

**THE GEORGE WASHINGTON ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD MINUTES  
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS PLANNING RETREAT**

August 18, 2007

*Board of Directors in Attendance:* Rudy Alvarez, Paul T. Antony, Blaine Atkisson, J.P. Blackford, Sally Cacheris, Nicole Capp, Penn Chabrow, Amy Chmar, Jay Cohen, Montrose Cones, James A. Core, Richard Crespin, Lindsey Davidson, Laura Downs, Allan From, Marc Goldsmith, Jeremy Gosbee, Richard Greene, Memphis Holland, Mark Hughes, Frank Kent, Issa Khozeimeh, Joseph Kiehl, Jon Klonsky, Jeannie Lesko, Laurie Lowe, Lindsay Rhein Marsh, Jeanette Michael, Douglas Mickle, Melissa Nachatelo, Tejbir Sigh Phool, Richard Popiel, Pilar Rivera, Beverly Roberts, Brian W. Schoeneman, Freda Steinberger, Jonathon Tarnow, Deborah Wheeler

*Members Not in Attendance:* Jeffrey Akman, Zoe Beckerman, Cheryl Bolding-Gunn, Celeste Bondon, Oscar David, Debby Demaree, Steven Frenkil, Minnie Harmon, Richard Heideman, Kamden Hoffman, Rex Holloway, Stuart Kassin, Gerald Lazarus, John Manning, Jeff Marootian, Robert Miller, Arlinda Mezini, Jodie Moxley, Kristy McDonnell Ortiz, Sreedhar Potarazu, Steven Ross, Christopher Young

*Members Via Teleconference:* Eric Mendelsohn, Christina Guerola Sarchio, Kamden Hoffman

*Staff in Attendance:* Kelly Bosma, Paul Bradley, Kevin Corbett, Laurel Price Jones, Andrew Kaufteil, Paul Lanzone, Raina Lenney, Matt Lindsay, Adrienne A. Rulnick, Maggie Wilson

*Staff Not in Attendance:* Julia Coplan, Andrew Hill, Stephanie Medwid, Anita Pytlarz Ponchione

**Call to Order and Minutes**

- GWAA President Richard Crespin called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m.

**Introduction of President Knapp**

- Laurel Price Jones introduced President Knapp as the 16<sup>th</sup> President of The George Washington University. Even though his first day was in August 2007, he has been working behind the scenes since January 2007. He has brought to GW over 30 years of higher education experience and most recently served as Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs at Johns Hopkins University.
- President Knapp discussed some of his aspirations for GW. They include:
  - Improving the GW experience of student.
  - Growing and becoming recognized as a research institution.

- Becoming re-recognized for the resource GW is because of its location in Washington D.C.
- Strengthening partnerships with fellow institutions in the Washington D.C. Metropolitan area.
- Increasing connection between students and alumni so they recognize GW as a worldwide and lifelong community.
- President Knapp discussed some of the challenges and opportunities for GW. They include:
  - Only 11% of GW alumni are participating on an annual basis in support of the institution. This is low in comparison to our peer institutions. Knapp believes the institution can do better and significantly improve this number through the years.
  - Increasing the connection between the students, campus, faculty, staff, the President and other higher administrative positions to improve the emotional connection to GW.

### **Introduction of Adrienne Rulnick**

- Adrienne Rulnick has been hired as the new Associate Vice President for Alumni Relations and Development.
- Rulnick announced her enthusiasm to build a strong bridge between the university, Dr. Knapp, and alumni.
- Rulnick reported there is an opportunity to create more branding of alumni in a physical and comparable way. At the other end of the spectrum we need to think creatively in regards to how we translate our message into ways that can be more meaningful to alumni who may have graduated from different schools within the university.
- Rulnick stated that getting everyone from the GW Community involved and engaged is important in strengthening their all-around participation. The first step to accomplishing this is emphasizing the importance of telling stories.

