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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
April 8, 2006**

Board members present: Mark Aubry '95, Jean Baird '80, Pat Bass '66, Jennifer Frahm '94, Guy Gebhardt '69, Marsha Guenzler-Stevens '78, Scott Huch '86, Esteban Lizano '04, Jessica Lothman '06, Fran Rouzee '66, Tracy Wych '77

Board members unable to attend:, Ray Berger '70, Todd French '93, Sherry Graehling '72, Gigi Giunta, Tom Giunta, Deon Hornsby '97, Muneerah Maalik '00, Marilyn Neis '71, Tom Neis '70, Larry Rollings '67, Amy Tenhouse '97

IWU Administration/Staff present: Emmalyn Dickinson, Carla Fritz, Jennifer Lehman, Beth Raboin-Gettleman '99, Steve Seibring '81, Marty Smith, Lora Wey '88, Richard Wilson

Opening Remarks:

Jean Baird opened the meeting by noting that the meeting was scheduled to allow board members to participate in the John Wesley Powell Research Conference.

Jean announced that Beth Raboin-Gettleman had resigned her position at IWU because her husband had accepted a position at Goldman Sachs in New York. But, she also noted that although Beth would be leaving the staff at IWU, she would remain an active alum for the University.

Id revolve welcoming everyone and reviewing the agenda for the homecoming/alumni volunteer workshop/homecoming weekend. She made special mention of the Minority Alumni Network's Recognition Ceremony on Sunday at Evelyn Chapel and encouraged members to attend.

She introduced the new members to the group-- Fran Rouzee '66, new chair of the Class Secretary/Newsletter Committee; Carla Fritz, new member of the IWU staff responsible for working with the newsletter editors; Gigi and Tom Giunta, chairs of the Parent Board; and, Marty Wilson, new Vice President for University Advancement.

She asked the other Board members to introduce themselves and note their board responsibilities.

Jean also reported that Jim Graehling '72 had resigned from the Executive Board due to medical reasons and that Jeff Hanna, Vice President of University Communications, would be leaving IWU the end of this month to take a job at the University of Virginia. She noted the contributions both these people had made to the IWU Alumni Association and asked that members express their appreciation when they next saw them.

President's Report:

President Wilson began his report by commenting on the success of the recent reception for IWU parents that Gigi and Tom Giunta had been instrumental in putting together. The reception was held at the President's house with 650 parents and somewhere between 75 and 100 faculty members in attendance.

Dick noted how delighted he was to have Marty Smith on board as VP for Advancement. And, he saluted the Advancement staff on their hard work during the transition period.

Dick commended the Executive Board for its many significant contributions to the success of IWU.

According to Wilson, the last six weeks at IWU have been rather tumultuous with the national tragedies of the two hurricanes, the death of an IWU football player in August, and the recent fire at the Sigma Pi House. He noted the terrific job the IWU counseling staff has done in helping students deal with these issues. He also reported that he has created an athletic task force to investigate and document everything that happened leading up to Doug Schmeid's hospitalization; and, second, to perform a study of "best practices" to ensure the health and welfare of our student athletes. Wilson has authorized the task force to go wherever they need to go to get the help necessary to carry out this broad charge. This review will include all athletic programs at the University and every aspect of the programs from transportation to conditioning to staffing.

Two campus groups have been formed to focus on long-term issues to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina and Rita. The IWU community will be working with Habitat for Humanity to help hurricane victims.

Dick reported that we do not have a report yet as to exactly what caused the Sigma Pi fire. It was a flash fire – no criminal activity. One student was seriously burned on his hands and face and will require plastic surgery. He has been upgraded from critical to serious, and some of the life support systems have been removed. He appears to be making good progress. The other Sigma Pi students were temporarily re-housed, but are not back in the Sigma Pi house. Dick noted that all the University's emergency systems worked successfully in taking care of these students.

IWU enrolled 595 new students in the fall--565 in the first year class and 30 transfers. Dick noted that is about 25 students more than planned. One of the reasons for this over-enrollment is the historical ratio used by the University indicated that 20 to 25 students would change their mind after May 1 and decide not to attend IWU. This year only five students opted not to attend. IWU was also very successful in its diversity efforts. Enrollment of African-American, Latino/a, and Native American students increased from 61 last year to 94 this year--a 54% increase in minority enrollment.

International student enrollment went from 12 students at the end of the last academic year to 20 starting this year. Dick credits this increase to the strong efforts of the Admission and Financial Aid staffs.

Dick reported on the progress of the Minor Meyers Welcome Center. The plan calls for \$5 million. To date, we have received \$2.8 million. We are \$2.2 million from starting the project. Dick noted he would like to have this project completed within the next twelve months. But, he also emphasized that he will not authorize construction of any building until we have the money.

