Thursday, April 7, 2011
Members and College Staff Present:
Katherine Barnett, Kate Pearce, Mitch Lehn, Bruce Wahl, Magdalena Wells,
Katherine Kroeger, Brenda Berkman, Linda Bjerke, Ted Hillestad, Sean Burress, Sam
Dotzler, Mickey Monsen, Randy Betcher, Gary Perkins, Jennifer Sawyer, Rebecca
Taibl, Brock Metzger, Siri Thompson

Nathan Soland, Kathy Schuurman, Meredith Olson, Heidi Quiram, Sheri Eichhorn,
Allen Baker, Janet Thompson, Tracy Fossum, Eric Tvedt, Nicole Schroeder

a. Katherine opened the meeting with a welcome and devotions.
b. Katherine provided a President’s Report:
   a. The key initiatives of the Board of Regents include the Strategic
      Plan and the Main Street Project
   b. We are in preparation for a new capital campaign. Katherine’s
      sense would be to begin campaign 2013-2014.
   c. Katherine shared information on the new Board of Regents
      members.
   d. High Admissions yield this year; next year will be much more
      selective.
      a. Challenges with class size, residence hall space
      b. Goal is still to be under 3,000 students with a goal of 2,800.
      c. Greatest boom of students coming from the south, west
         coast area.
      d. Greatest diversity in applicants ever
   e. Provost search has very highly qualified candidates. Selection
      committee made up of faculty members.
   f. Top 2 risks the college worries about?
      a. U of MN Liberal Arts program – however, students have to
         go 5.5 years to get the classes they want/need vs. 4 years at
         STO
      b. Online education – changing environment and where
         education is heading
      c. No discussion of becoming a University
      d. 2% of graduates from college (not a University) in this
         country come from liberal arts
      e. Online courses are being discussed – possibly could be
         offered to alumni
         i. Luther college has lectures available for free on
            iTunes U.

c. Alumni Board Show and Tell
a. **Sean Burress** – Focus Group Research

b. **Mickey Monsen** – Beckettwood has 13 Oles, “all mobile, alert, and involved in things,” working on projects together, wants to think of ways we can reach out to older alumni as well

c. **Rebecca Taibl** – Enjoyed the Gala, working on building relationships within her class and finding reasons for the Northeast area St. Paul Oles to gather for a purpose of getting to know one another, etc.

d. **Brenda Berkman** – 823 alums in greater NYC area, huge percentage are from classes of 2000 onward. No lese event this year. Skating party in January with St. Olaf Interim students, continuing to look for ways for art student interim students to interact with alumni. Day of Service coming up. Young alum Ben Baker just finished Master’s degree in Jazz Piano and is very involved in the club.

e. **Bruce Wahl** – Great lese event in November, successful theater and bookclub events, dinner with DC Interim students, homelessness seminar, Day of Service coming up, concerned with communications and follow through with events.

f. **Jennifer Sawyer** – involved with a sophomore leadership group on campus, involved with Ole Ventures and Oasis. Highlight of the past 6 months was Gala and Brock winning the iPad.

g. **Mitch Lehn** – Found some new volunteers in the Denver area, building networking events, broomball, raptor center tour, new Day of Service leader, Fort Collins is developing more of their own events too, upcoming wine tasting and pool party.

h. **Magdalena Wells** – Young alumni world is tricky as people still feel connected to the college and friends, harder to “force” gatherings to these groups, Young alumni holiday party was well attended and fabulous, Gala was fun and had more younger people in attendance, many of her students in the Admission Possible program are applying to St. Olaf, with a large number also being admitted.

i. **Siri Thompson** – Will share more during SAA report, students are interested in senior time capsules

j. **Linda Bjerke** – Continuing to attend Conversations, wonders how we can engage more alums in the Twin Cities area

k. **Ted Hillestad** – California happy hours and picnics coming up, engaged on the Alumni and Parent Committee for the Mainstreet Project – a lot of suggestions have been made, initial findings are more than can be done, trying to recruit Oles for jobs at Google, hopes students become more comfortable reaching out to alums for advice

l. **Brock Metzger** – Gala Co-Chair, enjoyed the Young Alumni Holiday Party, Theater Event for Oles organized by Ole alum, Choir Reunion Chair Captain for his class, always willing to talk with Oles about Target, Gala was a resounding success, 343 people attended, raised over $160,000, continue to find more sponsors and donors to make this event less costly for the college. Online Gala Auction had an
incredible response—raised $18,000 on 15 items. VIP reception had 30-40 people and good response.

