

**National Alumni Association Board of Directors**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**January 31, 2009**

**Alumni Board Attendees:** Joe Aiello, Peter Barber, Laurie Cory, Chris Day, Anne Driscoll, Jeremy Glenn, Jill Johnson, Shawna Kasner-Hannam, Doug Mertz, Dennis Olson, David Schulte, Kent Stevens, Scott Stevens, Susan Stocum **Teleconference:** Chris Anderson, VA Barber, Loretta Sieman

**Student Representatives:** Angie Jansen, Adam Kaduce

**Drake Staff:** Jonathan Brendemuehl, John Brown, Blake Campbell, Ashley Nichols, Pam Pepper, Betty See, John Smith

**Guests:** President David Maxwell, Brooke Benschoter

**Welcome message:** John Brown welcomed everyone and introduced John Smith, VP for Alumni & Development, who in turn introduced the new director of alumni and parent programs, Blake Campbell. Blake thanked the alumni staff and shared that he is excited to be in this position. He asked the board to think about the direction they would like to go and he sees great opportunities for the board as representatives of 62,000 alums. You are ambassadors for Drake. We need to be relationship driven and connect with our alums on a personal level. In the upcoming months the alumni staff will have retreats to develop a strategic plan. What do you want our alums to think, feel, and say? The alumni staff will be visiting with each of you individually so you can share your thoughts, ideas, and expectations with us. I would like you to think about what you want to bring to the table. The alumni staff will present a draft plan in April with a proposed programming changes and new ideas for the next 3-5 years.

**Committee Reports:**

**Advancement Committee:** Peter Barber shared their discussion and considerations of how we brand Drake and the National Alumni Association and what this means to us. We need to create individual relationships with alums and in turn they will be responsive to us. We have a great opportunity to connect with alumni at the Greek Reunion.

Pam Pepper, Director of The Drake Fund, shared that there has been much excitement with the basketball teams' winning season last year. Last fiscal year was our best on record with annual fund receiving \$3.1 million. Since the economy is in dire shape, the staff has a plan in place. As of December 2008 we are \$67,000 behind last year's pace. We will do a spring mailing around Valentines Day to 40,000 alumni and the letter will be signed by Holly Morrison Dierks with both a Greek and non Greek message. We need full participation of the alumni board.

Phonathon students will start calling around Valentines Day. The students love to hear your Drake stories.

John Smith shared that Barb Ford is working with BOT to secure 10% of the \$3 million to be raised by May 31, 2009. Matching gifts and outstanding pledges will be counted in this figure.

**Recruitment Committee:** VA Barber shared the goals set by the group.

- 1) To match the Future Alumni Network (FAN) with board members to be a mentor to them.
- 2) Participate in alumni home receptions starting with the remaining receptions. Ashley Nichols will mark who is a board member on each alumni list for the admission counselors. Wendy will suggest that admission counselors invite board members first to attend next year's event. The committee discussed whether to have individual alums write personal notes or send e-mails to the prospective students inviting them to the AHR in their area. Ashley Nichols will create a template or standard form to use for the note and a personal touch could be added to this. A follow up thank you card would be written from the board member to the prospective student.
- 3) The committee discussed ways to be involved in the National Alumni Scholarship program. It was decided that board members would be invited to Friday night spirit night with the exception of those serving on the selection committee. This would be a great way for students to meet other alums, parents and Drake staff.
- 4) We need to invite the Drake seniors to attend the Bulldog Bash in their area and have a board member partner with the students.

**Programming Committee:** Joe Aiello shared the committee's recommendation that an event template be created for the events in various cities so as to have consistency and create ease with alums.

- 1) This would need to include bullet points and incorporate goal setting to measure the success of the event. This basic outline form will help recap the event and should be sent to the committee for review before the next board meeting in April. We will then vote on the form as a group and post it on the alumni website by June 1.
- 2) We need to improve the Alumni Awards Dinner to reflect the honor that this award warrants. It was suggested that more students should participate in this event. We would like to see this event revamped for 2010 and discussed if the event should be moved to a different date (Relays/Commencement). This will be discussed at our April board meeting.
- 3) Jonathan Brendemuehl shared information about The All Greek Reunion. This will be held at 32<sup>nd</sup> & Forest on April 25 from 4-8 PM. A facebook page has been started with 633 members and an rsvp webpage has been created on the Drake website where you can go to a guest book with the capability of sorting by house and you can see who is coming from your house; 160 have rsvp'd so far. There is great enthusiasm to gather with other alums from your house. It was suggested to separate the groups in the tent by decades for ease of finding each other. Blake said we will have a reunion central so people can check in. The staff will have a master spreadsheet and will act as ambassadors of the event to help find people.

Jonathan also shared that the alumni website is being revamped so it is easier to navigate.