Dick reported that the endowment fund was projected to be \$148 million at August 1, 2005—it was \$160 million. He noted that IWU got used to living on an endowment of \$200 million before 9/11 and we are working our way back.

Dick reported on the progress of the strategic planning process. We have established six goals that are listed on the Web site. This fall, the staff will be identifying will be identifying four to six strategies for each of these goals. And, these strategies will drive our programs for the next five to seven years. He emphasized the importance of alumni involvement in developing these strategies.

He reported the current issues of concern for the University are:

- May Term – need to review resources and philosophy,
- Tuition policy and access.
- Searches for Provost and Vice President of University Communications.
- Transitional house for undergraduates.
- New capital campaign.
- Study abroad program—how we might enhance it.

Student Attitude Survey

Mona Gardner provided a handout explaining the general picture about how we go about doing student assessments—a summary of what information we collect over the years a student is here.

As a result of the collective information, the University has discovered that over the course of the last three to four years our students are not as satisfied on average as students at other top liberal arts colleges. And, focusing on the academic program, we find IWU students not to be as engaged in their academic activity as others are engaged. Faculty forums and student panels have been created in order to compare student expectations to what is being provided to them by the University.

In the past, the University has used national survey instruments in order to compare itself to other private liberal arts colleges. This fall, the University has done an in-house parent survey for incoming students in order to see what parent expectations and influences are for our incoming class.

In conjunction with five other liberal arts colleges, the University received a grant for \$300,000 that will last over three years and allow us to study student performance in our general education program, with particular focus on critical thinking, writing and civic engagement. The University will be able to compare practices with other schools to find what works best.

The University is also asking its faculty for the first time this year to participate in a national survey which is a faculty study of student engagement. This survey will allow us to compare what faculty expectations are with regard to student involvement and compare their expectations to what students think.

The University has also established an assessment task force that has developed a series of questions modeled after the Harvard project that will be administered via personal interviews.

IWU Women's Council:

Marsha Guenzler-Stevens distributed a draft of the plan for the IWU Council for Women. She reported that her committee, made up of faculty, administrators and alumni, met yesterday to discuss the objectives for the Women's Council.

The draft she presented included the following

- Two possible mission statements
- Criteria for membership on the council.
- Possible programs that the council would undertake/sponsor

The committee is working on identifying a diverse group of women (age, profession, ethnicity, etc.) who will be extended a formal invitation to join the council. The committee hopes to have approximately 50 women in its initial membership.

The council will be self-sustaining, so members will be expected to make a financial contribution (membership dues) annually.

Annual Fund:

Mark Aubry reported the following:

2005 Goal = 6,170 donors	2005 Actual = 5,103 donors
\$1.5 million	\$1.553 million

Reasons for declining donor participation this past year:

- Lora Wey moved from fundraising to management
- Class Agent program was without a leader for part of the year until Jeff Mavros arrived.
- Class Agent program needs to be re-energized.

2006 Goal = 5,700 donors; \$1.635 million

Jeff Mavros reported on how he is planning to re-energize the Class Agent program.

- He has contacted class agent volunteers to determine if they are still interested in serving, and has recruited new volunteers where necessary. He now has an active group of volunteers.
- He has revised the solicitation strategy—volunteers will be much more proactive in reunion years.
- He is creating a Web site that will be more “friendly” to the Development Department’s goals.

Research shows that alums who attend University-sponsored events are more likely to donate. Scott Huch suggested that Jeff and Mark consider incorporating a telemarketing plan that does not include a request for a contribution, but, rather, informs alums of upcoming events in their region and encourages them to attend..

Career Networking:

Todd French referred to his outline of the Career Networking Committee. He noted that the success of the committee will rely on the development of regional subcommittees. Todd is looking to recruit alumni who have job opportunities, internship capabilities and are willing to serve as mentors for alumni of any age. He will begin this process today at the Alumni Volunteer Workshop.

Alumni Admissions:

Jean Baird announced the Jennifer Shaughnessy, Assistant Director of Admissions, will be making a presentation at the Alumni Volunteer Workshop.

Scott Huch emphasized the need for the Admissions Office to provide training opportunities for regional volunteers.

Class Secretary/Newsletter Editor:

Fran Rouzee reported that she was working to revive the newsletter program and asked for input/suggestions from board members. In the recent past, newsletters were put on the Web, but due to privacy issues, newsletters had to be taken off the Web site.

