

Alfred University Parents Association
Advisory Board Meeting
April 27, 2013

Minutes

Call to Order

Association President Katie Rommel-Esham called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. Other members present were Susan and Bill Arduino, Allison Bishop-White, Melissa and Steve Delmonte, Tom Downie and Kate Parr, Deborah Kleinberg and Jack Stillwaggon. University administrators present were: Kathy Woughter, Vice President for Student Affairs; Jodi Bailey, Director of Marketing; Mark McFadden, Director of the Career Development Center; Brenda Porter, Director of Residence Life; and Melody McLay, Director of Summer School, Summer Programs and Parents Programs.

Katie welcomed everyone and talked about the recent activity in the AU Parent-to-Parent Yahoo group. Members of the group have been very active and much more involved this year. Many of the questions posed have been about housing options/procedures, meal plans, how many students stay on campus during the weekends, how much there is to do outside of classes, if new students are generally pretty successful at making friends, etc. There may still be parents who are unaware of the group, but we will be sure to promote it at check-in and Parents Orientation.

Katie then introduced Mark McFadden, Director of the Career Development Center.

Career Development Center (CDC) Presentation

Mark McFadden provided everyone with a copy of the CDC mission and goals, along with a suggested Four-Year Career Plan for College Students. He stresses, when speaking with prospective students and first-year students, that they should visit the Career Development Center early and often, so they can learn about resources, options, and what they need to have in place to do an effective job search. They need to be aware of what goes into having professional maturity – projecting a professional image. The CDC provides etiquette events and other programs to assist with this.

The CDC's mission is to serve as the primary resource for students to acquire essential career-related skills and experiences, and understand how to utilize strengths and values to achieve success. Ideally, every student should leave Alfred University with the following skills:

- A quality resume and cover letter
- A relevant experiential education experience (e.g. internship, co-op, fieldwork)
- A significant service-learning experience
- Strong interviewing skills
- Networking skills: the ability to find and utilize contacts
- The ability to identify and utilize effective job and experiential education search strategies.

They should have an understanding of their professional image, a solid understanding of real world career knowledge, the awareness that the CDC is a valuable resource for the grad school search and application process, the knowledge that the CDC's services are always available to them, even after they leave Alfred, and that they can give back in the future by serving as a Saxon Career Volunteer. They should also be aware that the CDC offers a 50/50 working relationship.

The Career Development Center is one piece in the process of students finding a job. Their education and other campus resources, such as the Leadership Center, also play a part. Interviewing skills are very important. The CDC staff conducts mock-interviews with the students and give them feedback on their verbal and non-verbal performance. (50% of how we communicate is non-verbal.)

Students need to understand the real world and how it works. We have the Saxon Career Volunteer Network made up of alumni and others who serve as resources, connections, advisors and potential employers. He encourages students to use LinkedIn as a resource as well.

The CDC also subscribes to a program called Careership, which is a job, company, contact information aggregator. It is a great resource for doing pre-interview research on a company or an individual with whom a student might be interviewing.

The Four-Year Career Plan Mark handed out to everyone is just a guideline, but can be helpful to parents and students so they realize they should begin the process early.

Q: Can the CDC help students find a summer job?

A: They have a summer internship and job fair in February – this gets the idea on students’ radar so they don’t wait until too late in the semester to begin thinking about this. (They also have several other large-scale events each year including the Engineering Career Fair, Graduate School Fair, Meet the Accountants, Alumni Networking Nights, and more.)

Students should not just apply for one job and wait to see if they get it before trying for others. In this job market, they should apply for many different jobs and should get used to hearing the word “no.” After graduation, students who don’t have a job should be spending 35-40 hours a week looking for a job.

Q: Some students, even seniors, are not yet ready/willing to take ownership of the job search process. How can parents help students get to where they need to be to actively and effectively search for employment?

A: It is often helpful to break down the process into manageable steps. Analyze the process, looking at where the student is now and where he wants to be. Then identify the steps needed to get from here to there and get him to start working on those. Small successes can be very motivating and can help the student develop confidence.

Q: Does the CDC offer an on-line portfolio service?

A: The CDC does have their own credential file in-house, but they are looking at possibly transitioning to *Interfolio* over the summer.

Q: Can students choose which letters are sent out to prospective employers?

A: Yes. And they would be able to do that with *Interfolio* also. The CDC staff are doing the research on this right now. The process in *Interfolio* would be more self-directed.

The CDC also has Saxon JobLink where students can post resumes and include a URL prospective employers can access to see a photo and view additional information about the student. They can also sign up for interviews through Saxon JobLink. About 100 companies recruit at AU each year.

If students are unable to find paying jobs right away, they are often encouraged to consider taking an unpaid internship or volunteer position to gain important professional experience.

Comment: Working for a not-for-profit organization can give the students a great opportunity to do a lot of things – that is experience they can put on their resume.

Some students are able to work an unpaid internship and still have time each week to work at another job that helps them pay the bills.

Q: Are companies that provide internships willing to negotiate the number of hours to allow students time to also work another paying job?

A: It really varies – some do and some don't.