### **President's Report**

- Jeremy Gosbee presented the minutes from the GWAA Annual Meeting, June 6, 2007. They were approved with minor changes accepted.
- Minutes from the Executive Committee Meeting, July 10, 2007 were presented.
- Crespin announced on Thursday, November 15, 2007 there would be events held specifically for alumni as a part of his inaugural celebration. There will be a breakfast in the morning and a dinner in the evening. Two tables (20 seats) are available for GWAA members.
- Crespin Introduced the GWAA Goals for FY 08
  - Lifetime Engagement- From the moment of admission through the rest of their lives, the GWAA wants alumni to feel part of our worldwide family. The GWAA will enhance and expand current programs and create new initiatives that will appeal and add value to the lives of alumni at every

point, from the moment they enter the University, through mid-career, to later life.

- **Gathering a Voice-** Active engagement requires a two-way conversation. The GWAA wants to hear from alumni on the issues affecting their lives so that we may do a better job representing them in the University community. The GWAA will also establish and institutionalize mechanisms for gathering feedback from alumni on an ongoing basis.
- **Building a Culture of Philanthropy-** For our worldwide family to mean something it needs to be based on giving back- giving back to each other, to the University, and to future generations of alumni.

### **Review of Goals for FY08 from Alumni Programs**

- Raina Lenney reported some of the improvements in FY07 including, expansion of the Board, enhanced local and regional programs, and the launch of the Young Alumni Network.
- Lenney announced the FY08 goals for Alumni Relations, which included specific goals for Alumni Programming, George Washington Alumni Association and Volunteer Management, Clubs and Groups, and Alumni Communications.
- Lenney presented FY08 goals for Alumni Programming, which included Regional Programs, Student Alumni Programs, School-Alumni Programs, and Alumni Awards Program.
  - Regional Programming is hoping to increase alumni participation from 4.5% of alumni attending events in FY07 to 6% attending events. Also, there will be an increase from 240-hosted events to 270, which is a 15% increase. Regional Programs will focus on four specific regions: Washington DC, Primary Regions, Secondary Regions, and International Regions.
    - The Washington DC region will expand its level of programming in DC metro area by planning more events outside of the District-proper. These areas include Tyson's Corner, Fredrick, Bethesda, and Reston. Programming will include continuing to work with Athletics and SASS on sponsorships, cross marketing, and streamlined branding to alumni. Also, by maintaining the Programs Committee's structure on the GWAA board, which would include more active recruitment of GWAA members and outside volunteers for the committee.
    - The Primary Regions will continue the development of the five main regional chapters (Manhattan, Boston, Philadelphia, Ft. Lauderdale/Palm Beach, Miami) by empowering chapters to create and to plan at least six regional events and to hold quarterly meetings, holding two annual strategy sessions, opening annual strategy session to leadership and potential volunteers, and identifying leadership positions, including chapter leaders and at least four committee members/additional volunteers.

- The Secondary Regions will continue to expand the development of these areas in hopes to eventually establish them as main chapters. Current secondary regions include Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.
- The International Regions will continue to develop programming in London, continue communication with volunteers in Turkey, Brazil, Philippines, and others as they emerge, and work with school-based officers to increase international programs.
- Student Alumni Programs is expanding programs geared to student alumni connections. The expansion of programs include the following:
  - Arranging 50 dinners in DC area for “Dinner with Alumni”.
  - Arranging 6 regional dinners in primary regions for “Dinner with Alumni”.
  - Maintaining 3 lectures per semester for “How Do I Become A...?”
  - Continuing participation in Grad Week, building a successful 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual “Zero-Year” Reunion.
  - Involving student leadership from the Student Association and Class Council in program development, especially relating to career services involving alumni.
  - Engaging students with alumni at Alumni Reunion Weekend.
  - Coordinating an integrated Legacy Program to include three targeted programs per year, as well as branded communication.
  - Educating outside offices about our student-alumni programs, specifically Admissions and Housing.
  - Integrating students into Alumni Online Community/Career Advisor Network.
  - Enhancing engagement with GWAA student-alumni initiatives committee.
- School-Alumni Programs is creating and implementing coordinated alumni programs plan for CCAS, which will be spearheaded by Anita Ponchione.
- Alumni Awards Programs is planning to increase community awareness of all alumni award recipients by using campus media outlets to demonstrate students the link between skills learned at GW and accomplishments outside the University.
- Lenney presented FY08 goals for Volunteer Management by developing a program to work with campus and division partners to build support for using alumni volunteers. A process will also need to be established this year to identify, recruit, place, train, utilize and recognize alumni volunteers.
- Lenney presented FY08 goals for the Alumni Relations Clubs and Groups Divisions included five specific goals.
  - Continuing the development of the Black Alumni Association and LGBT Alumni Association, in conjunction with university partners.

