

Rensselaer Alumni Association
Board of Trustees Meeting
Heffner Alumni House, Alumni Conference Center
April 12, 2014

Board Members Present:

Cornelius Barton '58, Richard Bollam '66, Glenn Brown '54, Stephen Browne '15, Jessica Budris '01, Maria Ciunga '91, Paul Frio '92, Linda Jojo '87, Kristen Lee '15, Meghan Lenihan '10, Raul Lopez-Palm '77, Roger Mike '70, Brian Nock '13, Lawrence Pulvirent '81, Jessica Sweeney '04, Lauren Thomas '01, Allison Woodford '93, Jeffrey Schanz-RAA Executive Director and Assistant Vice President, Alumni Relations

Board Members Absent:

Terence Barton '92, Charles Carletta '14, Paul Cosgrave '72, Brian Dean '97, Patricia DeLauri '85, David Gertler '83, Thomas Keating '75, Jennifer Keyes '02, Theresa Kozikowski '85, Kareem Muhammad '01, Nagesh Rao '02, Allison Welling '14

Guests Present:

Roger Grice '87, AIGC President

Staff Present:

Joyce Kelly Martin-Sr. Administrative Coordinator, Alumni Relations

I. Call to Order (Mike)

- The meeting was called to order at 9:18 a.m.

II. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes (Mike)

- ***A motion to approve the February 8, 2014 RAA Board Meeting minutes was made by Budris, seconded by Woodford, and approved by all in attendance.***

III. Financial Report (Bollam)

Income and Expenses-Status to Date

- Income received and expenses incurred from July 1, 2013 through March 31, 2014 as well as projected income and anticipated expenses through year-end, June 30, 2014 were reviewed.
- The travel tours program continues to bring in less revenue than budgeted and efforts need to be increased for finding more unique tours which will appeal to our alumni.
 - Maria Ciunga and Paul Frio volunteered to meet with the current director of the alumni tours program, Michael Wellner, to explore the possibility of expanding the program to make it more attractive for alumni of all ages.
 - They agreed to report back to the Board with their findings at the October meeting.

ACTION: CIUNGA/FRIO

- The credit card program income remains lower than originally estimated for this year.
- The insurance program has been growing steadily over the years and it is anticipated the gradual upward pattern will continue, especially with the Liberty Mutual home and auto program.
- The \$30,000 investment income for the RAA portfolio was based on the unrestricted investment balance of \$1M on 4/1/13 and a 3% spending rate.
- The \$11,160 investment income for the RAA Endowment Fund was based on the unrestricted investment balance of \$372,000 on 4/1/13 and a 3% spending rate.

- Checks for many of the budgeted line item expenses are not issued until the 3rd and 4th quarters to allow the RAA portfolio to grow.
- RAA Graduating Student Gifts
 - Some members of the Board expressed their opinion that the RAA paperweight should be replaced with an alternative gift that is more creative, useful and contemporary, and would better represent the many ways alumni can stay connected to the RAA.
 - Meg Lenihan and Jessica Budris volunteered to discuss alternative possibilities and report back to the Board with their suggestions.

ACTION: LENIHAN/BUDRIS

Approval of Proposed RAA FY15 Budget

- The RAA Portfolio investment spending rate income of \$33,000 is based on 3% of the \$1.1M unrestricted investment balance at 12/31/13.
- The RAA Endowment Fund investment spending rate income of \$20,000 is based on 3% of the \$488,500 unrestricted investment balance at 4/8/14 which was \$14,655, plus approximately 20% of the unspent FY13-14 income which was \$5,345.
- ***A motion to approve the FY15 budget as presented was made by Jojo, seconded by Budris and approved by all in attendance.***

RAA Endowment Fund/Fundraising Update (Bollam)

- A “Founders” plaque, listing the names of alumni who met the December 31, 2013 deadline, will be created and located in the Heffner Alumni House.
- Schanz is researching the use of a multiple-media digital “loop” display which would include names of the lifetime giving level donors as well as RAA Award Winners, RAA Past Presidents, etc., and would have the flexibility to be updated easily.
- Bollam announced he has set a fifteen-month goal to raise an additional \$75,000 for the RAA Endowment Fund by June 30, 2015.
- He is looking at other ways to raise money for the Fund, including the next RPi Day Challenge, crowdsourcing, soliciting individual alumni chapters and creating challenge gifts from the RAA Board.
- Meghan Lenihan volunteered to work with Alumni Office staff members to create an application packet for the student cash award.

