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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
October 6, 2006**

Board members present: Jean Baird '80, Ray Berger '70, Guy Gebhardt '69, Sherry Graehling '72, Marsha Guenzler-Stevens '78, Deon Hornsby '97, Scott Huch '86, Brian Lewis, Esteban Lizano '04, Muneerah Maalik '00, Sundeep Mullangi '97, Marilyn Neis '71, Tom Neis '70, Amy Olson '90, Fran Rouzee '66, Tracy Wych '77

Board members unable to attend: Mark Aubry '95, Pat Bass '66, Jennifer Jones '94, Todd French '93

IWU Administration/Staff present: Jane Baines, Emmalyn Dickinson, Celeste Flachsbart, Carla Fritz, Mona Gardner, Ann Harding, Jennifer Krause, Jeff Mavros '98, Sara Powell '72, Steve Seibring '81, Jennifer Shaughnessy '98, Trevor Sierra '05, Marty Smith, Lora Wey '88, Richard Wilson

Welcome

Jean Baird welcomed the following new members:

- Trevor Sierra '05, Assistant Director of Alumni Relations
- Ann Harding, Director of Alumni Relations
- Brian Lewis, Parent Board President
- Amy Olson '90, Reunion Chair
- Sundeep Mullangi '97, Annual Fund Chair
- Jennifer Shaughnessy '98, Admissions Network Chair

Jean asked all the board members to introduce themselves and tell a little about their role on the Alumni Association Executive Board.

President's Report:

President Wilson reported the following:

- All the major administrative positions at the University are now filled.
- For 2006, the University had 3,300 admission applications for 590 spots in the entering class. This was the second highest total of applications in the University's history.
- The University continues to enhance its cultural diversity. Enrollment of international students doubled this year. Enrollment of African-American, Latino and Native American students increased by 50% this year.
- Valery Dymshits, the director of the Judaica Center of St. Petersburg, Russia is serving as a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence at IWU this year.
- IWU professor Brian Hatcher has received a Fulbright Hays Faculty Research Abroad Fellowship through the U.S. Department of Education, as well as a grant from the Fulbright Council for International Exchange of Scholars Traditional

Scholars Program. He will be doing research in Kalkota, India and in the United Kingdom.

- A new brochure summarizing the University's strategic plan has been created. It is designed to be used as a handout and/or mailer for marketing and informational purposes. The design allows the brochure to be updated easily and cost-effectively. Pat Bass '66 designed the piece while serving as interim Vice President for University Communications.
- With regard to the *Teaching and Learning* goal in the Strategic Plan, the University is moving ahead on advising. Student input on what does and what doesn't work has been compiled and is being studied.
- As for the *Student Growth and Development* goal, the University has developed a first-year student program that continues to improve every year. In order to address the attrition that occurs in the sophomore year, the University is working on programming to provide additional support for second-year students.
- In the area of Human Resources, the University is working to convert seven long-term visiting professor positions into permanent positions. Wilson reported that this can be done relatively inexpensively and will result in an increased number of faculty involved in University activities.
- The University endowment at the end of the last academic year was \$165.5 million, exceeding its target goal by \$1.5 million. The growth is a result of both new additions to the endowment and appreciation of existing assets. Every \$1 million of growth in the endowment adds \$50,000 to the University's operating budget.
- At the recent Benefactor's Dinner, fifteen new scholarships were announced. Approximately 125 people attended the dinner along with the students they are sponsoring. There are now over 200 scholarships being funded by alumni and friends.
- The dollar goal for the Welcome Center is \$5.2 million. To date, the University has acquired \$4.7 million, and President Wilson anticipates that the University will have \$5 million by the time the Board of Trustees meets on October 31. At that meeting, he thinks the Board will approve the University moving ahead with final construction plans for the building.
- The University has worked out an arrangement with Sodexo to remodel significant portions of the Memorial Center. Work is now under way to remodel the Bertholf Commons. The Turfler Room will be completely renovated. Finally, the Main Lounge will undergo a major change. Work on the Turfler Room will begin during semester break, and work on the Main Lounge is scheduled to begin next summer.
- IWU's ranking in *U.S. News and World Report* this year fell from 55th to 61st. President Wilson distributed a chart tracing IWU's performance over the past three years with regard to the various factors that make up the *U.S. News and World Report* rankings. The chart shows that IWU has made progress in many areas. President Wilson feels that our decline in the rankings can be attributed primarily to our past problems with our endowment. Our endowment problems forced the University to restrain its budget over the past four years.

