Semi-Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes

Friday April 11, 2014

Thomas Commons

Directors present: Jennifer Albrecht '98, Deb Stewart Bowman '74, Andy Briscoe '96, Tim DeLong '69, Colin DeVaughan '94, Mark Dohnalek '82, Jerry Gale '74, Christine Hamon '03, Johna Gabriel Hedden '93, Patricia Helland '86, Fred Holtz '86, Paul Hutchison '87, Michelle Krezek '85, Sheila Kruse Boyce '85, Matt Lang '96, Amy Luitjens '01, Dick McKeen '55, Tashia Pierce '11, Eileen Quigley '84, Erica Osmundson Reimers '98, Hattie Wagner '12, Mo Walsh '13

Directors absent: Peg Dana '73, Derek Johnson '04, Isaiah McGee '01, Tim Wynes '83

Staff members present: Alyse Eggebrecht (Assist. Director, Alumni Engagement & Annual Giving), Macie Anderson (Assistant Director, Marketing Engagement), Dustin Ross (Senior Dir., Alumni Engagement & Annual Giving), Lisa White (Dir., Alumni Engagement & Annual Giving), Pam Gerard (Vice President, Alumni & College Adv.), Dee Ann Rexroat (Dir., Marketing & Communications), Colleen Murphy (Vice President for Enrollment)

Young Alumni Advisory Committee guests: Jennifer Quindry Shorr '04, Michael Johnson '12, Fia Wulur '13, David Zabner '13

Opening Business

- Call to order and approval of Fall 2013 minutes
  Motion to approve Fall 2013 minutes by Andy Briscoe, second by Amy Luitjens. Minutes approved unanimously.

- Announcement of Fall 2014 meeting date
  The Fall 2014 meeting date of October 17, 2014, was announced. This coincides with Cornell Homecoming.

- Invitation to join Board of Trustees for spring meeting 2015
  The Board of Trustees has invited the Alumni Board to meeting during the Trustees’ spring meeting dates so that the two boards can share social and educational times. Therefore, the Spring 2015 meeting date of May 1-2, 2015, was announced. This is currently planned as a one-time joint meeting date. More information on this spring meeting will be shared at a later date.
Alumni Engagement & Annual Giving update

- **Advancement update**
Pam Gerard provided a campaign update. The original estimated cost of the Strategic Plan was $182M but is likely to be closer to $200M. The plan for fundraising will be subject to a feasibility study. One challenge the college faces is that several current best prospects are committed to the Residence Hall renovation project for the next several years. The college will continue to fundraise and will likely conduct 2-3 smaller campaigns rather than one large campaign to reach that $200 goal. Next steps are for outside consultants to conduct a feasibility study and for outside consultants to look at our staffing needs. The feasibility study will include interviews of our top 50 donors and will be completed by February 2015. Success will depend on broad alumni involvement and the Alumni Board will play an important role in developing that increased alumni engagement.

- **Metrics**
Dustin Ross presented an update on how Alumni Engagement & Annual Giving (AEAG) is measuring engagement and setting goals to increase the rate of engagement. AEAG is planning to measure five key indicators for engagement: giving, online logins and updates, event attendance, volunteering, and other feedback (such as survey response, prospective student referral, and staff or volunteer visits recorded). To begin increasing engagement, AEAG is focusing on regional involvement, Pan-Campus engagement (working with other campus partners), volunteer leadership, and development. Initial action steps include rolling out a new regional engagement plan, formalizing the parent role on Homecoming/Family Weekend, enhancing the Homecoming/Family Weekend experience, improving marketing messages (participation, giving, communication), developing student and Young Alumni engagement, and conducting a myCornell redesign.

Annual Fund: the phonathon calling program will be brought in-house by the Fall with a goal of hiring a staff person by July 1. This change will allow Cornell to have better control over student caller hiring and training as well as to use the student caller position as a way to build student engagement.

- **Students/Young Alumni**
The new phonathon staff member will also take over student engagement programs. The Senior gift campaign exceeded its 100-donor goal, ending with 107 donors. They raised $1,780, which will be increased by $2,000 due to a challenge given by the Brands to add $500 for every senior over 100. Alyse Eggebrecht introduced the formation of the Student Alumni Ambassador program, which will help bridge the gap between the student and alumni experience. The Student Ambassador program is the decedent of the CASA program. Alyse announced the Class of 2014 co-class agents, Dan Carney and Nicole Potter. She also shared the success of last fall’s Young Alumni giving challenge, which included a challenge gift by Tamra Toussaint ’86.

