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Alumni Association Executive Board, Illinois Wesleyan University

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**Illinois Wesleyan University Alumni Association
Minutes of the Executive Board Meeting
September 17, 2004**

Board members present: Mark Aubry '95, Jean Baird '80, Pat Bass '66, Brittany Becker '05, Ray Berger '70, Kris Condon '84, Jennifer Frahm '94, Todd French '93, Guy Gebhardt '69, Jim Graehling '72, Sherry Graehling '72, Scott Huch '86, Esteban Lizano '01, Muneerah Maalik '00, Marilyn Neis '71, Tom Neis '70, Barb Nielsen '85, Larry Rollings '67, Mark Sheldon '70, Trevor Sierra '05, Tracy Wych '77

Board members unable to attend: Deon Hornsby '97, Marsha Guenzler-Stevens '78, Amy Tenhouse '97

IWU Administration/Staff present: Jane Baines, Emmalyn Dickinson, Jennifer Lehman, Sara Powell '72, Beth Raboin-Gettleman '99, Ben Rhodes '69, Steve Seibring '81, Lora Wey '88

Welcome and Introductions:

Jean Baird opened the meeting by welcoming new members--Guy Gebhardt and Muneerah Maalik. She asked all others in attendance to introduce themselves to the group.

The meeting was suspended temporarily to allow for a group photo to be taken.

Approval of the Minutes from the May 1, 2004 Executive Board Meeting:

Upon reconvening the meeting, a motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the May 1, 2004 Executive Board Meeting. The minutes were approved as presented.

Committee Updates:

- ***Volunteer Leadership Workshop:*** Steve Seibring reported that out of a total of 225 volunteers, approximately 80 people from 12 states will be attending the workshop this weekend.
- ***Career Networking:*** Todd French reported on the success of the career seminar held yesterday evening and sponsored by the Alumni Association. The seminar, titled "Pursue Your Passion", was attended by approximately 48 students. Todd noted that many students stayed after the presentation to talk to alums about their specific career interests.

Warren Kistner, IWU Career Center Director, has requested that the Alumni Association concentrate on continuing to develop and to enhance the career

mentoring program. The Alumni Association also needs to seek ways to increase student internships, particularly during the May term with a possible extension into the summer.

Todd also reported that he has been talking to Scott Huch about the possibility of incorporating a career networking subcommittee at the regional level.

- **Reunion/Homecoming Committee:** Ray Berger began by thanking Steve Seibring and his staff for all their help with reunions and homecoming. He referred to the 2004 and 2005 list of reunion committees that was included in the Executive Board members' information packets.

Ray reported that the Back-to-College program presented by IWU faculty and alumni has continued to grow and expand over the years. He noted that the feedback on these programs has been very positive.

As an example of a successful reunion plan, Ray identified the Class of '84 headed by Kris Condon and Jane Baffes. They recruited 20 committee members and expect a turnout of 80 + classmates for their 20th reunion. He noted that classes create their own excitement, not the University or the Alumni Relations staff. In order to accommodate classmates who were not able to attend both Friday and Saturday night activities, Kris's committee has planned a special program for both nights. The program includes a video, which is also the reunion favor, and the production cost has been included in the price of the event. The video is a series of still photos from the senior class and more recent photos all set to a soundtrack of 80's music. Some Executive Board members suggested that the class might market this video to everyone in the class of 1984 as a way to get additional participation in the annual fund.

Ray reported that the University has returned to the practice of letting classes determine their dinner location and program. Classes appear to want to be in their own setting and determine their own agenda.

Ray noted that for 2005, chairs or committees have been identified for only four reunion classes—1965, 1970, 1995, and 2000. Ray went on to report that he needs more support in recruitment efforts. He feels that Scott Huch's ideas for designing a regional structure might prove to be a great help.

Ray reported that his goal is to identify reunion chairs approximately 18 months prior to the reunion. Another goal Ray wants to implement is to utilize the reunion chairs to generate a special reunion gift. Ray noted that reunions are a great opportunity to generate additional funds for the University.