- Expanding communication and grant donations to a wider range of multicultural groups, sports teams, academic departments and schools, and student organizations of all stripes, including Greek organizations.
  - Finding new and inventive ways to use technology to connect clubs and interest groups with their alumni. So far, social networking sites, web pages, and online user groups have encouraged engagement.
  - Systematizing online networking among the groups, while coordinating and meeting the various needs of constituents.
  - E-newsletters, online giving appeals, and file sharing capabilities will be branded and expanded.
- Lenney presented FY08 goals for the newest division of Alumni Relations: Alumni Communications. The first main focus will be to develop a proactive, integrated alumni communications plan by launching a new website, improving the current Colonial Cable and Regional Roundup, continuing work with the ACE to improve alumni visibility in other university publications (i.e. The Hatchet, GW Magazine, etc.), developing literature on all alumni benefits, and creating consistency through all invitations and marketing pieces. The second focus will be to expand the use of the Alumni Community by increasing the number of online visitors from 43,300 to 55,500, registering 800 alumni advisors in the Career Advisor Network (currently there are 439), attaining online Class Notes submissions for each reunion class, and updating alumni contact information.
  - Lenney presented the FY08 goals for the division of Alumni Benefits which included the following:
    - Regaining lost ground in the Alumni Course Audit Program by increasing web and print marketing efforts.
    - Maintaining current suite of affinity products, including Bank of America credit card and banking services, auto/home/life/health insurance and home mortgage.
    - Finalizing both web and print marketing plans for a special license plate program in Virginia and DC, along with the rollout of redesigned plate in the state of Maryland.
    - Developing a plan for revenues received by the Virginia special plate program. Revenues must be approved by the State Council for Higher Education of Virginia as scholarship funds for eligible undergraduate students who reside in the state of Virginia and who take courses at one of GW's Virginia campuses.
    - Increasing Alumni Memorabilia Sales by enhancing the look and function of the Online Alumni Marketplace, developing a more efficient method for processing orders for internal and external customers, marketing the Alumni Memorabilia through alumni communications and internal communications at peak sale point throughout the year, and by researching feasibility of expanding selection of exclusive merchandise offered through the Online Alumni Marketplace.
    - Increasing room night occupancy at the DC-based Club Quarters hotel by marketing the program to faculty and staff of the university.

- Communicating alumni benefits and services to the larger University community and also to development officers to assist their efforts in prospect engagement. Hopefully, this will create greater awareness of alumni benefits and services extended to staff and faculty.
- Continuing to work with Development Operations in developing plans to offer a permanent email service to alumni through an outside vendor, such as MS Windows Live.

### Review of Goals for FY08 from Annual Giving

- Seth Rosenzweig reported FY07 was one of the most successful years for the Annual Giving program. New innovations in the GW Annual Fund were achieved and the recruitment of a new leadership annual giving team was completed. The FY08 plan capitalizes on the success of FY07.
- Rosenzweig announced in FY07, the GW Annual Fund raised \$2,417,000 and 16,600 donors through direct marketing programs. In the coming year, the staff hopes to continue to grow the mail, phone, and e-mail programs through increased sophistication and efficiency. The GW Annual Fund's overall goals for FY08 are \$2,817,000 and 18,725 donors. The goals have been specifically aimed depending on the different type of marketing program used.