- **Homecoming/Family Weekend**
Lisa White provided an update on Homecoming/Family Weekend. The college is moving forward with plans for a joint event and AEAG staff is working closely with Student Affairs staff to coordinate events. Alumni programming will not change but more educational opportunities may become available to alumni through Family Weekend presentations. AEAG will be introducing a new Twitter campaign for Homecoming/Family weekend so that
alumni, families, and students can post photos and announcements. The hashtags will be #coloritpurple and #homeonethehilltop.

**Alumni Board Strategic Plan**
Fred Holtz summarized the strategic planning process of the past 18 months. The decision to draft a new plan followed the ratification of the college’s new strategic plan, the alumni survey sent last summer, and the recommendations of the Alumni Task Force from Fall 2013. The goal is to increase Alumni Engagement to 30% by 2016 by enhancing the overall effectiveness of the Alumni Association, supporting volunteer efforts on- and off-campus, and supporting the lifelong connection all Cornellians have to the college and to each other. New committee chairs Andy Briscoe (Board Development/Awards), Michelle Krezek (Reunions/Homecoming), and Eileen Quigley (regional engagement) summarized the priorities of each of their committees. Fred Holtz asked for a motion to approve the new strategic plan, including the re-definition of committees. Motion by Andy Briscoe, second by Dick McKeen. Motion approved unanimously.

**Proposed changes to By-laws**
Changes to the Constitution and By-Laws were presented regarding the new committees and the change of the president-elect position from one to two years. Motion to approve changes by Michelle Krezek, second by Tashia Pierce. Motion approved unanimously.

**Committee break-out sessions**

**Luncheon**
Honorary alumna status was presented to retiring Professor of Spanish Sally Farrington-Clute.

**Campus update**
President Jonathan Brand provided an update on the college’s strategic plan and the budget.

**Committee reports**
- **Board Development/Awards Committee Report (Appendix A)**
The Board Development/Awards committee defined its top priorities: updating the Alumni Awards process, updating the nomination process for Alumni Awards and Alumni Board of Directors, evaluating young alumni representation on the Alumni Board, developing a board recognition process, discussing opportunities for engagement of past-Alumni Board presidents, developing a mentor program for new Alumni Board members, developing an exit interview and feedback process for current board members, development of leadership opportunities for Alumni Board members, structure for Ad hoc committees, codifying Alumni Board giving expectations, and developing an Alumni Board secretary position.
• **Reunions/Homecoming Committee Report (Appendix B)**

The Reunions/Homecoming committee defined its top priorities: developing reunion volunteer recognition, redefining Alumni Board’s role at Homecoming, Homecoming marketing, increasing Homecoming attendance, identifying non-Homecoming affinity reunion opportunities, and supporting both reunion and class agent volunteers.

• **Regional Engagement Committee Report (Appendix C)**

The Regional Engagement committee defined its top priorities: supporting the development of regional clubs (already launched in Colorado and the Twin Cities), identifying ways to encourage event attendance by all age groups, and supporting young alumni at a regional level through networking opportunities.

**Volunteer training**

Dustin Ross and Lisa White presented the new volunteer training programs for reunion volunteers and regional volunteers. The primary goals for reunion volunteers are to increase reunion attendance and encourage the two foundations of annual giving. Webinar training was presented to reunion volunteers in February and materials for reunion volunteers are available on myCornell. As of mid-April there are 70 reunion volunteers for Homecoming 2014.

The primary goals for regional engagement volunteers are to provide opportunities for alumni to connect with one another and the college, welcome new alumni and new students in the region, support current students and young alumni as they develop professionally, assist Admission in recruiting new students from a region, and providing financial support to the college. Regional Club training has been presented at planning meetings in Twin Cities and Denver, with a training in Chicago scheduled for April. The next phase of the regional club program will expand to Des Moines, Phoenix, Washington D.C., and St. Louis.

**Marketing Plan**

Director of Marketing & Communications Dee Ann Rexroat and Vice President for Enrollment Colleen Murphy gave a presentation on the college’s new marketing plan. The Marketing plan goals are to: 1) establish and integrate brand identity across campus, 2) increase external brand identify, and 3) help increase enrollment and fundraising. It was built on research, defines the core messaging, and details strategies/tactics for integrated communication. The research included: a strategic plan survey; an external creative team; an alumni survey; a perception study of prospective students/parents; and counselors; a non-matriculant survey; and ongoing college research.