- **Regions:** Scott Huh reported that he has targeted 16 regions for closer study because of their current activity level and growth potential. The targeted regions are Chicago, McLean County, Peoria/Pekin, Champaign, Springfield, Rockford, Galesburg/Quad Cities, St. Louis, New York City/Metro, Los Angeles, Milwaukee,

Phoenix/Tucson, San Francisco, Washington DC/Metro, Dallas/Ft. Worth, and Atlanta.

Scott reported on the success of the New York City Theatre event. The event was held in conjunction with IWU's May term theater class. A total of 108 people attended the event of which 27 were IWU students. The event included alumni readings from the plays of Larry Shue '68. Scott thanked Tracy Wych for her leadership in coordinating the event. Scott noted this event sent the appropriate message to students and alumni. It made alumni feel that they are still very much a part of the University community. And, it made students aware of the fact that there is a very vibrant group of IWU alumni outside of Bloomington/Normal, and they will, one day, be a part of this group.

Scott reported that Jennifer Frahm is the new president of the New York City/Metro region and is currently working with a committee to determine how to build on the success of the May event in New York.

Scott updated the Board on other events that have occurred since their last meeting.

- St. Louis event in July. Attendance = 24 alumni and friends including prospective students and their parents.
- Chicago Cub game in August. All 150 tickets were sold within 3 hours of the e-mail announcement.
- Cog Hill Golf outing in September. Attendance = 87 alumni and friends.
- Washington DC event to meet the new president in September. Attendance = 58 alumni and friends. Scott noted that the Wilsons were a big hit in DC.
- Champaign event to meet the new president in September. Attendance = 82 alumni and friends. Larry Rollings reported that it was a *great event*.

Scott reported that yesterday's regional committee meeting focused on how the regions can most effectively support the Alumni Association's goals and objectives. Scott presented a regional model, which closely mirrors the overall structure of the Alumni Association. He feels that the regions should duplicate what the Alumni Association is doing at the national level, but modify the regional structure to the specific needs and strengths of each region. Scott emphasized the need to take advantage of regional alumni strengths. He also feels very strongly that the Alumni Association should provide alumni with the opportunity to contribute to the University in a meaningful way.

Scott reported that he is having a meeting on October 19th with the Regional Alumni Council of Washington DC, to look at filling the various committee chairmanships for the region. He noted that at the last DC connection, a significant number of alums (58) indicated their willingness to volunteer to help serve the Alumni Association in some capacity. One of the first activities to

involve an alumni volunteer is the fine arts fair at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

Scott noted the importance of expanding the leadership of the Alumni Association. As an example, he pointed out the problem he experienced trying to schedule the workshop meeting for regional presidents. Many of the regional presidents are also class agents and needed to attend the class agent workshop as well.

Ray Berger commented that Scott's organization model would be of great help to him in explaining to alumni why they should be involved in regional activities.

Scott also recommended that we amend the mission statement of the Alumni Association to include a sentence that expresses the Alumni Association's desire to offer alumni increased opportunities to become a part of the University community and to contribute more meaningfully to the education of IWU undergraduates.

Additional recommendations from Scott included the following:

- Establish hosting committees for region events. These committees are made up of alums who make phone calls to invite people to the connection and serve as greeters at the event. Scott noted that *events are the best method for recruiting volunteers*.
- Develop regional Web sites.
- Implement a system for notifying regional leadership whenever a new alum moves into the region.
- Consider adding a Young Alum component to the regional plan.

Scott emphasized the need for adding a *Young Alum* spoke to the Alumni Association's Organization Chart. He noted that young alums have somewhat different needs from other alums (career networking, informal social get-togethers, and giving expectations) and we need to focus more on programming for this group in order to bring them into the process early on and offer them a reason to be involved.

The Executive Board will take action on Scott's recommendation at its next meeting.