- President Wilson emphasized the need to improve the percentage of alumni giving to the annual fund. He reported that Marty Smith and the development staff are looking at ways in which this number can be improved.

Following his remarks, President Wilson opened the floor to questions and/or suggestions.

Marsha Guenzer-Stevens suggested that the University consider moving the Alumni Office to the Memorial Center. President Wilson noted that this suggestion was being considered.

Scott Huch expressed concern about the University's decline in the selectivity measurement and asked if there was a plan in place to reverse this decline. President Wilson noted that selectivity is based on a number of factors including the number of students accepted compared to the number of student applications received. He feels that the University will see improvement in the selectivity measurement since applications are continuing to increase while the University is not increasing the number of students it accepts.

Guy Gebhardt inquired as to the status of transitional housing on campus. President Wilson reported that the plans for transitional housing are moving ahead. Drawings have been done and the University is in the process of acquiring property.

Strategic Plan Update:

Mona Gardner followed up on President Wilson's comments by noting that the selectivity ranking in *U.S. News and World Report* is based on a number of factors. She also noted that the first year that appears on the handout was the best class the University has ever had in terms of number of applications and selectivity.

Mona also reported that with the change in leadership in the Admissions Office there was a conscious decision to change the admissions process. The essay question on the application was changed and this might have resulted in fewer applications. The more traditional type of essay question has now been reinstated on the application.

In addition to the traditional measurements of class rank and test scores, the Admissions Office is also putting more emphasis on the interview process and student activities. This change has resulted in a very slight lowering of test scores. On the other hand, this change has allowed us to open up the process and attract a richer mix of students. The number of student in the top 10% has declined slightly.

Mona reported that the magazine's peer assessment score is based on the peer assessment for the President, Provost and Dean of Admissions. Mona feels that our ranking declined due the fact that we have had a turnover in all three positions in the last three year and that the leadership at our peer universities doesn't yet know our new

people. She is confident that this score will rise as IWU's leadership group becomes better acquainted with its peers.

Matt Kurz, Vice President of University Communications is overseeing efforts to enhance IWU's identity. He will be conducting a series of on-campus discussions to determine how we can better capitalize on and promote IWU's distinctive relationship between liberal arts and professional programs. He will also conduct external market research to determine how IWU is perceived by the outside. From this research, the University will develop a message that will be acceptable internally and that will be easily recognizable to the public.

Mona distributed a summary of the University's research on how IWU students view the academic advising they have received while attending the University. The information was gathered from surveys and from personal interviews with 70 students. The findings show that our first-year students are generally less satisfied with advising while the senior survey shows a more mixed picture.

Mona noted that a major problem associated with advising is the student's ability to schedule the course he/she wants at the desired time. And, if the student is pursuing a double major, scheduling courses is even more difficult.

In response to these concerns, the University is making an effort to spread out course offerings and create more evening classes.

Scott Huch noted that there is a strong interest among alumni to assist students through career networking and mentoring. He recommended that Mona include alumni in the group that will be working on improving the advising process for IWU students. He noted that alumni can be a strong faculty resource as well.

Mona reported that the University was investigating the possibility of acquiring grants to study the advising program.

Committee Reports:

- **Council for IWU Women:** Marsha Guenzler-Stevens reported that the inaugural meeting of the Council for IWU Women would convene this afternoon. Marsha thanked Steve Seibring, Ann Harding, Beth Raboin-Gettleman and Pat Wilson for their efforts in supporting the creation of the council. She also gave a special thank you to three faculty members who have not only invested their time and talent, but have invested financially in this endeavor. They are: Sammie Robinson, Valerie Orlando and Darcy Greder.