The key attributes of Cornell College that were identified through the research are: 1) life-changing academic immersion; 2) dynamic learning community; 3) global and engaged campus culture; 4) classic campus setting; and 5) lifelong success of our graduates.

From these key attributes the marketing committee was able to define elevator speech phrases that are already being incorporated into admission and development marketing. Alumni Board members had the opportunity to view this year’s Admission marketing pieces.
**Closing Business**

Fred Holtz asked for volunteers to take minutes for the Fall 2014 Alumni Board meeting. Hattie Wagner volunteered. Meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.
Appendix A
Board Development/Awards Committee Report

The Board Development and Awards Committee met on Friday, April 11, 2014, in the Thayer Conference Room in the Thomas Commons at 10:45 AM. All members were present, with the exception of Peg Dana and Isaiah McGee.

- Updated awards process
  o It was agreed that there needs to be guidelines to assist the committee in determining who to grant awards to in the future. The awards to be reviewed are:
    ▪ Distinguished Achievement Award – granted for outstanding generosity and/or service to the college, outstanding participation in community affairs, or unusual achievement in one’s field of endeavor (usually limited to one person, done in conjunction with the President’s office – expected to deliver remarks at the October convocation)
    ▪ Leadership and Service Award – granted to alumni who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in their careers or professions, and whose work has contributed to the betterment of their community and its citizens, and whose commitment to the college is strong. Class agents who have served for 25 years will receive this award at their reunion convocation (usually around 3 awarded)
    ▪ Young Alumni Award – granted to alums who have been away from Cornell for 15 years or less, and have demonstrated leadership capability, substantial indication of a commitment to the service of others, demonstration of potential for leadership/distinction in the long term, and substantial commitment to the college and its’ mission. (usually 1 awarded)
  o ACTION ITEM – Andy Briscoe will draft a general framework for consideration. This shall include factors the committee shall weigh in granting the award, such as: reunion year, commitment to the college, gender/ethnic/geographical diversity, past recipients, years of service, ability to receive the award in a timely fashion.

- Updated nominees for alumni board awards
  o It was agreed that a baseline questionnaire, or form, should be completed in order to nominate individuals for any of the aforementioned awards. Such a form would then allow for a more objective comparison of award candidates by the committee.
  o ACTION ITEM – Andy Briscoe will draft a general form for consideration. This form could then be posted on the college’s website, myCornell, Facebook, as well as being made available to faculty, staff, and the Cornell Report.

- Updated nominees to alumni board
  o A general framework for consideration to aid in nominating individuals to the Alumni Board is needed. This framework shall include factors such as: graduation year, commitment to the college, gender/ethnic/geographical diversity, years of service, community involvement/activism, etc.
  o ACTION ITEM – Andy Briscoe will draft general parameters for consideration.

- Young alumni seat(s)
The committee learned that alumni board members who fill the young alumni seats, serve concurrently as the class agent for their respective class. These individuals are chosen by the Alumni Office. Discussion ensued as to whether or not the young alumni representative and class agent should be one and the same person (so as to afford more leadership opportunities to a greater circle of individuals). It was generally agreed that maintaining the young alumni seats on the alumni board is beneficial, in that they provide a fresh perspective and immediate insight to the board.

- **ACTION ITEM** – The Young Alumni Advisory Committee shall be consulted in the process of discerning the proper role of the young alumni representatives to the alumni board and the class agent.

  - **Board member recognition**
    - The committee agreed that there was a need to provide individualized recognition to board members at the conclusion of their terms. In years past, when an Alumni Board member retires, they are presented with a piece of pottery or piece of art created by one of Cornell’s art faculty members. In an effort to engage current students/soon to be alumni with the Board, it was suggested that students (particularly seniors) compete to create something to be awarded to departing board members. It could be a tapestry, a watercolor, a piece of pottery, etc. The only real parameter is that the creation must be evocative of the Cornell experience (and easily transportable on a plane). The student selected would then create the piece(s) for the retiring members - and be recognized at the Homecoming convocation (and perhaps graduation, too) for their contributions.
    - **ACTION ITEM** – Andy Briscoe will reach out to Doug Hanson and Tony Plaut to see if this contest is feasible, and something that could easily be run out of the Art Department.