**Guests:** President Maxwell spoke about branding Drake. This is a work in progress; we need to be aware of how we as a University communicate with our alums. We brought in Larry Lauer, an expert in the field of Marketing & Communications in Higher Education to get an outside perspective. Larry has worked with hundreds of colleges, and Drake enlisted his help in performing an audit of the department over a 4 day time span on campus, meeting with various people on campus. Larry's report was positive, mentioning

that the quality and potential are very good. He provided great feedback on our operating structure. The big issue is how to change the structure and process to manage this large demand. Brooke is developing a strategic plan that will be in place by June 1. Timing is perfect for us to look at how we communicate with our alums, we need to step back and take a look at certain things we do to determine if this is an effective way to communicate at this time and to build a better relationship with our alums. We need to know what we want to achieve and what the consequences are.

Brooke Benschoter, Director of Marketing & Communications shared that five years ago, our biggest challenge was the lack of brand and consistency. We didn't have a clear logo or message at that time. Marketing and communications has been spending the last five years implementing a brand for Drake and they are the guardian of the brand. Everyone on the Drake campus is their client. We are beginning the process of implementing this new strategic plan where each department will have an account service person operating under a client based system. This allows one dedicated individual to become a topical expert for each area, thus becoming a subject matter expert. Every group will have a template and sub brand. The Account Representative will track each project, the goals, and evaluate future opportunities. M&C are looking at different tools and want to integrate a plan that works better than the current model.

Brooke mentioned that marketing and communications is challenged to get more email addresses. They will partner with Alumni & Parent Programs to get current emails for our alums. This is critical going forward for communication purposes. Blake suggested that we need to look at our list of alums who are engaged in events. Seniors would need to fill out a form with information before receiving their diploma and in return inform them of what they can expect for completing the form. We need to instill the value and pride of a Drake degree and the value of staying connected to Drake and make them aware that they are automatically a special member of the Alumni Association. Marketing and Communications will again do an alumni survey this spring as the last survey was in 2007. This will be a crucial tool for us to assess where our programming and outreach opportunities should rest moving forward.

President Maxwell shared that we are an enrollment driven institution and all indicators are that Drake is as strong as ever. He will change his article in the Drake Blue magazine to visit about how Drake stands in this economy so our alums know what is happening at Drake.

John Smith presented a campaign update and stated that we are in a great position due to the dedication and hard work of President Maxwell. The campaign was launched in the fall of 2007 as a 5 year campaign as the BOT felt it was time to move forward. The only thing that changed is a new timeline with new benchmarks. April 1 is the first benchmark and we have raised 28 million to date. Original plans called for us to have reached the \$100 million mark. The BOT is considering options that include increasing the length of the campaign to 7 years, increasing the quiet phase 2 more years and moving forward cautiously. The economic crisis is having an impact on the timing of gift asks and decisions. Since June 1<sup>st</sup>, our staff has been visiting one on one with people in order to build relationships with alumni for future solicitations. We value your encouragement and your feedback.

Tom Delahunt, VP for Admissions and Financial Aid, offered a presentation about how recruit our current students and the challenges they face in making the decision in today's climate. A decision was made four years ago to increase our criteria for admittance to Drake. We make our best offer first and do not change this decision.

In 2008 we had a 68% acceptance rate and the average debt after graduation is \$32,000. The estimated family discount rate is \$14,120.00 for freshman students. Drake's priorities are affordability, diversity, academic quality and net revenue/discount rate. We have an application deadline of March 1 and are positioned well at this time. We are bringing students to visit campus from various cities to increase our diversity. Our freshman retention rate is 87.5% and our 4 year graduation rate is 72%. We had 902 freshman students enroll in 2008 and will track this group all 4 years.

John Smith offered a BOT update. The board met in Chicago during the previous week. The new chair for the BOT is Don Fletcher from Kansas City; he is the first person in years in this position outside of Des Moines. We have two new board members, Greg Abel and Dennis Albaugh. The board discussed their role with Drake University and how to make best use of it. The Board of Trustees approved a new Master's of law degrees; LLM, health law, intellectual property and individual studies.

Scott Stevens, Secretary of the Alumni Board, shared the names of the 2009 Alumni Award winners.

Young Alumni Achievement Award: Jennifer Jacobs Henderson

Young Alumni Loyalty Award: Carrie Blumenfeld

Alumni Achievement Award: Bill Bryson

Alumni Loyalty Award: Joan Behrendt Middleton

Distinguished Service Award: Dick Hartig

Blake asked the board to please make all efforts possible to be in attendance at the May 16 Alumni Awards ceremony as it is sponsored by the Drake University National Alumni Association and Alumni Board. Our staff will be contacting you individually to hear your Drake stories, and learn how you want to make a difference on the board. Give some thought as to what you want to share with us. You are our ambassadors. We ask that you consider engaging with 2 alums between now and our April 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. You can visit via phone or in person with other alums you know. We need to engage new and interesting people in your communities. A staff person will follow up with some potential names to consider for contact.

The next board meeting is April 24 from 8-12noon at Levitt Hall.