Sixty-eight people were invited to join the Council. At this time, 35 people have joined the Council and have contributed \$11,000.

- Annual Fund: Sundeep Mullangi reported the following results for the 2005-2006 academic year:

<u>\$ Goal</u>	<u>\$ Actual</u>	<u>#Participation Goal</u>	<u>#Participation Actual</u>
\$1.63 M	\$1.66 M	5,700 donors	4,800 donors

The goal for this academic year is as follows:

<u>\$ Goal</u>	<u># Participation Goal</u>
\$1.8 M	5,100 donors

Sundeep reported that the following strategies would be implemented to achieve these goals:

- Improve the alumni and friends database—get accurate e-mails and phone numbers
 - Emphasize to alumni the importance of “giving back” to the University
 - Establish measurements in order to evaluate the effectiveness of different marketing approaches; i.e., campaign messages, direct mail, phone calls, etc.
- Career Networking: Esteban Lizano reported the following:
 - A Career Networking Steering Committee made up of interested Regional Chairs has been established.
 - The Committee has worked on establishing priorities. Its focus over the next six months will be on how to help current students.
 - The Committee is working on building a database of alumni who want to assist and to connect with students looking for help.

Esteban asked Executive Board members to help in recruiting alums for career networking and to continue to get the word out to alumni about this program.

Esteban expressed appreciation for all the work Todd French had done in creating this program. He also expressed gratitude for the work and support of Pat Wilson, Warren Kistner and Ann Harding.

- Alumni Admissions Network: Jennifer Shaughnessy reported the following:
 - The group has changed its name to “Alumni Admissions Network”
 - Jennifer and Jeff Mavros are heading up the group.
 - In meeting with the Deans of Admissions, Tony Bankston and Bob Murray, the Network has developed a set of priorities.
 - The Network’s first goal is to set up a program where alums will contact all students who have been accepted to IWU.
 - The Network will work on a program to have alumni cover college fairs.

Scott Huch encouraged Jennifer and Jeff to have the Network accelerate its implementation plans. He noted that the regions are “ready” to take on these activities. Some regions have already been covering college fairs, etc.

Marsha Guenzler-Stevens reported that this is an activity that the IWU Council for Women would be interested in taking on.

- Newsletters: Fran Rouzee reported the following:
 - She has contacted the 21 newsletter editors who had not written a newsletter in more than a year asking them if they were interested in continuing as class newsletter editor. Eight alums opted out of continuing in this position.
 - Currently there are 54 newsletter editors. Fran is looking to fill 17 open positions. The classes that need an editor are 2005, 2002, 1991, 1990, 1989, 1986, 1982, 1981, 1974, 1971, 1965, 1963, 1962, 1958, 1957, 1956, and 1951. She asked Executive Board members to let her know of anyone who might be interested in becoming a newsletter editor for one of these classes.
 - During the past year 6,500 newsletters were mailed accounting for a 63% participation.
 - Newsletter samples are on the IWU Web site.
 - Fran is planning to have newsletter editors include articles emphasizing specific programs at IWU; i.e., annual fund, parent fund, critical University projects, etc.
 - Fran is also planning to include “guest columns” in the newsletters. This column could be from a Class Agent, a Minority Alumni Network representative, etc. She asked AAEB members to send her suggestions for what they would like to see in these guest columns.

- Reunions: Amy Olson has just joined the Executive Board. This is her first meeting and she is just beginning to learn about the job. Amy will have a report at the next AAEB meeting.

- Minority Alumni Network: Deon Hornsby and Muneerah Maalik reported the following:
 - They are working on expanding the network to include all minority alumni and students.
 - They also want to expand representation on the MAN Board.
 - MAN will focus on scholarships. During homecoming, the Network is holding a Silent Auction to raise money for scholarships. This year’s auction is a test case and, if it goes well, the Network will do it again next year.
 - MAN will hold a mentoring session for students on Saturday afternoon.
 - MAN will hold its recognition service at Evelyn Chapel on Sunday at 11:00 a.m. This year the group is recognizing Phyllis Barker ‘73.