Tracy Wych requested the University provide the following support:

- Host regional Web pages that keep current with regional events.
- Publish regional list serves.

Jim Graehling noted that there were a number of issues raised here that need further study by the technology committee.

Scott reported that he has scheduled teleconference calls with the regional presidents once every two months between now and the next meeting of the Executive Board.

Tom Neis reported that he and Marilyn would be hosting an event at their home next Saturday night to introduce President and Mrs. Wilson to the Chicago Northwest Suburban neighborhood.

Marilyn Neis noted that there has been a great deal of alumni interest within the Chicago Region to do something philanthropic for the community; for example, participating in a Habitat for Humanity project this coming summer

Guy Gebhardt reported on recent events in the Atlanta region. He noted that his region has had good luck with backyard functions and they are going to do another one in November. Last spring, the IWU Co-choir was in Atlanta, and the most successful regional event was held last fall at Monica Kaufmann's house—approximately 64 alumni and friends attended the event. Guy noted that alumni in Atlanta are hungry for news about IWU.

Guy also recommended that postcards or invitations about an IWU event be followed up with a telephone call because alumni in other parts of the country assume the event being promoted via the card or letter is being held in Bloomington or Chicago. They need be reminded telephone call or e-mail that it is a regional event.

Scott Huch noted that homecoming would be an ideal time to hold the Alumni Volunteer Leadership Workshop.

Steve Seibring reminded everyone that regional events are listed in the IWU Magazine, the alumni Web site, and the monthly E-connection. Alumni should be sure that they take advantage of this information.

- ***Student Alumni Council:*** Brittany Becker reported that the first meeting of SAC would be this coming weekend. She has met with Emmalyn Dickinson to begin developing a plan to provide more opportunities for undergraduates to interact with alumni.

Current SAC membership is approximately 30 students right now, but the organization will be recruiting new members at the Far Left Carnival that is scheduled for this coming week.

Brittany asked board members to e-mail her with any ideas regarding how to interrelate SAC activities with alumni activities and responsibilities. Her e-mail address is bbecker@iwu.edu.

Jennifer Frahm mentioned that the New York Region was establishing a Welcome Committee to contact alumni who were new residents of the New York metro area. She noted that a Web site would be the first choice for helping new alums get connected.

Ray Berger suggested that the Alumni Association send a letter to the parents of recent graduates asking them to let us know where their son/daughter is now residing.

- **Annual Fund:** Jean Baird announced that the Executive Board had 100% participation for the annual fund. Also, 70% of alumni who attended an event/connection during the 2003-2004 fiscal year donated to the annual fund (65% donated during the previous year). And, over 80% of alumni who volunteer at some level make a gift to the annual fund.

Mark Aubry reported that great things have been happening with the annual fund. The participation goal for this year was 5,500 donors. Actual donors were 5,593. Mark thanked Lora Wey and her staff for their support in this effort.

Steve Seibring reported that approximately 17% of our annual fund dollars come from student phonathon solicitations.

Mark noted that the current list of class agents and information about the class agent program were included in the members' information packets.

The participation goal for 2004-2005 is 6,170 donors. Mark feels this goal is easily attainable. Alumni volunteers will be concentrating on participation—development staff will be concentrating on the dollars.

Mark noted that the staff liaisons and alumni volunteers need to be utilized more efficiently and effectively. Volunteers need to be committed to making personal solicitations to classmates. Personal telephone calls are one of the most effective ways to get classmates to give.

Mark reported that for 2004-2005, annual fund efforts will focus on our young alumni (1990's – 2000's). It is important that the University instill a giving habit in young alums that will develop into greater giving as they age and become more prosperous

We need to educate students on what it means to be an alum. They should understand the importance of "giving back" to the University. Students should be aware that even a full-pay student only pays a portion of the cost of their education.

Steve Seibring reported that in every student's financial aid package is a notice that a portion of his/her financial aid is made available because of the generosity of alumni and friends. And, if the student qualifies for a specific scholarship, he/she is given the name and a brief profile of the donor. The student is also encouraged to send a thank you note to the donor.

