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Minutes

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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
April 17, 2009

Board members present: Babawande Afolabi '10, Brian Beam '91, Todd French '93, Tracy Garrett '81, Marsha Guenzler-Stevens '78, Deon Hornsby '97, Scott Huch '86, Dean Jukovich '93, Rich Marvel '98, Sundeep Mullangi '97, Jim Mullins '03, Marilyn Neis '71, Justine Robinson '06, Fran Rouzee '66, Jen Shaughnessy '98, Tracy Wych '77

Board members unable to attend: Ray Berger '70, Josh Butts '01, Brian Lewis, Tom Neis '70, Gary Ohler '87, Larry Stimpert '80

IWU administration/staff present: Kevin Clark, Tony Bankston '91, Ann Harding, Jeff Mavros '98, Trevor Sierra '05, Natalie Schmidt, Richard Wilson

Students present: Carissa Nemmers '09, Scott

Welcome and Introductions:

Todd French welcomed the Alumni Executive Board and went over contents of folder. Ann Harding introduced Natalie Schmidt to the board. Ann expressed her gratitude to the board for taking the strategic plan apart and revisiting the goals, because it gives the Alumni Relations office a road map to work with the AAEB. Todd thanked everyone for their hard work. Todd explained that the board was making an exception for call-ins for this meeting and explained the importance of on campus meetings and being on campus. The board went around the room and introduced themselves giving their year and where they came from.

Goal #1

Group members: Scott Huch '86, Babawande Afolabi '10, Bob Evans, Brian Lewis, Gary Ohler '87, Tracy Wych '77, Todd French '93, Ann Harding, Trevor Sierra '05

Bob Evans called in.

Scott Huch asked everyone to take out their strategic plans so they could look at goal number 1 while it is being discussed. Scott pointed out that this is a diverse working group involving current students, trustees, parents, administration staff and alumni. Scott gave special thanks to Bob Evans for joining them. Scott started by reviewing goal number one. "Enhance the sense of empowerment and ownership of the University among alumni by providing broadened and meaningful opportunities for volunteer involvement." Scott presented a PowerPoint presentation.

- The group looked at objectives A and B and then looked at individual activities by bullet point as well as strategies listed.
- Review of progress to date: ten years ago didn't exist, five years ago the association was meeting to hear reports from staff and launched Regional Chapters program.
- Today we are looking at taking next step, which is how do we take what we have so far and integrate that with what undergraduates, parents, faculty, staff, administration, board of trustees are all doing to try and advance the mission of the University.
- Programs listed in strategic plan that are no longer active: Student Alumni Council, Academic Advisory Council, Alumni Fund Board and Career Networking Committee.
- Scott noted the first three above activities represent a link between this alumni association and undergraduates, a link between this association and faculty, and a link between our association and funding for the University.
- Scott asked board to keep in mind for future discussion that those three programs are very important links for this association to have.
- Since above programs are not currently active what can board do to replace them or what has board done to replace them?
- Under current organizational plan, a career networking function is understood to be a part of every auxiliary group's mission.
- Group listed active groups and categorized them in terms of level of activity today.
- "Achieved" and in progress: Regional Chapters, Parent Board, Council for IWU Women, Class Newsletters, and Admissions Advisory Committee.
- Developing and Growing: Pride Alumni Community
- How do we find organizational entrepreneurs to step up with a plan like Josh did with PAC?
- Forming and Renewing activities very important to the success of this Alumni Association: MAN, GAN, YAC, Reunions/Homecoming, Physical Presence on Campus.
- MAN was model on how to organize AAEB, currently under leadership transition and board should offer whatever support MAN needs.
- GAN and YAC new organizations still in formative stages.
- Reunions/Homecoming: what is the proper relationship between the two?
- What is the relationship between homecoming and getting alumni back to campus on one hand and promoting our alumni associations programs and persuading people to get involved with them on the other hand?
- Physical presence on campus would not be on this list if it were not for the fact that it is listed on the strategic plan as objective B.
- Over the years, there has been a lot of discussion about the idea of an alumni house without coming any closer to realization. It is an idea that should be revisited.