m. Sam Dotzler – Enjoyed the Gala, monthly dinners in Chicago are getting back on track, Justin and Sarah McCarty are taking over ATWAC dinner, Networking Event will happen twice a year, Julie Treumann is doing quarterly Ole attorney lunches in Chicago, building on professional connections, 2 Day of Service events—Downtown and Suburban event, moving forward with social media outlets and building up Facebook interactions, wants to do one or two special events per year (farm tours, etc)

n. Kate Pearce – working on 10 year reunion as gift co-chair, reminded everyone that the Gala is owned by the Alumni Board and expressed thanks for everyone’s help and involvement in Gala

o. Katherine Barnett- Give to the Max Day was so successful; St. Olaf on the Road came to DC at the Newseum. Ballroom dancing is a hot activity for younger alums—could work well for a club event. Mainstreet Project is going to change how students progress through college. From their first year students will be focused on vocation and how they can get from a to b. Students will have opportunities to write their own “game plan” of how to get through college and into a career. Mentoring is a great opportunity to help get involved with current students. Students need more information on how to access Alumni Database. Need to help identify and create internships; provide vehicles for students to get to internships, etc.

Questions and Feedback:

Q. How to handle lack of follow through with volunteers?

A. Try to assign two people to uphold a project—at least one person would hopefully follow through. Another strategy would be to provide a clear work plan or outline of event goal, clear vision.

Viral spread of information can be really helpful; also helpful to connect with people who have done the same event, project, award nomination, etc before. Connections can help keep people accountable.

Volunteers aren’t lazy but could be stuck—maybe they need more help to keep going.

It could be helpful to have updates on what is happening in other cities at any given time. Perhaps Alumni Board members could reach out to alums they know in the area and promote events, etc.
Q. Are volunteers given an event planning worksheet? Followed up with by APR staff members? A template for specific events could help inexperienced volunteers.

A. Templates are a good idea; but can’t always guarantee that people follow them.

Q. Is there a way APR staff could push out information on people who are in the arts, media, medicine, law, etc in the regional areas? This cluster group information could be helpful.

**Update on Commencement and Reunion Weekend**

Around 1,200 people are registered so far for Reunion. Goal for weekend is 3,500 with many of those people part of Choir Reunion. 50th Reunion is looking great. Still needs to grow a lot by the registration deadline.

Downtown Northfield party on Friday and Saturday night is going to be a blast with 32 Below on Friday and Story Hill, Rogue Valley with Chris Koza, and the Bratlanders on Saturday.

**Mentoring Brainstorming**

Mentoring is needed in both particular fields, geographic areas, and in general with regards to vocation, liberal arts options after graduation, etc.

Some mentors frustrated with getting emails from students who they can’t connect with or don’t have anything to offer them based on their interests, majors, etc.

Perhaps students could have lists of Alums and reach out that way rather than vice versa.

What does it mean to be a mentor vs. an advisor? What are the students expecting from alumni mentors? True “mentors” are often relationships built over time.

- Responsibility is on the student to follow up with mentor

**Pitfalls of mentoring programs:**

- matching errors
- lack of training – both mentors and mentees
- mentee groups could build off of each other
- need to have a clear beginning and clear end

**Communications Audit**
**Year in Advance**

a. Many people keep this for a reference
b. Having the calendar in the back is useful
c. Great to have a picture of the person doing the lecture
d. The calendar could be located in the centerfold
e. Glossary of what types of events are included in each category
f. Perforated calendar would be good as a stand alone piece for the fridge, etc
g. Add contact information for Alumni Board members
h. How can Alumni Board give back to these events/help/etc
i. Purpose and cost perspective – cut it be cut in half with fewer pictures? Just give the info and calendar instead?
j. A good “feel-good” piece, pride piece
k. Could this be modified to go out to every alum, not just Twin Cities
   a. Include club events, all music tours, etc
   b. Most of these events are things people travel to
   c. Important for alums all over to recognize the scope of the St. Olaf Alumni Network
l. Online calendar with search mechanism to pull up events based on your personal interests – academically, socially, etc
m. “Here are the events you registered before, here are some you might like”
n. Inconsistencies of type face, font color in gray was ineffective, didn’t motivate to action
o. Useful for first contact prior the follow up emails, etc
p. Volunteer Opportunities would be good to include (1 page max)