Activities currently sponsored by the Student Alumni Council and the Alumni/Developments Offices to foster alumni awareness and a culture of stewardship among current students include:

- First-year student Move-in Day
- Class Dinners
- Homecoming activities
- Traditions Tour for First Year Students at Fall Festival. (It was suggested that the traditions tour be put on a CD and mailed to alums as a way to solicit donations.)

Scott Huch suggested that for new graduates, one way to drive up participation at a very low cost would be through an e-mail solicitation. Ask new alums for \$4.00 (represents the four years they spent at IWU) and tell them that for the first four years they are out of school, all we will ask from them is \$4.00 each year. Have them pay via a debit card. Scott believes this will be a very inexpensive way to drive up participation and, at the same time, develop stewardship. And, as these alums mature, we will drive up the "ask".

Jim Graehling emphasized how important it is for the volunteer caller to show a genuine interest in the person he/she is calling and to speak frankly about the needs of IWU.

Mark noted that alumni satisfaction is one of the measurements used by third parties to rank colleges and universities. The satisfaction ratio is based, in part, on alumni participation in the annual fund. In addition, alumni participation is one of the statistics foundations consider when determining grant money.

In responding to a question about the difference between the annual fund and a major gift, Lora Wey noted that a major gift is \$10,000 and up.

Jean Baird encouraged members to keep sharing ideas with Mark.

It was suggested that the Executive Board members come in and work the phonathon. Sherry Graehling immediately volunteered—she loves doing this.

- **Class Newsletters:** Kris Condon referred members to the newsletter information included in their packets. Current plans are to publish class newsletters in both print and electronic versions. Two newsletters per year will be mailed to all reunion classes and classes whose reunion is scheduled for the following year (January and August). One newsletter per year will be sent to all other classes (August). Kris reported that the University Communications Department has put together a web page with electronic message bulletin boards for each class year. She will be downloading this information for the newsletter editors' training session tomorrow. This electronic messaging will allow alums to send a message and choose where it goes (bulletin board, magazine, and/or newsletter editor). Kris asked Board members to take some time to look at the message board and post something to their classmates.

Kris reported that the newsletter editors' session on Saturday would be a working session on the computer. Each editor will get a CD with sample newsletter material and campus photographs. The editors will learn how to work with this material in order to produce a class newsletter.

Scott Huch noted that Kris' report showed nine open positions for newsletter editor. He suggested that Kris contact the alums who had last served as newsletter editors for the classes with open positions and ask them to reconsider volunteering. He felt that they might reconsider given the new format and the fact that they would be asked to produce only one to two newsletters per year.

Scott also suggested that we advertise the new newsletter format in the IWU Magazine and encourage all alums with e-mail addresses to be sure the University has their current e-mail address on file.

Todd French suggested that we use the class newsletters to help with career networking. Kris reported that Alumni Relations sends each newsletter editor a list of talking points—topics that should be communicated to all alumni—and career networking needs to be included in this list.

- ***Nominations and Awards Committee:*** Larry Rollings reported that due to the fact the Alumni Council did not meet last spring, he will need to ask for approval of the alumni award nominees at tomorrow's meeting. (The Executive Board approved these nominees at its meeting last May.) Larry also noted that the Executive Board Bylaws would need to be amended to accommodate the change in the Alumni Council meeting.

Scott Huch and Larry will work on amending the bylaws and present their proposed revision to the Executive Board at its next meeting or during one of its conference calls prior to the meeting.

Luncheon Speaker:

The Board meeting was suspended for lunch. Jean Kerr, Director of May Term, was the luncheon speaker. She reported that May term typically has 18 travel courses and 60 classes on campus. The majority of IWU students travel once. Last year 1,478 students were involved in May term.

