**CORNELL ILR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

**Board of Directors Meeting**

**King-Shaw Conference Center**

**Cornell University, Ithaca, New York**

**MINUTES OF OCTOBER 15, 2016 MEETING**

**INTRODUCTION**

President Esta Bigler called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. She reviewed the agenda and reported that the minutes of the June meeting were prepared but had not been copied for the Board’s review.  The June 2016 minutes will be presented at the January meeting for review and approval.

Board Members present and on the phone introduced themselves.

Present were: Eliot Schuman, Mary Zitmer, Dean Hallock, Jasen Nia, Marjorie Wittner, Robert Landau, Lisa Hunter, Ames Collins, Patricia Fitzgerald, Valerie Benjamin, Jennifer Fitzpatrick, Jaqui Brady, Harvey Sanders, Suzette Simon, Susan Youngblood, Rick Lustig, Dawn Levy-Weinstein, Tom Barreca, Joe Cartafalsa, Kara Lombardi, Joel Friedman, Rich Lovely, Jordan Berman, Howard Byck, Eric Fisher, Raphael Sebastien, Rob Whitman, Marty Schmelkin, Susan Panepento and Sue Sappington.

On the phone were: Jason Jendrewski, Dave Matthews, and Beth Florin.

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

Esta Bigler gave the finance report. [Attached] She explained the account balances and asked for questions. There were none.

**STATE OF THE SCHOOL**

Dean Hallock gave a state of the school report.  He has just completed his second year as Dean.  The committee working on strategic planning will be issuing its report soon.  He hopes to establish a curriculum committee to review the current curriculum and evaluate whether updates/changes should be made.  Both the faculty and the student body have changed dramatically.  Areas of greatest change are: diversity of student body and the jobs they pursue, age of faculty, expected retirements, need to hire new faculty and remain competitive.  The Dean is not sure that curriculum changes are warranted as a result, but at a minimum the current curriculum should be evaluated in light of these changes.  In exploring new curriculum the Dean will want to hear from alumni.

The student body continues to excel; this year ILR produced a Rhodes scholar, University student body presidents, and student University trustee.  The new Associate Dean of Student Well-Being, Kara Lombardi, has begun working and will give the next report.  She has added transfer students to the freshman colloquium project.  The college budget continues to improve, but the Dean is thinking of ways to keep the college financially secure and replace the declining share of State support for the school.  Types of programs being considered include more professional, on-line certificate programs. Moving forward, the Dean will focus on find ways to improve the student experience and other improvements/projects. Some ideas he is exploring include building a better relationship with SUNY; exploring creation of a new academic department; examining the location of the mid-town NYC extension office.

The Dean took questions from Board Members. Questions were asked about NYC Cornell Tech and ILR relationship. The Dean reported that the ILR presence will be small on the NYC Tech campus for the first seven years, because the primary space usage is allocated to tech businesses. He is hopeful that in Phase 2 of the development, more academic space will become available. With regard to creating a new department within the college, the Dean would like the faculty to begin discussing this. At a minimum, hiring that straddles two departments is a good way to attract new tenured faculty. A Board Member asked about the academic staff’s acceptance of new media in the classroom. The Dean reported that communications, media and the future of work place – is a faculty focus and new technologies have been adopted in the classroom. For example, professors Hyman and Dyer are focusing writing and research on these topics. In addition, Professor Gold won an award for “flipping” the classroom a new teaching model. Lecture format not as common as it used to be. Streaming remote lecturers has been used in some instances, but is not being used for degree programs.

**THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND WELL-BEING**

Assistant Dean Kara Lombardi gave a presentation on her work so far at ILR. She has spent her first few months exploring the current student experience. She has been very impressed with the Dean’s desire to improve the student experience. Her observations so far include: The ILR school enjoys a University wide reputation as a special place with interesting things going on. Her early interactions with students have been very positive. The students are incredible - they have a focus and are inspirational. The school provides lots of international opportunities and credit internships, and the advising team is very good. The faculty is very dedicated and want students to succeed.

Assistant Dean Lombardi described her challenge as helping students navigate complex relationships. The school offers many interesting opportunities and programs, but they don’t always appear accessible. The school is a competitive place, and the students feel pressure to perform. That pressure can lead to feelings of isolation. She wants to find ways to support the students more and make sure they feel included and that the programs to do so are normalized.