  - **Past presidents**
    - The committee discussed how best to maximize the institutional knowledge of past board members and past presidents of the board. It was quickly agreed that inviting all past board members to the October board meeting to participate in deliberations would be too onerous and unproductive. Rather, it was agreed that such an invite should be extended just to past presidents of the Alumni Board, and their involvement and participation should be confined to the introductory portion of Friday morning (rather than the actual board deliberations).
    - **ACTION ITEM** – starting with the October, 2014 board meeting, the Alumni Office should purposefully extend an invitation to all former past presidents of the Alumni Board to join in the first/introductory portion of the Friday morning meeting.

  - **Mentors**
    - The committee discussed the advisability of having mentors for new members to assist them during their first meeting. The committee agreed that the board is not timid, and the function/role of a mentor would be more as pre-meeting advisor. Current board members could volunteer to be a mentor to new members, and would provide initial guidance prior to the first meeting. The mentor’s duties would discharge after the first meeting, as the new member became acclimated to the ebb and flow of board business.
    - **ACTION ITEM** – starting with the next crop of nominees to the board, current board members can volunteer to be a mentor to new board members and assist them with their transition onto the board.
- Exit interview/feedback
  o The committee discussed the need to glean feedback from board members about their time and experiences on the board. This feedback could then utilized to maximize the effectiveness of board meetings, material covered, and committee work.
  o ACTION ITEM – the Alumni Office will explore implementing a post-meeting survey to be emailed to all board members. The survey will contain questions about the various agenda items, as well as suggestions for improvement.

- Board development
  o The committee discussed the need to provide meaningful leadership opportunities to members of the board. These opportunities would include committee chair positions, as well as entering into the leadership as president-elect. How to properly gauge and determine interest in these positions was then discussed.
  o ACTION ITEM – in conjunction with the aforementioned survey to be developed and sent by the Alumni Office at the conclusion of each meeting, a question/portion of the survey will be devoted to ascertaining the individual’s interest in assuming a position of leadership on the board. Based on these responses, paths into leadership could subsequently be explored.

- Ad hoc committees
  o The committee discussed the need that shall be arising in the future for creating and appointing short-term ad hoc committees. These committees shall be individually project-focused. These committees would afford greater leadership opportunities to more board members, and would be of a limited duration.

- Alumni board giving
  o The committee then discussed the possibility of the Alumni Board focusing its fundraising prowess on one highly visible project. Individuals could donate to that particular cause, and the stature of the board could be heightened by such a “sponsorship” opportunity. Refurbishing Allee Chapel had previously been mentioned. Another option would be to procure a large stone block, engraved with Cornell College (similar to the similar markers at the East entrance to campus and the bottom of the hill across from McWethy Hall), and place it at the West entrance to campus (i.e. in the Olin yard).
  o ACTION ITEM – the Alumni Office shall compile a list of 4 – 6 projects that could reasonably be funded by the Alumni Board (and which exhibit a current need of the college). These projects could then provide a starting point for the sponsorship conversation.

- Board secretary
  o The committee discussed the need to have a consistent secretary for the board meetings. Spring meetings are less urgent, as staff is available to fill this void. However, during Homecoming, when staff is scarce, it would be beneficial for an individual board member to be present to take notes for the board. Such a position would also create a leadership position for a board member.
  o ACTION ITEM – volunteers shall be solicited from amongst the board’s membership to fill this need at the October, 2014 meeting.

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 11:45 AM.
Appendix B
Alumni Board of Directors
Reunions/Homecoming Committee Report
April 11, 2014

The Reunions/Homecoming committee met on Friday, April 11, 2014, in the Russell Classroom in the Thomas Commons at 10:45 AM. All members were present, with the exception of Deb Stewart Bowman. The staff liaison was Dustin Ross.