Mark reminded everyone that there would be an open house at the Career Development Center beginning at 11:00 a.m. He encouraged anyone with questions to please stop by. The CDC is located in the Steinheim.

Report on Campus Housing

Katie then introduced Brenda Porter, Director of Residence Life, to give us an update on campus housing. Brenda explained that this is her 12th year at Alfred University, and there has been a recent, exciting shift in philosophy. For decades the University has prescribed to the philosophy that all first-year students should be housed together in first-year residence halls. Based upon feedback from a task force on residence life, and suggestions from Residence Life staff, however, they have decided to try something new.

This fall, first-year students will not have to live in first-year halls only. They can choose places to live all throughout the campus. And, first-year students who want to live with friends who are upperclassmen can do so. Surprisingly, Brenda has found that upperclassmen, for the most part, don't have a problem with living in the same residence with first-year students.

There have also been changes made to the housing sign-up process, which is now on-line. Students can opt to stay where they are currently housed if they wish to. They are not required to move. Another change is that students don't have to fill a suite, to live in a suite.

Also, the University has contracted with a service called RoomSync, which interfaces with Face Book and enables incoming (deposited) students to input information about themselves, view potential roommate matches, connect with each other and, hopefully, find someone with whom they can be compatible. The program looks at the books they are reading, the music they listen to, their hobbies, interests, etc. Students choose each other and decide to room together. It makes them feel better to know that they have made the decision, rather than just being placed with another student by the University. Over 50 students are already signed up in RoomSync, and a couple of roommate matches have already been made.

Brenda is also a member of RoomSync so students can contact her if they have questions.

Q: How does the room selection process work? Is it a lottery?

A: Yes. It is a lottery. Students are given a specific sign-up time – a 15-minute window during which they can sign up for a room (seniors get first choice, then juniors and sophomores).

Q: Is the process different for students who wish to live in a “themed house” such as Hillel House?

A: In the case of Hillel House, Dr. Larry Greil is the advisor. He reviews applications from students who wish to live there and personally selects those who will be occupying the house.

Q: Do students living in Hillel House have to have a meal plan?

A: Students living in a house with a full kitchen do not have to be on a meal plan. In the case of Hillel House, there are actually two kitchens. One of them is Kosher.

Q: How many students live off-campus?

A: Between 25% and 30%.

Q: Where do they live?

A: The majority live within 5 miles of campus, but others drive in each day from Wellsville or Hornell.

Q: Is the move to have mixed housing (first-years living with upperclasses) going to mesh with the Saxon Sidekicks program?

A: Yes. Students who opt to have a mentor will still be given one.

Barresi will be a pure first-year residence for those who wish that, and it is also Alfred Al Fresco. Joel's House will also be Alfred Al Fresco – a community of students who wish to take advantage of all we have in this area. (Alfred Al Fresco is a program that is dedicated to involving students in a healthy lifestyle and conscious participation in respecting the environment. It is associated with events like Horse to Holler and Wild About Alfred. Alfred Al Fresco is great for anyone who likes hiking and outdoor activities.)

The programming in the Suites will change now that there will be first-year students living there. They will be encouraged to come out of their suites and mingle with other students living in their building.

Comment: Sounds like you are really creating community. This is wonderful.

Comments: This new policy gives everyone maximum choice – you can't go wrong with that. The University is treating the students more like adults. It seems like there is more of a sense of community here, not a feeling of separation by class. It should also help the students develop interpersonal skills.

Report from the Vice President for Student Affairs

Katie then asked Kathy Woughter, Vice President for Student Affairs, to present her report. Kathy began by handing out a document detailing the meal plan options for next year and explaining that they have changed significantly, partly in response to upcoming changes in Powell Dining Hall. In response to student comments/suggestions and feedback from student focus groups, we are changing Powell Dining Hall from a traditional all-you-care-to-eat traditional board hall to a retail facility. There will be 5 different stations – selected based on AUs unique personality, what students tell us they want, and what our students *actually* eat. (The work in Powell will be completed over the summer.) The new meal plan options are designed to give students maximum control of their meal management in relation to their lifestyle. The change in housing policy for first-year students has also been considered. With students of all ages living on both sides of campus, they can now choose a plan based upon where they will be eating. If they plan on eating most of their meals in Ade – they might select the *King Alfred Plan* which has unlimited swipes in Ade. If they feel they will be eating more often in Powell, they might choose to go with a plan that includes more Saxon Swipes and Dining Dollars.

Ade Meals are meals to be used in Ade Dining Hall exclusively and are reloaded onto the student's meal card at the beginning of each week. Saxon Swipes can be used at a variety of

locations, and can also be used as guest swipes. Dining Dollars are used like cash at any AVI Fresh location and at selected vending machines.

The new selection of meal plan options is modeled after a couple of plans we have studied at other schools such as RIT and SUNY New Paltz. Our students have been very helpful in providing input. It is also important to note that prices have been kept the same (this is the 3rd or 4th year in a row that costs haven't increased.)

Q: How will Powell Dining Hall be different from Ade Hall?