She reported that there were 1923 first year applications for Fall 2016 admission. Again this was an increase over the number of applications received last year. ILR leads the campus in underrepresented populations and first generation college attendees. More students are applying to do a senior thesis than ever before; ILR students continue to take strong leadership roles across campus. MILR students hit the job market immediately; they begin interviews only weeks after they arrive. 46% of students participate in some type of meaningful abroad program. Career services reports an 85% satisfaction rate. 76% of the spring graduates were employed. Overall the graduates are doing well as they leave. They continue to go into a greater variety of jobs and report a greater interest in obtaining meaningful work – corporate responsibility, etc. The Student Services Office – now led by Kevin Harris, also enjoys very high approval ratings. She will focus her efforts on improving a culture of diversity at the college and on early intervention strategies. She would like the staff to know early when students are not engaging or not doing well – and wants faculty to report signs of this. She also wants to strengthen the community by focusing on building a greater synergy between students, administration and faculty. Currently, there are 6 teams working with students to collaborate and increase communication. She would like to advance the school’s use of technology in order to advance the communications and insure that students get what they need.

Last, Assistant Dean Lombardi discussed the ide of student “well-being.” She explained that it can include such things as – making appropriate referrals, simplifying things, intentional follow up and monitoring, creating resiliency, and normalizing the structures. ILR students are successful. But the school challenges them more and they are generally not equipped for failure or prepared to deal with it. She will focus on things like how to decrease the pressure on interviewing. This may be as simple as changing how we talk about it. Teaching the community how to know when stress becomes unhealthy, and how to help others in the community to deal with stress.

A Board member asked a question about the availability of alumni career services and the growing need to be able to tie back into the network for support more often. Assistant Dean Lombardi stated that she will examine the role of alumni in the ILR community and investigate whether improved services can be offered.

A break was taken at 10:49 a.m. and the meeting resumed at 11:08 a.m.

**COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Jordan Berman gave the report and reviewed the committee’s last presentation how do we capture attention and inspire conversation with fellow alums. In addition to the branding that has been completed, the committee’s goals include developing content and channels. This has begun by the website update, and content available through the website - I am ILRAA videos, Esta’s blog and other member produced social media channels. In addition, what is developed must be executed and be relevant, current and consistent. The committee’s next steps include establishing administrative channels via ILRAA community managers, coordinating editorial calendar with school, and developing and publishing content across digital channels. Jordan Berman explained that the success of some of this depends on the membership of the ILRAA. He encouraged Board members to get on social media and start posting, tagging, tweeting etc. and use #ILRAA.

A question was asked about whether there had been any monitoring or feedback on the efforts made thus far by the committee? Jordan explained that sophisticated monitoring is not in place and would have a cost, at a minimum software. But anecdotally, feedback has been positive. He will be setting up portal in the near future and have a company present at next meeting to discuss this aspect of the improvements.

**STUDENT ACTIVITY REPORT**

Esta Bigler gave Joe Cartafalsa’s report on yesterday’s alumni events. He thought all the programs were well-attended and well-received. In the future alumni participants should make greater efforts to involve students in the discussion and answer their questions. Rich Lovely added that he agreed more time should be afforded to student questions. Rob Landau shared an experience he had with a student who approached him last year for information and ended up interning with his company. He encouraged everyone to make the time and steer and help students. Dawn Levy-Weinstein also reported she had done a similar thing and it was very rewarding. Jason Njambiu suggested that the association do a better job of networking with the student organizations elected officers. Esta Bigler concurred that Assistant Dean Lombardi should be a good bridge to facilitate that.

Sue Sappington reported that she had received a thank you from a student who enjoyed the alumni programs. She suggested that students wanted to go to more than one panel and that next years event try to allow for some rotation among panels.

Esta Bigler encouraged Board Members to take a WISP.

**ALUMNI ACTIVITIES**

Esta Bigler reported that the NYC Finance Counsel held a summer program for alumni and students that had great turn out and provided great networking.