**Class Newsletters**

a. “Bottom of the barrel” piece – compared to the other things STO is sending out
b. Good to include information on PAG class goal, participation, etc
c. Hesitant to add info on PAG as it might become “just another solicitation piece”
d. Online version could be really useful; fun to have access to other class newsletters online to see what friends from other years are up to
e. Surrounding class year content – example a letter for everyone from 1990-2000.
f. Option to receive mailings print vs. email
   a. Some people want to read a lot of text, others want little snippets
g. Tendency for same people to update same information all the time
h. Facebook takes care of these updates and connections in some ways
i. Still ok to be mailed, but quality and quantity has to change, down to 1 page

**Paper Invitation (DC)**

a. Need official St. Olaf logo or name on front
b. Color is nice
c. Small size takes away initial reaction that there will be a funding envelope inside
d. Would be great to have a “look who’s coming” feature
e. Mail always costs more than email
f. What is cost benefit analysis? Communications budget is $80-100 K a year

Printed Newsletter
   a. Text heavy, so many URLs aren’t needed
   b. Hard to focus
c. Like the outside message more than inside
d. Needs color on the inside
e. Perforation on the bottom would be nice to tear off upcoming events
f. Nice to have Alumni Board Contact info on newsletter as resource

Ole Weekly Email
   a. Communications all look slightly different, how much consistency do we want across the board? Look, image, font, etc?
b. Too much scrolling is needed
c. Put most valuable info at top
d. Maybe a “what’s in store” at the top with a quick table of contents
e. Weekly might be too often
f. Use of icons is nice
g. It’s the same every week
h. Misses the photo of the week

Day of Service Email
   a. Should every email say “St. Olaf: texttexttexttext”
b. Message of email is good
c. Quick to read
d. Nice not to scroll
e. This email goes out to everyone, not just featured in a newsletter
f. Some people get 4 emails a week

Homelessness and Mental Health
   a. Downer of an event
   b. More interesting that the LVC young alums were part of it; professor was part of it, etc
c. Dates and Details stacked are easier to read
d. Like the overall look
e. Like the HTML coding and banner headers for different reason. Banner is like the “brand”
f. Like that it features upcoming events; include registration links
g. Include pictures of the presenters

Study Travel Email
a. Embedded video from a past participant is needed
b. Focus on the uniqueness of the learning element
c. Target emails to those who are more likely to be able to afford and have time to go on this trip
d. Narrow scope sometimes, other times cast a wide net
e. Overloading of emails often leads to deletion
f. Banner could be a photo of a place featured in the email
g. A video could be shown to others
h. High cost needs a lot of girth behind it. Sell it by sharing the experience

Friday, April 8, 2011
Members and College Staff Present:
Kate Pearce, Mitch Lehn, Bruce Wahl, Magdalena Wells, Katherine Kroeger, Brenda Berkman, Linda Bjerke, Ted Hillestad, Sean Burress, Sam Dotzler, Mickey Monsen, Randy Betcher, Gary Perkins, Jennifer Sawyer, Rebecca Taibl, Brock Metzger, Siri Thompson

Nathan Soland, Kathy Schuurman, Meredith Olson, Heidi Quiram, Sheri Eichhorn, Allen Baker, Janet Thompson, Tracy Fossum, Eric Tvedt, Nicole Schroeder, Matt Fedde

Student Alumni Association Report – Siri Thompson
- SAA hosted the Etiquette Dinner for 100 students in February. It was very popular and a great opportunity to learn business and dining etiquette.
- In March SAA celebrated Philanthropy month by hosting “I heart St. Olaf.” At this event students wrote thank you notes to donors and competed for various prizes and t-shirts based on how many notes they wrote.
- The ABC breakfast went well this morning; students enjoyed connecting with Board Members
- On April 16 students will participate in National Day of Service in the Twin Cities and Northfield.
- One issue on student minds lately is the new security policies in the Pause for all large events. New security measures are in place to keep the Pause events safe and fun for all.
- Students are also busy lining up jobs and internships for the summer — many attended the recent job and internship fair in Minneapolis.
- Andrea Dittmann ’12 will be the new SAA Coordinator for 2011-2012.

Partners in Annual Giving Update – Randy Betcher
- Current Numbers: 6622 donors, $2,757,109, 19% participation
- Down somewhat in number of donors and dollars
  - Charging for Christmas Fest tickets impacted Partners compared to FY 2010.
  - 264 donors to last year’s C. Fest have not given to PAG yet this year
Thrivent’s charitable donation program changed significantly, reducing the amount of gift matches.