- Council of IWU Women is very first auxiliary group that made a direct link between alumni involvement and alumni giving and has a solid component of mentoring undergraduates.
- Looking at the Regional Chapters, Parent Board, Council of IWU Women, Class Newsletters, Admissions Advisory Committee as examples of programs that have been done right, how does the association learn from them and build on their success?
- Looking at one of the slides of the PowerPoint presentation there are columns: Achieved/and or in Progress, Developing and Growing, Forming and Renewing. These columns create a “barbell effect” - which is to say we have a whole bunch of programs working pretty well, we have a whole bunch of programs that are either brand new or renewing and programs that we would like to see move towards the left of the chart into the Achieved and/or in Progress column. The objective is for all eleven of the programs to be in the left column.
- If all programs moved to the left column, a fourth column of Undeveloped Ideas could be formed. This would allow the association to create new volunteer activities for alumni, allowing room for more affinity groups.
- The working group came up with a list of questions to bring to the attention of the board for discussion.
- How do we identify, recruit, train, and support leaders? (“Leadership Development”)
- How do we craft a program to recruit volunteers?
- Are we ready for a full-blown membership drive?
- How do we forge a greater link between our activities and University funding?
- What are we doing now to make recent and current achievements permanent?
- Can we encourage our alumni association members to make a stronger commitment? This is the question Scott would like to see discussed today.
- We would be required to promote our programs, identify, attract and recruit prospective members, ask our members to support the organization by volunteering, persuade members to join the Alumni Association, and then ask ourselves will it be necessary to charge dues and how much.
- How do we forge a greater link between our activities and the University funding? We have established pretty conclusively there is a direct correlation between attendance at events and giving to the Annual Fund. Now it is time for the Executive Board to consider the question of which alumni activities are directly linked to funding. Examples would be Council for IWU Women and the Parent Board programs where it is expected that part of participation is giving money and those programs where there is only an indirect link like GAN, YAC and the hybrid model: where the Chicago regional alumni chapter hosted a tea for the Council of IWU Women, whose purpose was to benefit the GAN.
- What are our expectations of each other on this Executive Board with respect to a hundred percent participation in a stewardship model?
- Can we piggy back on the capital campaign for the purpose of organizing alumni volunteers?

- What are we doing now to make recent and current achievements permanent?
- One way of doing that is go ahead with building a physical presence on campus. This is copied straight out of the strategic plan. These are all things we agreed were wonderful ideas but should revisit them to either say in ten years we haven't done much on this or we should get moving.
- Working group looked at resources available to support these programs. Which are: Development Staff, Alumni Relations Staff, Admissions Staff, Alumnae(Women), Greek Alumni, Parents, Archivist
- Four of the eight are staff at the University and yet what we are talking about here is a volunteer organization.
- There are clearly active alumnae, Council for Women, Greek Alumni, Parents
- The big gap in resources is volunteers.
- The question is what do we need to be doing more of to fill that gap?
- We come back around to looking at goal #1 and asking the question what are we doing to enhance the sense of empowerment and ownership of the University among alumni by providing broadened and meaningful opportunities for volunteer involvement?
- Scott's answer would be there is a lot of activity in fact almost as much or more than our present level of organization can bare. It is a typical entrepreneurial model where at some point you reach a level of growth where you collapse under your own weight. We need to look at that head on and determine how do we move forward from here with the resources that we have?
- Scott keeps coming back to the two words broadened and meaningful. There is an obligation on our association to work on continued growth as well as to always make sure that we are responding not only to the needs and interests of the alumni but to the needs and interests of the students, the university advancing the mission of Illinois Wesleyan which is the entire purpose of our association.
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