The theme for May term this year is *The Challenge of Diversity at Home and Abroad*. Jean is looking to alumni for their help. She wants to create a "palpably different energy on campus during May Term, and reach out to a broader community". Ideas she wants to implement this May include:

- Lunch events in open air – entertainment that will attract the broader community (dance company, jazz combo, African drum group, etc.).
- Campus lectures for the mature learner (faculty, staff, and broader community).

- Open guest lecture series (once a week in the evening and is open to everyone in the community). Include alumni with special talents.
- Guest Artist Scholar Program. Bring people of national or international fame, to campus to teach an interdisciplinary course.

Scott Huch recommended that as well as looking to have alumni come here for May term, she needs to look outward to see where May term students will be traveling and, then, connect with alums in those areas.

Jean would like alumni suggestions. Her e-mail address is jkerr@iwu.edu.

After lunch the Board meeting continued with its reports from committees.

- **Minority Alumni Network:** Muneerah Maalik reported on the Minority Alumni Network activities held since the last Executive Board meeting.
 - Annual MAN picnic – 87 attendees, 4 prospective students. President Wilson was the featured guest.
 - Business meeting before the picnic – first time a full slate of officers was recruited by MAN.
 - New student orientation at IWU – Tony Grey and Muneerah participated in the weekend activities welcoming new minority students and their families to campus. Tony presented a brief overview of the Minority Alumni network to new students and their families. Muneerah presented a workshop for parents on diversity and tolerance. One outcome of the workshop was a request to add a parent association to the Minority Alumni Network. The Minority Alumni Network will be voting on this request on October 3, 2004.

Upcoming homecoming events include the following:

- Mentoring workshop immediately following the football game. (Last year's session had about 40 attendees and, this year, MAN is anticipating more).
- Chapel and recognition service on Sunday. Honorees include Willie Brown, Chair of the Associates Board, and outgoing chairs of the Minority Alumni Network, Dr. Ansel Johnson '81 and Debra Burt-Frazier '75. President Wilson will give the welcoming address for the chapel service.
- The annual MAN planning meeting will follow the chapel service. The agenda for this meeting will focus on the structure of the network and the best way to connect with parents. The network will also evaluate its homecoming/reunion activities and its recruitment efforts and how they relate back to the issue of diversity.

MAN's fundraising goal for the 2004-2005 fiscal year is a \$75 contribution per network member. Over the next three years, giving is targeted to increase by 13%.

Jean Baird encouraged Executive Board members to try to attend as many Minority Alumni Network events as possible.

Lora Wey asked if the Minority Alumni Network has considered including minority groups other than African-American. Muneerah responded that, to date, MAN has not made a concerted effort of recruit other minority groups. And, at this time, MAN has no strategic plan in place to formally recruit other minority groups. This issue will be brought up the next time MAN meets to discuss its strategic plan.

Sherry Graehling asked if foreign students are considered a part of the Minority Alumni Network. Muneerah replied that the foreign students have their own organization. She noted that most foreign students who attend IWU return to their country after they graduate; however, for those foreign students who remain in the U.S., MAN needs to determine a way to include them in the network. Muneerah went on to say that, at this time, the University treats these two groups (foreign students and minority students from the U.S.) as separate entities.

Ben Rhodes reported that MAN helps mentor the seven Wade McCree students on campus. Ben explained the Wade McCree program to the Board. It is a four year program for at-risk Detroit students. Students are interviewed in the eighth grade for acceptance into the program. The program is a four-year program beginning in the ninth grade. Students who are accepted into the program are required to maintain at least a B average, an attendance rate of 95%, and abstain from all drugs and alcohol during their four years in high school. IWU is the only private school, and the only school outside of the state of Michigan, that participates in this program.

In response to a question about IWU's progress with overall diversity, Ben noted that the University has made improvements, but it is not where it wants to be. This past year, IWU doubled its admission of African-American students. He emphasized that University diversity is a priority for the Board of Trustees and the Administration.