IV. Old Business

RAA Work Groups, RAN, AIGC and ReconRally - Group leaders gave brief status reports - submitted report summaries are attached

- *RAN Update (Gertler via video)*
- ReconRally (Grice/Student Team Presentation) - the students are continuing to develop and improve an interactive app which will provide users with a virtual campus tour experience.

V. New Business

Approval of RAA Board Slate of 2014-15 Nominees (Mike)

- The members of this year’s RAA Nominating Committee were RAA Board members Paul Cosgrave (chair), Roger Mike, Maria Ciunga, Linda Jojo and Jeff Schanz.
- ***A motion to approve the slate of RAA Board nominees as presented was made by Brown, seconded by Bollam, and approved by all in attendance.***

Rensselaer Medal Program (Mike)

- David Gertler, who was unable to attend this meeting, asked that the possibility of having RAA Board members present the Rensselaer Medal at local high schools in their areas be brought to the Board for their consideration.
- Feedback included the following comments:
 - The medal presentation is a very brief part of a much larger ceremony.
 - Alumni may not be able to take the time off from their work day.
 - There needs to be a consistent approach for all medal winners.
 - Some chapters invite students to their get-togethers (summer picnics, etc.)
 - Sending a letter from the RAA Board or calling the recipient would be a better option.
- Mike stated that anyone interested in working on this issue to contact him to determine the best way to proceed.

Spring 2015 Board Weekend (Mike)

- It was decided that the Spring 2015 Board Weekend should be scheduled in late April/early May to avoid holidays before and after that time period.
- Board members agreed it was important to be on campus while the students are here.

VI. Weekend Wrap-Up and Adjournment (Mike)

- ***A motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:38 a.m. was made by Budris, seconded by Ciunga, and approved by all in attendance.***

RAA FY13-14 RAA WORK GROUPS AND AIGC SUBMITTED REPORTS

Career and Professional Development (Kozikowski)

- Prior to this meeting the group had met and reviewed the results gathered from benchmarking with other colleges/universities to determine how to better structure our thoughts around the kinds of programs we want to offer RPI alumni.
- The group broke off into separate teams to look into what types of content other schools offer and what RPI can offer to our alumni.
- One team reviewed the offerings to streamline into more static content (tools and tips) where you would go in and use the checklist to update your resume.
- Another team focused on education (technical development and leadership development).
- The third team looked at what other types of resources we can utilize to have an outsource of resume critiquing mock interviews, etc.
- Next steps will be to start building our library of content both on tools and tricks, continuing education, looking at resources that are already available to us so we can get a baseload of content to have loaded onto a yet to be determined platform.
- Then work with communications to push out the platform and to work on what type of metrics we want to have going forward from a # of new contents to be delivered (live, virtual) and having it recorded so we can add it to the stock content.
- Will be meeting again before the next meeting to make sure we have a good library together before the launch of the web site.

Communications and Branding (Woodford)

- The communication meeting was spent reviewing the draft version of the new Alumni/Institute Advancement website.
- The draft design presentation highlights:
 - The team is using responsive design, making sure that site works on all different devices.
 - The team focused on mobile first- ensure effective design for the smallest screen.
 - The team has taken a more minimalist approach to screen design and content.
 - The site addresses 3 channels: Parents, Alumni, Giving.
 - The team spent time looking at a number of the previous designs and sites and created a very organized and fresh look and feel for the new site.
 - The new site has a login and a profile option for alumni to update their information.
 - The team will continue using social media in concert with the new site to bring users to specific pages.
 - The tentative schedule for an August delivery.