<b>FY08 Goals</b>	<b>Dollars</b>	<b>% Increase</b>	<b>Donors</b>	<b>% Increase</b>
Mail	\$1,430,000	12%	8,650	13%
Phone	\$910,000	16%	8,800	11%
Web	\$4000,000	38%	1,100	10%
Match	\$77,000	10%	175	15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,817,000</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>18,725</b>	<b>13%</b>

- Rosenzweig presented goals for the Young Alumni Network, Young Alumni Giving Programs, Student Philanthropy, and Reunions.
  - Young Alumni Network will expand the current program in conjunction with Annual Giving efforts by:
    - Hosting at least two branded programs per semester in DC.
    - Integrating other relevant programming opportunities such as DC programs, University programs, and student-alumni programs.
    - Creating a website and establishing other branded materials such as palm cards, quarterly emails, mailings, etc.
    - Coding all YAN members in Banner and promoting internal use.
    - Launching YAN in New York and holding two additional branded programs in New York in the spring semester.
    - Welcoming new graduates to the Young Alumni Network and the GWAA within three months of graduation.
  - The Young Alumni Giving Program will increase financial support from Young Alumni gifts by:

- Creating uniquely branded collateral and messaging to this constituency that reflects both the giving program and the Young Alumni Network.
  - Soliciting recent graduates for the first gift within six months of graduation.
  - Educating alumni about Young Alumni level within Luther Rice Society, which is a \$250 gift for membership for the first five years after graduation.
  - Recruiting class-giving agents for each of the ten class years.
  - Creating committee structures per class for peer-to-peer solicitation purposes.
  - Utilizing social networking and regional events hosted by the existing Young Alumni Network to spread awareness and recruit committee members.
- Student Philanthropy will undergo an evaluation the current management structure for the class giving programs. The evaluation process will be a collaborative process between the Annual Fund and Alumni Relations. From this evaluation there will be heavy consideration of a newly created position, Assistant Director of Young Alumni and Student Philanthropy, who would oversee class-based fundraising initiatives, as well as the young alumni giving initiative. The FY08 goals for student philanthropy include:
    - Expanding the student philanthropy program to include the incoming class of 2011, bringing it to a total of four class-based fundraising initiatives, all of which culminate in each class's Senior Gift Campaign.
    - Achieving 30% participation in Senior Class Gift; 10% participation in Class of 2011; and 15% in 2009 and 2010.
    - Expanding outreach and awareness of giving programs through a cohesive marketing plan and expanded tabling events.
    - Evaluating student pledges process of Class Giving Campaign.
    - Exploring best practices in student giving campaigns and in the establishment of student committees.
- The Reunions program continues to grow and expand. The same structure as Young Alumni Giving Program will also be used for the reunion program by increasing overall participation in alumni events as well as philanthropic support. Goals for the reunion program include:
    - Achieving attendance of 1,000 for undergraduate reunions, a 30% increase over Reunions of 2006.
    - Engaging more alumni volunteers in a more meaningful manner; maintain committee structures with a large general committee and four subcommittees, and engage volunteers to the extent of their interest and availability.
    - Increasing reunion fundraising through continued collaboration with the GW Annual Fund, Leadership Annual Giving, Planned

Giving and school-based and major gifts officers in all possible ways.

- Hosting reunions for various clubs and groups, such as Black Alumni Association, the LGBT Alumni Association, and others.
- Improving and streamlining existing collateral and website by sending every guest a confirmation packet two weeks prior and following up by sending a survey of attendees.
- Creating specific class giving websites so each class can view and track goals and progress.

## **Work Groups Report for Developing Initiatives for Achieving GWAA Goals**

### Enabling Lifetime Engagement

#### Action Items

- Building and branding a class' identity from point of entry to class branding, while leveraging events like the convocation and commencement to garner alumni support.
- Bringing prominent people to campus for marquis events will attract alumni.
- Focus on successful reunion years. Do not abandon classes with low responses but do not waste energy which could benefit other alumni constituencies.
- Developing an Alumni Career Services Network for mid-career alumni. Development of a site in support of user needs would be influenced by gathering regionally-based feedback and collecting best and worst practice scenarios from like institutions.
- Increasing the presence at large events on campus, such as spring fling.
- Providing alumni benefits package and membership card so they feel apart of the university when they are juniors or seniors and are easily contacted and accessible.
- Increased alumni involvement with admissions; interviewing students across the country.
- Continuing the career guidance network, which would include mentoring from alumni to graduating students.
- Diversify the kinds of programs offered to alumni. Such programs would include, a sports clinic with a GW varsity team with a meet and greet of the coaches and players.
- Offering brown bag lunches instead of evening lectures for those alumni who have evening commitments.
- Reserving seats for alumni at events sponsored by GWAA grant programs.