- Many thanks to everyone involved in the Black and Gold Gala – huge success!
- Changes coming to the Partners website
- Challenges ahead:
  - Alums aren’t always clear why PAG is worthy of support now; need to convince them of the “here’s the lasting and current value” of their gifts
  - Articulating better to alumni the challenges of the college
  - Our high dollar givers are nearing the end of their giving lives and we need younger classes to fill in behind those givers with increased gifts
  - Soliciting new donors is an expensive and time-consuming proposition relative to hanging onto the one’s we already have
  - It’s cheaper to retain an existing donor than find a new one—need to keep ongoing appeals to this group fresh while staying on message.

Ole Gifting Focus Groups – Sean Burress

- The Partnership – John Haugen ’86, General Mills Volunteer Moderators, PAG
- The Process:
  - Set Learning Plan
    - Understand giving segments, why Oles donate, perceptions of STO, What’s (Not) working
  - Phase I – Qualitative
    - Execute focus groups
    - Decision maker ideation
    - Align on key questions and target populations
  - Phase II – Quantitative
    - Design questionnaire
    - Confirm ideas
    - Influence decisions
- Focus Group Segments
  - Young Alumni (age 22-32), Mid Age Alumni (age 33-53), Mature Alumni (age 55-77)
  - Ideal Givers (3+ consec. Years), Moderate Givers (recently gave, 1-2 consec. Years), Non-Givers (never or once)
    - Young Alumni
      - Single, no kids, immediate gratification, tech savvy, and PAG trained
      - “Paying it Forward”, “Concerned Planners,” “Disgruntled Youth”
    - Middle Age Alumni
      - Kids in college, established careers, building wealth, busy, pragmatic
• “Helping Olaf Help Me”, “Wanting Certainty,” “Have Bigger Concerns”
  ▪ Mature Alumni
    • Empty nesters, fixed incomes, active in community, appreciate youth
    • “The idealists” or “The traditionalists”

• The World of Donating
  o Oles naturally give – putting money where their values are
  o Give to others to make a difference, address a greater need, to feel affiliation, to receive recognition or reward
  o Why Oles Give to Olaf:
    ▪ Personal connections motivate giving – share the experience, give education and assistance, campus life, STO enhancement and mission

• Barriers to Giving:
  ▪ I expect STO to know me like I know STO and “Knowledge is Power”
  ▪ No relationship (impersonal communication, events not relevant to me)
  ▪ No transparency (what is the need? Where is it going? Was it successful?)
  ▪ No real need (wealthy students, rising tuition, beautiful campus)
  ▪ Not valued (no recognition, no thank yous, I’m more than money)
  ▪ Controversy keeps us divided
    ▪ Christmas Fest changes
    ▪ Selling WCAL
    ▪ Evolving faces of STO
    ▪ Continuous outreach
    ▪ Moving away from tradition
    ▪ Drinking on campus

• Perceptions of STO vary
  ▪ More than just Norwegian, Musical, Lutheran, Midwestern
  ▪ Social Leaders, Well to Do, Oles don’t need money, Oles give to Needy

• Communicating with Oles
  o Communication successes:
    ▪ Valentine’s Day card for Ole couples
    ▪ Local Outreach
    ▪ Partners calendar
    ▪ Regular, informative communication
  o Personalization is key

• Recommendations
Young Alumni – Class participation contests, social networks, be transparent, electronic communication, explain need clearly, non-monetary asks first

Mid-Age Alumni – Ask for assistance building STO brand power, share STO values and future vision, focus on how STO supports greater causes

Mature Alumni – invite and recognize participation, maintain personal connections, focus on worth and service and maintained traditions

- Next Steps
  - Key Questions:
    - Best ways to ask?
    - How often do you visit?
    - What is a good dollar range for the ask?
    - Any specific concepts to test?
  - Key Targets
    - Demographics
      - Income
      - Age
      - Location
      - Kids/No Kids
      - Religion
      - Ethnic background

Nominations for new board members presented
  - Board discussed nominees and voted to move everyone forward

Alumni Awards committee report
  - Award candidates presented
  - Board voted on candidates, re-organized categories, and moved candidates on to next step in the process

Advancement and College Relations Report – Mike Stitsworth

Meeting concluded at 5 p.m.