Walsh, Helen Zartarian, Jace Cooke, Jessie Seiler

Mr. Walsh called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. **Minutes of the January meeting had not been distributed in the packets and therefore there was not a motion for approval; these Minutes should be distributed for approval at the July meeting along with the April Minutes.**

President's report – Walsh

The following 2008 Alumni Association tentative Board dates were announced: January 26 - 27 and April 26 - 27. Croquet will most likely not be during the April AABD meeting. Dates for Summer and Fall are TBD.

Mr. Walsh reported on several discussions that occurred during the BVG meeting on April 28:

1. In response to the Virginia Tech incident, representatives of the College described to the BVG the College's plan for emergency situations and for identifying students who may be emotionally/psychologically troubled and a potential danger to themselves or the community.
2. The Presidential Education Commission is attempting to expand the concepts behind "No Child Left Behind" to higher education. They want to implement externally confirmable metrics to measure the performance of higher education institutions. It is a major concern that an attempt to institute such metrics would either misrepresent St. John's validity leading to a loss of the College's accreditation or would force changes in the school that could impair the Program's curriculum. At the last Alumni Association Board meeting we issued a resolution in support of President Chris Nelson's statements and we, the alumni, may need to return to the issue and take a more active role in advocacy.
3. A preliminary decision has been made to allocate \$1.0-1.3M to implement unified administrative systems and would take 15 - 18 months to complete.
4. The Capital Campaign results have passed \$107M. About 70% has come from alumni gifts across all levels of giving. \$900,000 of the \$2.5M Fielding Challenge has been achieved. The College wants to thank and recognize alumni for the large transformation they have made possible on each campus by holding celebratory events at each Homecoming and in each chapter throughout the country.

Treasurer's Report – Cowles

Mr. Cowles presented the Treasurer's Report (enclosed). Issues about supporting the *Epoch* magazine were raised and discussed.

The motion for acceptance of the Treasurer's Report was passed.

Nominating Committee – Thomas

Gary Edwards resigned in February. **The Board elected Patty Sollars to fill the remainder of his term.**

At the last meeting Jeff Bishop was approved to receive the Award of Merit. He has elected to receive it in Annapolis. The committee recommended that only two awards be presented at this homecoming dinner, holding off one award until sometime in the future. **This recommendation was passed by show of hands 12 to 7.** No Awards of Merit are scheduled this year to be given in Santa Fe but an Honorary Alumnus Degree will be given. **It was moved and seconded to nominate at-large directors. The motion passed unanimously.**

Chapters – Freeman

Seven (of 18) chapter representatives attended the Chapters Committee meeting. Issues discussed to address to improve chapter management included: simplified email through the college, simplifying tutor visits, problems giving enough notice for cards, and the possibility of a chapter presidents' workshop. The pros and cons of having a separate chapter presidents' retreat was discussed. Ways to increasing attendance of chapter presidents at board meetings were also discussed. Chapters are doing well. Most chapters meet regularly and new chapters, including a European chapter, are forming.

The South Florida reading group has petitioned to become the South Florida Chapter. **The Board approved the charter the South Florida chapter.**

Events – Leslie (for Travis)

The Events Committee discussed concerns regarding moving the date of the Santa Fe Homecoming that have been raised by alumni; the event schedules for both homecomings; and the idea of an alumni survey asking about homecomings and timing issues. The survey idea was tabled in order to allow the possible development of a college-wide survey addressing a broader set of questions for the alumni population.

Recent Graduates - Heimann

The Recent Graduates Committee discussed the state of career services. Responses from both career services offices were read and discussed. The committee will address career services as part of the development of the overall alumni strategy, since there are significant concerns about the efficacy of this program and the College has recognized career services as a major point for the strategy process. Collecting current data, particularly the current state of student experience and satisfaction with the career services, was recognized as a priority. Benchmarking ourselves against other similar colleges was also mentioned as an important part of any improvement plan.

Encouraging recent grads to be involved with chapters was also discussed.

Communications – Murray

The questions that were discussed during the Communications Committee meeting included: How do people communicate on the chapter level? How does the board communicate among itself? How do the chapters use the college magazine and John-e newsletter?

Victoria Smith gave an account to the Committee of how the databases are synchronized. There is also a unified database for the college in the works.

The way chapter presidents communicate was discussed and it was decided that standards and guidelines need to be developed.

Finance/Support – Cowles (for Fant)

Mr. Cowles reported that the 2006 Audit of the prior treasurer's records was conducted and found no issues.

He also reported that certain funds have been transferred to a higher yield CD.

Old Business

Mr. Walsh reported that the College has incorporated the suggestions made by the Alumni Board in January into the strategic plan. Operational Planning has not yet begun. It was asked that committees have recommendations by the next meeting.

New Business

Mr. George noted that Santa Fe tutor Greg Bayer is in Iraq trying to help Iraqi Fulbright scholars come to the United States and asked that we keep him in our thoughts.

Seminars for the board were discussed. Mr. Cowles suggested that having Walter Sterling Jr. lead a seminar in Santa Fe Saturday evening followed by dinner was suggested.

The Board adjourned at 12:15 p.m.