- Parent Board: Brian Lewis reported the following:
 - Brian is looking to build a communication bridge between parents and the administration.

- Each member of the Parent Board is going to contact 10 members to raise money for the Parent Fund.
- A newsletter, e-Parent, is sent out to parents monthly. Plans for the newsletter include articles from Administration, Development, Athletics, Admissions, MAN, etc.
- Brian commended Jennifer Krause and Jeff Mavros for their support.
- Regions: Scott Huch reported the following:
 - The regions are structured to mirror the structure of the national IWU Alumni Association.
 - The Regional Board is made up of all the Regional Presidents.
 - The annual goals for the regions are:
 - (1) Hold one University-sponsored event in each region
 - (2) Hold at least one additional event in each regions that is organized by the regional alumni
 - (3) Form Regional Boards with subcommittee chairs for each of the active national programs.
 - (4) Form an active Young Alumni Club in each region (graduates from the past 10 years)
 - (5) Convene at least two meetings per year of each Regional Board to plan activities for the coming year.
 - (6) Create and maintain a regional list serve and Web site.
 - (7) Each Regional President participate in at least two regional group committee meetings per year.
 - (8) Increase participation of regional alumni in IWU programs by 5% over the previous year.
 - Scott noted that there is a direct correlation between alumni participation in events and activities and in their giving to the University. Therefore, he recommends that we offer more opportunities for alumni to be involved. He encouraged the Board to start rolling out, as soon as possible, the programs that are now under development.
 - Comments regarding regional activities since the last AAEB meeting included:
 - Scott commended Jennifer Jones on her great work in organizing activities in the New York region.
 - Scott also noted that the Dallas region has had a couple of events. The Garrett's are making good progress with that region.
 - The Decatur region held an event at the Art Council.
 - The Peoria Region hosted a Peoria Chiefs baseball game.
 - The Atlanta Region hosted an Atlanta Braves baseball game. Guy Gebhardt has done a great job with that region.
 - San Francisco continues to have great events. The latest was a winery tour and luncheon. Ray Berger continues to do exciting things with the San Francisco region.
 - The Chicago region is being reorganized into seven neighborhood regions under the supervision of the Chicago Regional Board.

- Scott announced that we have established our first international alumni regional chapter in London, England, headed by Ashish Vohra '97. Scott noted that if this chapter is successful, we can look at other international locations.

Ray Berger requested that information be sent to the Regional Presidents providing them with the names of alumni in their region who have been recruited for various programs; i.e., Career Networking, Admissions, Minority Alumni Network, etc.

Bylaws:

Scott Huch moved that recommended changes to the bylaws be approved. His motion was seconded and approved by the members of the Executive Board.

Changes are as follows:

- Article IV, Section 2
 - (d) Admissions volunteers changed to **Alumni Admissions Network volunteers**
 - (j) Student Alumni Council replaced with **Ambassador Club**
 - (k) **Council for Women members** added
- Article V, Section 2
 - (c) Regional Admissions Committee changed to **Alumni Admissions Network**
 - (j) Student Alumni Council changed to **Ambassador Club**
 - (k) **Council for Women** added
- Article VI, Section 1 – **Vice President for Regions** added
- Article VI, Section 4 -- **Vice President for Regions** added
- Article VI, Section 6 -- **Vice President for Regions** added
- Article VII, Section 1, (c) **Vice President for Regions** added
- Article VIII, Section 1, (d) deleted

These changes must be presented to the Alumni Council for final approval.

Closing Remarks:

Jean Baird noted that the Executive Board has a few vacancies. Jean asked that Board members send her or Ann Harding any recommendations to fill these vacancies. These recommendations will be considered by the AAEB Nominating Committee.

Upcoming dates for AAEB include:

- Teleconference calls:
 - December 6th
 - February 7th
- Next on-campus meeting April 13th and 14th in conjunction with the John Wesley Powell Research Conference.
- 2007 Homecoming – October 19th through the 21st.