#### Related issues to consider

- Informing students about the financial cost of running an institution.
- When students receive scholarship form GWAA, follow up with a letter to track these students to close the loop to encourage donations.
- Over-committing the GWAA with too many events and keeping energetic alumni involved on a regular basis.

#### Gathering a Voice for Alumni

##### Actions

- Collecting feedback from event attendees – people are expressing their opinions at events, but what is the GWAA doing to actively collect for the purposes of evaluation and improvement?
- Use website as a platform for gathering a voice; it's more cost effective and will therefore let us hear from more people.
- Continue hosting live town hall meetings and forums, such as those held during the presidential search process. However, also host webinars, forums or online town hall meetings to encourage alumni to express opinions who may not live in the region.
- Use other non-conventional communications tools, such as podcasts.
- Implement ballot voting for leadership elections and also for questions to gather alumni input, which would hopefully increase involvement and engagement in the life of the GWAA.
- Eliminate donations or dues as a precondition to giving feedback or speaking out on an issue.
- Encourage the institution to thank students as they graduate for making a significant financial investment in their education.
- Seek the opinions and input of multi-generational GW families; they have a unique perspective that should be shared with others.
- Conduct pre-reunion surveys to collect input and engage alumni in their reunion classes.
- Communicate to alumni about what other alumni are accomplishing in the world (share news clippings, etc.)
- Launch a “Letters To the President” Campaign to encourage alumni to share their thoughts with President Knapp on the occasion of his inauguration.
- Ensure connective bridges have been established between the GWAA and relevant parts of the University, from President Knapp down to individual faculty or staff members.
- Engage other relevant groups in this issue, especially the president, Board of Trustees, etc.

#### Related Issues to consider

- Alumni relations and communications budgets – these are determined by administration and the Board of Trustees.
- Getting a commitment to act on alumni input – the GWAA can work to collect feedback, but it will be up to the administration to use that input in making decisions and to show alumni that it is being taken seriously. The administration will also have to be committed to a certain level of transparency that will help identify the areas where the GWAA can provide meaningful input based on its perspective of the matter.
- GW lacks a formal process to collect and process alumni feedback. This includes gathering input and sharing that input with the entire alumni community. To add to the process, GW should produce actionable items by which the administration shows activity based on alumni input.

#### Building a Culture of Philanthropy

##### Action Items

- Micro-targeting would be a great way to connect with student organizations and alumni affiliated with those organizations. The alumni will have a greater connection to give back to the University via the club/group they participated with and became engaged with while in school.
- Establish a sense of pride. Discover ways to create this sense of pride because it will lead to larger donations.
- Create a personal connection with students while they are on campus so their connection carries into giving their time and money back to the University. Also emphasize giving back your time before if you are not in a position to give back monetarily.
- Develop a platform that encompasses a few main focuses and let this serve as basis to work off, branding it so that it becomes a way of thinking for students and alumni.

##### Related issues to consider

- None were discussed.

#### Committee Reports

- Communications Committee
  - Jeremy Gosbee, Chair of the Communications Committee, reported there is a lack of consistency in the branding of communications to alumni. GWAA needs to increase print marketing to balance the fundraising aspects and to increase the perception of professionalism. It appears most printed communications tend to be for fundraising, while alumni programs

are largely promoted by email. Due to spam filters and the high volume of email communications, some alumni do not view what gets sent via email.