Fran stressed the importance of keeping in contact with alumni. Steve Seibring echoed Fran’s sentiment by noting that the mission of the Alumni Association is to strengthen the relationship between alumni and the University and to enhance the relationships among alumni. The newsletter program is an important element in achieving this mission. Steve also suggested that there may be a relationship between our decline donor participation and the lack of a consistent newsletter program over the past few years

Suggestions for the newsletter program included the following:

- Investigate third vendor possibilities for posting newsletters on the Web site to ensure privacy.
- Consider and insert to the Magazine once, or twice, a year covering class news.
- Consider a two-tier approach: conventional newsletters for the older classes, and a more technologically-advanced newsletter for the younger classes.
- Consider combining newsletters—have four or five classes included in the same newsletter.

Fran will be discussing future plans with the newsletter editors at the Alumni Volunteer Workshop this afternoon.

Minority Alumni Network:

Deon Hornsby reported on the successful Minority Alumni Network picnic which was held on August 7th at the home of Malik Jones '91. Eighty-five alumni, students and friends were in attendance.

Deon also reported on the events for the Homecoming weekend. Saturday afternoon the Network will hold a roundtable discussion for mentors and students. On Sunday morning, the annual Minority Alumni Network Recognition Ceremony and Service will be held at Evelyn Chapel. Ansel T. Johnson '81 will be recognized this year for his vision, leadership and dedication to the Minority Alumni Network.

The Network is also working on the development of a series of Manpower Talks where alumni will come to campus to talk to students about after-college experiences.

The Network's Black History Month celebration will be held the last weekend in February at the DuSable Museum in Chicago.

Regional Activities:

Scott Huch began his comments by noting the increased attendance for the Executive Board meeting and the Alumni Volunteer Workshop today. He attributed this increase in attendance to the fact that both these meetings were being held in conjunction with Homecoming. He strongly recommended that the Board continue to schedule these types of meetings to coincide with important events on campus.

Scott reported his plans for the regional workshop and with regional boards including:

- How to recruit volunteers
- Group dynamics
- Reading dynamics
- Running a volunteer organization
- Identifying future volunteer leaders.

Scott noted that there are too many volunteers who are in charge multiple activities. He emphasized the need to recruit more volunteers. He is working on a program to teach the regional president's how to identify, recruit and train their successors.

Nominations and Awards:

Larry Rollings reported the following:

2005 Homecoming Award recipients

Bob Davis '55	Distinguished Alumnus
June Schultz '44	Loyalty Award
Bill Brown '88	Robert Montgomery Outstanding Young Alumnus

2006 Award Nominations will be solicited via:

- IWU Magazine (winter edition)
- Class newsletters
- E-Connection
- E-mail
- Web site

Executive Board positions recently filled and to be filled:

- Fran Rouzee – Chair of Class Secretary/Newsletter program
- Alumni Admissions program—Admissions Office will identify someone to chair.
- One at-large position needs to be filled.
- Several volunteers have terms that expire this academic year.

Jean Baird reported that she will make a note to check on the progress of the Nominating Committee at the Executive Board's next conference call.

Reunions:

Steve Seibring reported that in addition to University-planned functions for this weekend, there are a number of mini-reunions taking place. The Alumni Office does not want to discourage these events, but we need to find a way to enable them to all come together or help them build their mini-reunions. He noted that class is not the sole identifier for alums, and he would like the Board to discuss ideas on how we can better support these events during the Board's next conference call.

Parent Board:

Gigi Giunta reported on the activities of the Parent Board. There are currently 18 members on the Parent Board, including Tom and Gigi. And, since the Fall Family Weekend, Gigi has received inquiries from three people who would like to serve on the Board. The parents' reception that weekend at President Wilson's house was an overwhelming success.

The Board also sponsored a Fall Festival program, "While Your Student Is Sleeping". Professor Frank Boyd spoke about the IWU community and responsibility. The session was very well attended.

The Parent Board hosted the final session of the first-year-student parent orientation. Several parents on the Board answered questions raised by the parents of first-year students.

During the first-year student orientation, the Board also had a meeting with President Wilson. Ideas were discussed and President Wilson has asked them act as a sounding board back to the University from the parents' viewpoints. The Board has called a random list of parents to inquire as to how their child is doing, to answer questions, and to ask them for suggestions/ideas. The Board will pool these ideas at their next conference call.

The Parent Board is also considering implementing a Spring Family Weekend. She will be meeting with Professor Gerry Olson to develop a spring program to get parents back on campus.

The Parent Board appeal letter has just been mailed. This year's goal is \$120,000 for the Parent Fund. And, an information table will be set up this winter at one of the basketball games to promote the Parent Fund and Parent Board.

Future Meetings

Jean Baird reported that she will send members information regarding the next two conference calls. December 7th and February 8th at 6:30 p.m.

The next on campus Executive Board meeting will be held in April in conjunction with the John Wesley Powell Research Conference.

The Executive Board adjourned to attend the Alumni Volunteer Workshop.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Rollings
Alumni Association Executive Board Secretary

