Alumni Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 01, 2012

Board Members Present: Sam Dotzler, Paul Finley, Amy Gillespie, Sandy Jerstad, Katherine Kroeger, Mitch Lehn, Brock Metzger, Kate Pearce, Ron Pechauer, Gary Perkins, Katherine Sands-Johnson, Jennifer Sawyer, Rebecca Taibl, Maggie Wells

Board Members Absent: Ben Baker, Nikki Brock-Maruska, Vijay Mehrota

Guests present for at least part of the day: Enoch Blazis, Heidi Quiram, Kathy Schuurman, Kari Swanson ’13, Jen Winterfeldt

The meeting came to order at 12:30 p.m. Campus pastor Matt Marohl introduced himself and led the opening devotion.

The group shared opinions with Enoch regarding what to look for in an alumni director candidate.

Board members introduced themselves and shared information about anything happening in their geographic area or what they are working on related to St. Olaf.

Types of events/activities in which alumni board members are involved:
- St. Olaf on the Road
- Networking
- Faculty presentations
- Lefse making
- Golf outing in Florida
- Black and Gold Gala
- Music org events
- Lunch and speaker
- Looking for new volunteers and attendees
- Send-off picnics sponsored by Admissions
- Happy Hour
- Christmas Party
- Theater outings
- Dinner at a restaurant
- Dinner at a volunteer’s house
- Facebook
- Alumni/Admissions program
- Reunion volunteer activities
- Ole Night Out
- Student mentoring / Main Street Project
- Twin Cities Ole Messenger
- Class fundraising
- Nurturing the college’s relationship with Northfield
- Presenting in St. Olaf classrooms
- Job shadowing over break, through Piper Center
- Ole Biz
- Day of Service

The board broke into small working groups to discuss social media engagement, Study Travel, and alumni awards. Each group brought back one question to share with the whole group.

Social media engagement: What do people want when they go to Facebook, i.e. what would they find engaging or to be of value?

Study Travel: Should St. Olaf increase the number of Study Travel offerings?

Alumni awards: If you were to look at what’s important for the new Spirit Award, what does a nomination packet look like?
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SAA - Kari Swanson ’13, Student Alumni Association (SAA) President gave a report on SAA events and recent campus events. Kari featured discussion related to the political atmosphere on campus with the upcoming elections. Kari was charged with the task of gauging how engaged current students are in the ownership of the campus and understanding of their part in the history of the college. Kari will give a report of her findings at the next Alumni Board meeting.

Student Wellness - Emily Virtue and Kate (current Wellness Center student director), reported on student wellness and on the work of the Wellness Center. The Wellness Center partners with the Athletic Department to assure that every student taking a gym class is required to attend at least 3 Wellness Center sessions, which are provided by student peer educators and cover a wide variety of topics related to mental health, sexual health, alcohol use, stress, suicide prevention, etc. Peer educators do peer-to-peer counseling and lead all of the Wellness Center sessions. The Wellness Center is interested in exploring how alumni could be more involved in their training or programming.

Piper Center - Branden Grimmett ’03, Director, presented on the programming and developments at the Piper Center for Vocation and Career. The Piper Center works with students on career exploration and vocation discernment through a variety of programs like Quo Voids (sophomore retreat), ShadOle, Career Network for Oles, Connections trips, Ole Law, Ole Biz, Making it in the Arts, etc. Ole Career Central is the online database and a one-stop-shop career portal that features employer profiles and active internships/jobs. In addition, the Piper Center supports on-campus recruiting, provides support for attending job and internship fairs, civic engagement, etc. The Piper Center is dedicated to making all services (excluding recruiting) available to all alumni and the Piper Center is also working towards having a sustainable staffing model to maintain these robust services.

Working Group presentations to the entire board -

- Study Travel
  - Big Question - should more Study Travel opportunities be offered every year, offering 8 trips instead of 4?
  - Yes! The group presented what study travel is, what their goals are, and presented a strategy of how to increase the study travel trips which includes engaging new alumni/parents/individuals, keeping professor led model, supporting the mission of the college, undertaking a budget analysis.
  - The committee will write a proposal that can be shared with the college leadership.

- Social Media
  - Social media is a new venue to meet the old need of connection.
  - What is the college already doing that can be shared with regional clubs.
  - Toolbox for clubs using Facebook
    - Form - all clubs should have a Facebook page, not Facebook group so there can be more data about what is working on Facebook and what isn’t
    - Name – uniformity in names for all new pages
    - Administrator – local volunteers and APR staff member
- Images - David Gonnerman will create a library of images that can be used for banners and images on Facebook
- Building followers – encourage local volunteers to invite followers
- Content – generate content that works by pushing out more stories from the Hill, including lectures and concerts, along with things that are relevant to the clubs
- Events – post upcoming club events along with other content
- Social media calendar – the college will share their social media calendar to have local volunteers more aware of content that could be shared on the club page
- Photos – encourage volunteers to post photos of Ole events
- Larger question – how do classes, during reunion and not best use social media?

- Alumni Awards
  - Awards: Distinguished Alumni Award, Alumni Achievement Award, Outstanding Service Award, and GOLD Award
  - Area of focus of the group: marketing (promote the award and recruiting), define the St. Olaf Spirit Award, execution of nomination and award process, follow-up
  - St. Olaf Spirit Award
    - Name of the award – find a name for the award that gives meaning to the award but doesn’t evoke too much emotion. The sub-committee will send out options to the entire board for vote.
    - Requirements: St. Olaf engagement and financial support, both direct and indirect
      - St. Olaf Engagement – shown loyalty to the college by promoting its mission through volunteering at alumni events, serving as a class fund agent, serving on reunion committees and other boards, helping to identify and encourage prospective students, and serving as a resource for St. Olaf.
      - Financial support – the candidate has supported the college financially, directly and/or indirectly. Financial supports includes: fundraising, gifts to the college, promoting Manitou Heights Society, participating in the Black and Gold Gala through attendance, donating items or hosting tables, etc.
  - Eligibility: St. Olaf alumni, parents or friends of the college are eligible to receive this award
  - Nomination Requirements:
    - A summary report which documents the service to St. Olaf College
    - Two letters of recommendation
  - Selection:
    - It is okay to have a large pool and let the selection committee make the selection
    - Maybe feature nominees (but not winners) on the website or in another way of publicly acknowledging these people

Black and Gold Gala - Co-Chairs this year are Tim Westermeyer and Lisa Warren and there is an entire committee of dedicated volunteers. The Gala this year will be on March 2, 2013 on the 3rd floor of Hilton in downtown Minneapolis. Alumni Board members are encouraged to attend, donate items to the auction (either directly or via connections), sponsor the Gala, and find donors to match donations during the Fund-A-Need portion of the Gala.
St. Olaf Fund – Last year 4.2 million dollars were raised for the St. Olaf Fund which represents a 15% increase. So far $808,000 has been raised this year (which represents an increase of 3% at this same time last year) and an increase of 395 donors at this same time last year. Give to the Max is November 15, 2012 so please mark your calendars and talk up the event on social media and to your networks. This year the St. Olaf Fund aims to increase participation to 28% and top 4.3 million dollars.

Next Meetings:
April 11 – 12, 2013
November 7 -8, 2013