- **Welcome Center Committee:** Pat Bass reported on the status of the Welcome Center. At this time, IWU does not have a "front door" for people to come to when they visit campus. The plan is to have a place for people to begin their visit to campus. Originally, the Career Center, the Admissions Office, and the Alumni Office were to be located in the Welcome Center. However, President Wilson has asked that this configuration be reevaluated. He wants to be sure that this is the appropriate grouping for a "welcome" center.

The University has put into place the following plan:

- Select an architect
- Conduct campus and alumni interviews
- Collect more information about existing "welcome" centers.
- Develop programming for the "welcome" center (who should be included in the center)
- Select a project manager

Jean asked Executive Board members to send their suggestions about specific campuses with "welcome centers" that they think would be valuable to visit to Steve Seibring.

- **Technology Committee:** Jim Graehling reported that he will be working on getting a better understanding of what the University's Information Technology Department does. Jim and Steve Seibring will work directly with Information Technology. The alumni site is just part of the IWU Web site. Jim proposed that he contact the committee chairs, particularly Kris Condon, Scott Huch, Ray Burger and Brittany Becker to determine if they can appoint someone to be their point person to channel ideas and needs with regard to the Web site to him. He wants to get input on what is needed with regard to shared information, and, he noted, we need to be careful about how we go about it in order to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of our communication.

At this time, student workers in the Alumni Office are updating information on the Web site. Steve Seibring reported that the University is looking at establishing a pool of student workers to take care of maintaining the Web site.

Jim encouraged Executive Board members to go on the Alumni Web site and investigate what is currently out there.

Strategic Plan:

Steve Seibring asked the Executive Board members to review the strategic planning draft included in their packet of information.

Scott Huch proposed that the Alumni Association's Mission Statement include *and generally to offer alumni greater opportunities to participate in the University community and to contribute in a wide variety of ways toward the accomplishment of the mission of Illinois Wesleyan University, the education of undergraduates.*

Sherry Graehling moved that this addition be added to Article II, Section 1, *Mission Statement* of the bylaws. Tom Neis seconded the motion. By a show of hands, the proposed change was passed unanimously.

Pat Bass noted that she would like to see the words *empowerment* and *ownership* replaced in Goal #1.

Sarah Powell recommended that the *Strategic Plan* be renamed the *Annual Strategic Plan*.

Due to time constraints, Steve Seibring asked the members to review the Strategic Plan draft and forward any suggestions/recommendations to him. The Alumni Office will compile these recommendations and send them to the members. At one of the Board's future conference calls the strategic plan should be discussed and revisions approved.

Future Meetings:

- ***Volunteer Leadership Workshop:*** Scott Huch recommended that future volunteer leadership workshops be held at homecoming. Pat Bass noted that this would put a major strain on the alumni staff.

Todd French stated that the Executive Board could design the program instead of relying on alumni staff. He reported that the staff at other institutions are usually 4 to 5 times the staff we have at IWU.

The Board members recommended that the volunteers be surveyed to find out what schedule would work best for them. Mark Aubry and Lora Wey volunteered to survey the alumni volunteers. The results of the survey will be presented prior to the next Executive Board meeting and the schedule for next year's workshop should be determined at one of the Board conference calls.

- ***Executive Board Meeting:*** Steve Seibring noted that typically the Executive Board meetings are held the weekend of Commencement, which will be on May 1, 2005. But, the Board may also want to consider having its next meeting around the President Wilson's inauguration which is scheduled for April 7 – 9.

Pat Bass stated that the Executive Board should definitely attend President Wilson's inauguration.

The Executive Board agreed that the next meeting of the Board would be on April 8, 2005 with committee meetings on the afternoon of April 7th.

- ***Executive Board Conference Calls:*** Jean Baird has scheduled conference calls for the remainder of 2004 (October 6 and December 8). The plan is to conference every two months. Jean will send out the agenda and the dial information the week before the conference call.

Job Descriptions:

Steve Seibring asked each committee chair to send him a description of their job by the first of February, 2005.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Rollings '67
IWU Alumni Association
Executive Board Secretary