- Reunion volunteer recognition
  o Alumni Board members could go to reunion events to thank the volunteers who helped organize
  o Post photos from events and/or send a framed photo to volunteer organizers – volunteers like to see the impact of what they did
  o Continue awards recognition at Friday dinner – good tradition
- Alumni Board role at Homecoming
  o Agreed that it would be nice to end the meeting earlier on Friday to allow Alumni Board members to participate in Homecoming activities Friday afternoon
  o Discussed Presidents Society recognition change. Are there ways to use this to bring people back to campus and bridge the gap between the students and alumni? Some committee members were concerned with the change from dinner to reception, noting that it encourages giving at the Presidents Society level.
  o Look for ways to interact with parents:
    ▪ Parent/alumni reception on Friday – is there a time when students are in class/sports/activities when the Alumni Board could engage with parents?
    ▪ Panels to exchange information between parents and alumni
    ▪ Campus tours (Michelle – was the suggestion that AB gives the tours?)
  o Alumni Board thank you notes to the professors who participate in Homecoming events, acknowledging their commitment to making the weekend a success.
- Homecoming marketing
  o myCornell
    ▪ post photos of reunions/homecoming, allowing for comments on photos. This could help create buzz for the next Homecoming
  o Cornell Report
    ▪ Perhaps have the spring issue include photos and news from the previous Homecoming and also preview the upcoming Homecoming
- Increasing Homecoming attendance
  o Focus on other affinities – Shakespeare play, athletics, dorms, departments
  o Focus on entire decade instead of year
  o Make sure invitations for reunion gathering are open to other years – include an open invitation in all class letters – “Even if it isn’t your reunion, feel free to drop in on any reunion event to reconnect with friends from different graduating classes.”
  o Should reunion planning begin more than a year in advance?
  o Consider the hooks that get different generations back to campus – panel discussions, educational opportunities, focus on updated facilities, presentations on academic research
  o Involve hall councils in planning events to show the residence halls to alumni
  o Offer drawing for a free flight, hotel, etc. Raffle the year before to get people interested in coming back
  o Offer tour of needs for future funding – schedule time to take alumni on tours of the completed facility improvements and what still remains to be updated
Define ways to better-engage area alumni at Homecoming
  - Avoid scheduling Homecoming during home Iowa Hawkeye game
Other comments
  - Committee expressed dissatisfaction with change in Presidents Society recognition. Feel reception does not appropriately thank donors or encourage new donors
  - Hoping the new Student Ambassador program provides a great way to connect students and alumni

- Non-Homecoming opportunities
  - Athletic campus for kids (market to alumni)
  - Education programs on campus – Chautauqua-like offerings – short courses, staying in dorms, eating in Thomas Commons
  - Family events – athletic campus for kids, educational and social opportunities for parents

- Other priorities for this committee:
  - Develop class agent recognition program
  - Discuss volunteer training process and address training concepts
  - Develop ways for committee to mentor reunion volunteers

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM.
Appendix B
Alumni Board of Directors
Regional Engagement Committee Report
April 11, 2014

The Regional Engagement committee met on Friday, April 11, 2014, in the Ringer Dining Room of the Thomas Commons at 10:45 a.m. All members were present with the exception of Derek Johnson and Tim Wynes. The staff liaison with Lisa White.

The committee discussed the college’s visits to Colorado and the Twin Cities and the 2014 activities in these areas. The discussion revolved around offering enough variation in the Cornell gatherings to attract all age groups. We focused on the most recent alumni who are having more difficulty finding a job in their chosen field and that we have an opportunity to make the regional engagements into networking events as well. Areas where we think we could help:

- Affinity/professional networking events
  - Panel of professionals in specific field
  - Blue Jeans (similar to Skype)
- Networking
  - Coordinate an ACM networking events
  - Have a networking tent at Homecoming (which is also family weekend)
  - Focus on first 5 years-out alumni
  - Hold an event that will include students between junior-senior year
  - Modify regional invites to include the profession of the event committee hosts (currently, we only include the graduation year on the invite)
  - Is there a way to pair students with alumni for mentoring when they choose they major? (need to talk with Career Engagement Center).
  - One popular topic for alumni networking might be industry trends
  - List the professions of all alumni board members on My Cornell
- Students – how do we make regional alumni more accessible to current students? (collaborate with CEC)
- Event ideas
  - Try to identify events that cater to different age groups
  - Pre-record or simulcast presentations for use at regional events – could even be used via event-in-a-box in smaller regions
  - Have alumni in specific industries video messages and have it available on the web site. (would need to team up with pan-campus partners)
  - Simulcast theatre production or concert in theatres across regions
  - Record mini course
  - Homecoming: record testimonials and advertise ways to connect regionally
    - Use summer events
    - Send email letting alumni know of plans to collect stories
    - Develop a list of questions
    - #hilltopstories