Communications and Branding/RAA Endowment Joint Session (Woodford)

- Rich reviewed the goals for fund raising with the team. Over the next 18 months the goal will be to raise an additional \$75,000.
- Initial discussions related to crowd funding activities were revisited in this session. We talked about trying to hold an event in the fall but felt it would get lost in volume of activity and fund raising requests. The team is looking at collaborating with next year's Pi Day.
- The team identified some specific audiences for fundraising:
 - RAA past presidents, student leaders, Phalanx, 50 Year Club, Chapter Leadership
- The following short term messages were defined:

- Tell the story of how the endowment came into existence.
- Educate people on how an endowment fund works.
- Communicate how the money is intended to be spent.
 - ✓ Red & White Award- this communication should include background on the Red & White organization and its mission.
 - ✓ Communicate the impact of the award to the student- this would happen after the first award is given.
 - ✓ Initial discussion to define in more detail how the money for Career Development will be spent. This is a continuing conversation as the CD group continues to refine their path forward.

Communications and Branding/Career and Professional Development Joint Session (Woodford)

- During the joint session the team reviewed the next steps that they had defined by area during their own work session. The focus of the session related to the development of the on-line portal concept allowing alumni access to important information in the career development arena. Based on the discussion the communication team came away with the following understanding.
- The portal will have 3 major content areas.
 - Career management tools (Resume writing tools, interview tips, job planning, career planning)
 - Continuing education topics (Leadership, Project management, New Engineering topics etc.)
 - Social media - this group was looking at using a hybrid approach.
 - ✓ Part 1- The plan is to have offerings related to basic knowledge development related to social media tools and the appropriate use of those tool (Social Media 101).
 - ✓ Part 2 – The plan is to integrate social media topics and education in the continued education topics.
- The following short term messages were defined for this group.
 - Communication 1- The overall goal/ vision of the career development area. Provide the context of the feedback from the alumni survey. Communicate that the alumni voice is being heard and that the request for these additional services is being looked and worked on.
 - Communication 2- Initial communication to introduce the concept of the “Career Development Portal” and the vision of its content and offerings. There was discussion about making sure that expectation are being set correctly and that we have identified clear short term success/ performance metrics related to what will be delivered.
 - Communication 3- There is a need to develop what we are calling an “engagement map” to help alumni understand all the different ways alumni can connect with the school and each other. (Chapters, RAN, RAA)
- Branding of the Career Development Portal and all associated content was addressed. The team defined the need to ensure that all content from the portal had the same look and feel and that it was to be clearly productized. This included brief discussion related the collection process and ensuring content quality and integrity. The CD team will be managing that process(s) and let the communication team know what support they need if any related to the internal team process of developing and collecting the content.

Alumni Inter-Greek Report (RAA Roger Grice, '87G, AIGC President, Lambda Chi Alpha Advisor)

The AIGC is involved in a number of projects, and we have been following campus activities.

- Spring rush and recruitment went smoothly; we will hear the final numbers at our 4-26-14 meeting.

- AIGC members took active roles in the Greek Leadership Retreat in February, where Greek alumni contributions paid for a national speaker to present to the new officers from each chapter.
- We are planning AIGC participation in this Summer's Student Orientation. We will have at least one AIGC member at each SO session.
- The Spring AIGC meeting will be on the morning of Saturday, April 26. The Greek Awards of Excellence ceremony will be held that afternoon.
- We are working with Tim Sams and Matt Hunt to ensure that RPI's request for "an audit" of each chapter's finances does not become a burdensome expense. Thanks to Paul Cosgrave and Rich Bollam for working with us.
- We formed a committee to review the Relationship Statement and suggest updates and revisions.
- We formed a committee to "set the bar" for sound chapter operations. The committee will come up with a set of touchstones and pointers to best practices. There will be no penalties to chapters for not following these guidelines; the guidelines are there for chapters who wish to use them to measure or improve their performance.
- We sponsored a suicide-awareness workshop for chapter advisors; Dr. Keith Anderson from RPI's Counseling Center conducted the workshop.
- We are setting up a mentoring program to pair AIGC members with IFC and Panhel officers who would like to work with a mentor. So far we have assigned mentors to the IFC VP for Risk Management—he is planning an Anti-Hazing Week for the fall.
- Please visit the AIGC website: <http://www.alumni.rpi.edu/services/affinity/AIGC/>