- Gosbee reported *GW Magazine* is the best communications vehicle we currently have for alumni, but it should be produced more often. Other ideas around the magazine included producing a monthly electronic version, distributing headlines from the magazine by email and highlighting the content in the various school-based magazines.
- Gosbee also reported maintaining a master calendar of publications and communications to ensure consistent scheduling and monitoring of the frequency of communications. This would make finding out about how to attend events easier. There, also, needs to be an increase in two-way communication. Some suggestions included, making it easier to submit items to the *Colonial Cable* electronic newsletter and Class Notes on the Web.
- Gosbee suggested that encouraging alumni to subscribe to the *GW Hatchet* would create nostalgia amongst alumni. There was discussion to making an emotional connection to alumni and *GW Hatchet* was recognized as one of those sources to bring alumni back to their college days.
- Gosbee suggested creating a benefits package and distribute it to students before they graduate.
- Gosbee discussed the possibility of micro targeting, which can offer a way to ensure information is reaching the most relevant audiences. This could even be applied to printed communications, such as by creating different versions of *GW Magazine* for different age groups by just changing the image on the front cover to bring them back to their specific college years. We noted that micro targeting is only effective if we have detailed biographical and activities-related information.
- Finally, Gosbee discussed peer-to-peer communication. We can only communicate with alumni if we have the University's cooperation in using the alumni database. In addition to allowing database access to alumni, organic or peer-to-peer communicative materials could also increase communication amongst engaged alumni. Also, ensuring alumni have a way to update GW and classmates on their accomplishments (class notes) will also increase this organic communication.

#### Finance Committee

- Treasurer Marc Goldsmith reported the GWAA has already made a commitment of \$14,000 to grants given to alumni groups. The Holiday Parties budget is \$20,000 and \$13,000 has already been approved from applications.
- Goldsmith asked on behalf of the Grant Committee for a report after the event has taken place. It should include the number of attendees, a summary of the event, and any comments regarding the grant process. Andrew Kaufteil confirmed that this report is already a requirement. Goldsmith also suggested that if the alumni group does not use all the

grant money this needs to be announced, so it can be put back into the grant pool.

- Goldsmith also reported the GWAA gives back to the university 75% of what it receives. Therefore, we are paying out twice on the \$5,000 Bank of America scholarship. Goldsmith suggested we take the \$5,000 scholarship from income so we pay the 75% out on a lower income total.
- Programming Committee
  - Blaine Atkisson, Chair of the Programming Committee, reported on the Calendar of Events. The fall semester is already scheduled. He requested volunteers for events. Those interested in volunteering should call Blaine or Maggie Wilson.
  - Atkisson reported additional programming includes, “Politics and Ports”, Brown Bag Lunches, expansion of events into suburban areas such as Loudon County, Reston, and Gaithersburg. The “GW Speaker Series” will also continue. For the fall “GW Speaker Series” will include such topics as retirement/investing, housing, career change, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
- Student-Alumni Committee
  - Laura Downs, Chair of Student-Alumni Committee pointed out a palmcard of upcoming events included in the board meeting folders.
  - Downs reported upcoming events included:
    - “How Do I Become A...Fortune Small Business Owner, Private Space Explorer, and Foreign Service Officer”
  - Downs also reported the committee will continue the “Dinner with Alumni” Program and GW Legacy Families. The “Dinner with Alumni Program has grown significantly this past year. There are 25 dinners scheduled for fall and hopefully 25 additional dinners in the spring. There will also be greater involvement in the admissions process including freshmen sendoffs and attendance at college fairs.

### **Old Business/New Business**

- President Richard Crespin announced the passing of long time GWAA Board of Directors member, Dr. Bruce Ammerman.
- Crespin moved that the Board of Directors confer upon Steven Knapp, President of The George Washington University, an honorary lifetime membership in The George Washington Alumni Association, and that he be appointed an executive officer and member of the Board of Directors. It was passed without objection.
- Crespin also moved that the Board of Directors create an ad-hoc committee for Alumni Career Services, which will integrate and establish a mentor network and career advisor center for mid-career alumni. Blaine Atkisson suggested Frank Kent head the ad-hoc committee. Both were passed without objection.
- Crespin also suggested the Executive Committee take all the reports and put them into a timeline for better and more thorough execution.
- Adrienne Rulnick suggested moving the meeting space due to the size of the Board of Directors. It would need to fit approximately 75 people and also have

break-off meeting rooms available. If someone has space available please contact Kevin Corbett.

- Andrew Kaufteil reminded all GWAA Board Members of Reunion Weekend September 28-30, 2007. If you have any questions, please contact Andrew.

**Adjournment**

- With no further business to discuss the Board Meeting adjourned at 3:54 p.m.

Submitted by,

L. Davidson  
*Secretary*