

Plenary Session  
Sunday January 27, 2008  
St. John's College  
Santa Fe, New Mexico

**Attendance:** Michael Bales, Charles Claunch, Dick Cowles, Carol Freeman, Forrest Hayes, Dave Heimann, Allan Hoffman, Felix Leslie, Michael MacDonald, Ellen MacLaughlin, Paul Martin, Jo Ann Mattson, Lee Mendelson, Joanne Murray, Walter Sterling, Steve Thomas, Liz Travis, Jason Walsh, Morgan White-Smith

The meeting began with approval of the September 07 minutes with one correction.

**President's Report – Walsh**

Mr. Walsh gave the highlights from the BVG meetings. As announced by Ron Fielding, as of December 2007, pledges and cash for the Capital Campaign have topped \$125 million with \$85 million cash-in-hand, 61% of which is from Alumni. Mr. Walsh noted that there is still time to meet the total identified need of \$162 million. The Fielding Challenge (dedicated to a new dormitory in Santa Fe) has nearly met its goal as well. Mr. Walsh also recognized alumni gifts as significant to the success of the Campaign. Also announced at the BVG meeting was Barbara (A55) and Warren (A52) Winiarski's gift of \$5 million designated for the Santa Fe residential project.

Mr. Walsh then addressed the Bush Administration's educational policy using outcome based measures to determine federal funding for education. Walsh acknowledged that Christopher Nelson has been working with politicians to address the college's concerns with this threat..

The Public Policy Committee of the BVG has recognized diversity as a central issue facing the campuses. St. John's diversity numbers still remain very low.

Mr. Walsh moved to express sympathy for Judith Tolliver Neely's death and send a letter of condolence to her family. The motion was seconded and passed.

Mr. Walsh reported that a \$26,000. gift from the Alumni Association to the College was given to the college during the BVG Plenary Session. This gift is the second installment of the Alumni Association's \$75,000 pledge for the college's Capital Campaign; after this gift, only \$25,000 remains outstanding under the pledge.

Mr. Walsh also noted that the college has paid a consulting firm to redesign its website.

**Treasurer's Report – Cowles**

Mr. Cowles reported that the 2007 budget ended in an operating surplus of \$4,614.72. The adoption of the Treasurer's report was moved, seconded, and passed.

**Nominating Committee – Thomas**

Mr. Thomas reminded members that the Nominating Committee eagerly solicits nominations from alumni for the four categories of awards and positions: Award of Merit, honorary alumni, alumni representatives to the BVG and at-large directors and officers of the Alumni Association. He moved to award two Alums for the Annapolis Award of Merit. The motion was seconded and passed.

Mr. Thomas then moved that Mr. Mendelson, Mr. Leslie, Ms. Sollars, Mr. Heimann, and Ms. Travis, all current at-large members of the board, be reappointed as at-large members for additional three-year terms on the Board. Such terms begin in January 2009. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Mattson acknowledged these board members as strong contributors to the Board.

Mr. Thomas announced that the Santa Fe Award of Merit, if any, the honorary alumni grants, if any, and alumni representatives to the BVG may be announced at the April meeting.

#### **Chapter Support – Freeman**

Ms. Freeman announced that the year has again been successful for Alumni Chapters. Nine chapters had 10-13 events each. The San Diego and Baltimore chapters are stated as inactive and San Diego will remain so. Freeman noted she has been making an effort to get the Baltimore chapter going again (a steering committee was suggested). Albuquerque, Freeman stated, is in need of a new president. She reported that the Chapters are having more social events than they have had in previous years, especially now that they have learned the college will provide some financial assistance. The monthly Chapter Presidents' conference call is also doing well.

The new policy of a 7-8 week lead-time in producing a postcard was discussed, as were ways of helping to mitigate that time commitment and strategies to enable planners to meet the deadline.

The use of the online community to facilitate communication between Chapter Presidents was discussed. Freeman said she is aiming at 100% reporting for Chapters and Reading Groups on line. The New York Chapter also has expressed need for aid and support in moving their website and email list to the Online Community.

Ms. Mattson suggested setting up a consistent tradition to honor outgoing Chapter Presidents for all their hard work and commitment. Mr. Thomas suggested thanking Presidents every year in addition to when they retire. These suggestions were well-received by the Board.

Ms. Freeman also noted that Chapter Presidents have asked about getting advice on readings and opening questions from Tutors.

#### **Events Report – Travis**

Ms. Travis reported that based on initial evidence, the college's decision to move Santa Fe's Homecoming to the Fall was a positive change. Homecoming dinners were well

attended with a good mix of alumni and students participating in events throughout the weekend.

Mr. Martin mentioned that having the two Homecomings so close together may make it difficult for people to attend both. He requested another discussion of moving Santa Fe's Homecoming date at the Board meeting in January '09, after results from the 2008 Homecomings are in.

The Committee hopes to gather information from current seniors about what they prefer in Annapolis for the upcoming Senior Dinner. The Santa Fe alumni office plans to conduct exit interviews with seniors to get feedback, both from those who attended and those who did not. Ms. Travis hopes to have a conference call by the end of February to discuss the Annapolis Senior Dinner. The old tradition of having hosts pay for their dinner was discussed and the possible perceived impropriety of having the Board treat themselves to a dinner was also brought up. The committee will continue to discuss this.

#### **Recent Graduates – Heimann**

The committee would like to get approval from each Deans for their plan to research Career Services. As soon as it has been approved, an in depth description of the plan will be made available to the board on-line.

The committee also discussed how to communicate with recent graduates and inform them of the ways in which the Alumni Association can help them. The committee also wants to consider extending the dues waiver from one year to five.

Mr. Walsh then requested that the alumni office provide a breakdown of dues paid by class year. Sending a letter from the Association that would welcome new graduates as well as lay out benefits of being an Alum was discussed. The possibility of sending out an Alumni Association membership card was also considered. The committee also introduced the idea of sending an electronic dues mailer to attempt to cut down on costs and accomplish a larger participation rate. The committee also discussed the possibility of a parting gift/keepsake from the Alumni Association to the graduates.

#### **Communications Report – Murray**

On the topic of the Dues Mailer, Ms. Murray suggested sending an email February 1<sup>st</sup>, followed by one on March 1<sup>st</sup> and sending a paper reminder to anyone who has yet to pay by April 1, followed by an additional paper reminder a few months later to those who still haven't paid. The Election Notice, Murray noted, can be removed from the mailer and placed in the College Magazine. The Alumni Association's magazine pages were also discussed with the exploration of alternatives to the current format, including a staple-in Dues Mailer.

#### **Support and Finance Report – Walsh (for Fant)**

Mr. Walsh invited all to read the by-laws and code of resolutions and provide the Committee with suggestions or corrections for improvement, as part of our quinquennial review of these documents.

Mr. Fant is researching business insurance for the Association. The budget was amended by reducing the Recent Graduates Committee's line from \$4,000 to \$1,000. Mr. Walsh motioned to approve the budget (final version attached). It was seconded and passed.

**Old Business**

Allan Hoffman read an excerpt from *A Happening, Its Side Effects, and Unintended Long Term Consequences, the Story of How I came to St. John's College* by Philip Camponeschi, A46

There was no new business and a motion to adjourn the meeting was seconded and passed at 12:04 p.m.