Beth Florin reported on the practice oriented webinar series. The second program on second careers was aired in September. 100 alumni registered; 60 people attended. Survey feedback shows that the program well received. Attendees evaluated all areas above 4 on a 5 point scale. The September webinar was recorded and is available on the website. Some things the committee has learned: 1 hour is too short. Additional time is needed to provide sufficient time for questions and answers. For the next webinar they will consider 1.5 hours. Also the committee needs to better manage the q&a and improve communications about who the segment will benefit. The next webinar is being organized by the NYC Finance group and is expected to focus on individual finance issues relevant to alumni – how best to save, etc.

**AFFINITY GROUP TASK FORCE REPORT**

Susan Panepento gave the committee’s report. She thanked the committee for their work and explained that they had quickly concluded that the ILRAA should encourage formation of Affinity Groups. This conclusion was based on the committee’s agreement that Affinity groups are consistent with the ILRAA’s mission and its recent efforts to increase the number of alumni who participate. The Committee also agreed that there are reciprocal benefits to the ILRAA and these groups – the sharing of information and resources provide mutual benefits. The committee also had consensus around the need for the ILRAA to establish some type of structure for Affinity groups. The Committee agreed that the actions of these groups will reflect back on the ILRAA regardless of whether they are part of the ILRAA. In addition, the committee agreed that a detailed or strict structure should be avoided because there is no desire to micromanage Affinity Groups. Where possible, the Committee felt that they should be treated like Chapters.

Susan Panepento reported that in developing the proposed guidelines, the Committee considered: the ILRAA by-laws, some corporate affinity group guidelines and the Chapter Guidelines. There was complete consensus on the committee for the proposed guidelines presented. [Proposed Guidelines for Affinity Groups attached.] The two areas that were discussed the most concerned the ILRAA role in determining the spokesperson for Affinity Groups and funding requests.

Susan Panepento summarized the Committee’s recommendations concerning additional work needed on this issue [details set forth in attached committee report.] She also reported that the Committee did not focus its discussions on the Women’s Caucus but considered the issues in a broader context. She informed the Board that the Women’s Caucus co-chair, Leona Barsky had informed some board members that she opposed the Committee’s proposed guidelines because they pose problems for groups with membership in a protected category and because special interest affinity groups are different than educational affinity groups.

Discussion followed concerning the proposed Affinity Group Guidelines. Esta Bigler reported that Dean Hallock informed her and the Women’s Caucus that the University will not allow any group outside the alumni association umbrella. Rich Lovely objected to the provision allowing appointment of Affinity Group “Chairs” by the ILRAA president and suggested that the group be permitted to recommend its spokesperson for approval. Susan Panepento asked for an amendment to the proposed by-laws. Joel Friedman moved to amend paragraph C. 2. of the guidelines to provide,

Each AG shall have a spokesperson or “Chair.” The AG will nominate and recommend a spokesperson for approval to the ILRAA Executive Committee. If approval is denied, it can be appealed within 10 days of notice of the denial to the Board of Directors and will be considered at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.

The friendly amendment was seconded by Dawn Levy-Weinstein. A vote was taken and the amendment was approved. Hearing no additional comments, Esta Bigler called for a vote on the proposed guidelines, as amended. Joel Friedman made a motion to approve and Eric Fisher seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Susan Panepento reported that she would ask the committee to continue and suggest amendments to the By-laws and Chapter Guidelines. She asked that another committee be formed to address revisions to the Event Planning Guidelines. Jason Jendrewski, Jacqui Brady, Dawn Levy-Weinstein, Jason Nhambiu, and Eric Fisher volunteered to work on this committee. Esta Bigler noted that Sue Sappington should be included on the committee as well.

Esta Bigler asked for additional questions. There was some further discussion of webinars. There was also a question about the continuing existence of other groups that do not elect to become affinity groups. Esta said that she did not know what would happen to these groups. She encouraged the Board Members to spread the word about the groups and expressed optimism that the ILRAA could increase Chapter involvement and integrate them into the Affinity Group activities.

Joe Cartafalsa advised the Board members about the location of the pre-game tailgate and that the November NYC Hockey game information will be sent by email next week.

Esta Bigler thanked everyone for their work and reported that the next Board meeting will be held on January 9, 2017 in NYC.

The meeting ended at 12:30 p.m.