A: Ade Hall is an all-you-care-to-eat board hall. The menu changes every day. In Powell it will be like a collection of small retail stores that offer the same menu every day, but there will be specials as well. (It will be kind of like an expanded Lil' Alf.) Powell will also be open weekends and late nights. There will be point-of-sale swipes; students won't have to swipe at a front desk to get in. Once purchased, food can be taken outside if students wish to do that. Powell will be a cash operation as well. Prices will be posted so students know how much is being deducted from their card.

We have recently hired new Wellness Center Director. As some of the board members may know, Dr. Cathie Chester left in August. Dr. Steve Byrne stepped in and acted as clinical director this year, but we have now hired Dr. Stanley Tam from Chicago to be Director of the Wellness Center. Dr. Tam will join us July 1.

It has been wonderful to have our new softball field. It's great to be able to host home softball games! There is still a bit of work to be done on the field, but it is functional.

The new recreation center is schedule to be open in November. We are hopeful that we'll be able to keep it open every weeknight until midnight and 'til 2 a.m. on the weekends. It would be something for students to do every night, late at night – something they can count on.

Big news from the Equestrian Center – for the first time ever, both our western and our hunt seat teams won our region! And, our hunt seat team placed second in our entire zone. We are competing against huge schools and have been very successful.

We have also been focusing our efforts on getting students outdoors more. Our WILD (Wilderness Immersion, Learning and Discovery) committee, made up of Student Affairs staff and students, has been amazing – promoting the beauty of where we are. Kathy encouraged everyone to visit the WILD web page (www.alfred.edu/students/wild/) to see all the activities/events they've had this year. Today they are doing the Hot Dog Day 5/K Color Run. They also had a Women in the Wilderness Day, which was a Leadership Center capstone project. They made maple syrup in the sugar shack, had the Horse to Holler event, and more.

The University is currently in the process of doing a Middle States assessment. Kathy and her staff have been focused on assessment in student affairs and they developed an assessment webpage. Kathy encouraged everyone to check it out: www.alfred.edu/students/assessment.cfm Results have been positive.

We have also being working on ways to show school spirit. For example, AU is now getting a mascot. In the past there has never been an area or department that had the funds or were empowered to do create a mascot. But, over the past year, the new Athletic Director, Equestrian Director, Student Affairs, University Relations and Marketing got together to make this happen. There will be a live warrior (an equestrian student) in costume, with a shield, riding a horse at

home football games. Also, a mascot company has made a mascot costume for someone to wear. The person wearing the mascot costume will be greeting people at events, at games, etc. Students will soon be trying out to wear the mascot costume and do this.

We also now have Saxon Fridays – days when faculty, staff and students wear their Saxon attire. Basically is it a school spirit day.

Q: Is the Fiat on the web?

A: Yes, it is on Tumbler, and this week's is the only printed version they've put out this year. The Fiat faced some big budgetary challenges this past year. Hopefully they'll be better funded next year and will, once again, be able to print a full series of papers.

Report on Parent-to-Parent Yahoo Group

Jodi Bailey is the Director of Marketing. Although she works within the Division of Enrollment Management, she partners with areas all over the campus to promote Alfred University.

Jodi thanked everyone for their input, and their previous suggestion to combine the Yahoo groups. She explained that there used to be one group for parents of current students and another group for parents of newly accepted students. We did this because we thought their concerns would be very different, but we found that they are actually similar. So now there is just one group – auparent2parent.

There's been a lot of activity in the group lately and the parents are looking forward to meeting each other at orientation.

Using the Yahoo Group format for this communication helps to keep it private. Individuals must be invited to join and then they can participate. Jodi expressed appreciation to members of the Board who are in the group and answer questions posed by new parents. If any parents wish to join, they should email Jodi Bailey at baileyj@alfred.edu, and she will send them an invitation.

This year we made a bigger effort to contact the parents of incoming students regarding the group via emails. Starting around the middle of March - each week Jodi sends invitations to the parents' emails, or if she doesn't have those, she sends to the students' emails and asks them to forward the information to their parents.

A few AU staff members are also members of the group so they can help answer questions and post announcements of things parents need to know. We feel that it is more effective, in most cases, for parents to respond to parents.

Comment: It would be good to have a sign-sheet for this, at new student check-in and Parents Orientation. We should also promote this at the Parents Association Table.

Director of Parents Programs Report

Parents Orientation will take place Thursday, August 22, 2013. In response to the evaluations we received last year and feedback from this Board, we have made some changes to the Parent Orientation schedule. As in past years, all parents will be encouraged to visit the Parents Association Table in McLane Gym during morning check-in to meet members of the Parents Advisory Board and pick up a copy of the *AU Parent Handbook*. We will also hand out the Parents Orientation schedule and will do our best to collect as many parent emails as possible.

Later that morning there will be a Parents Welcome in Nevins Theater with Parents Association President Katie Rommel-Esham, President Edmondson and Melody. Then we'll have a picnic lunch on the Brick Lawn, followed by college meetings with the Deans and Faculty.

We will have the usual Parents Information Fair in the lobby of Harder Hall, but it will take place a little earlier than usual and be followed by two sets of concurrent Parent Information Sessions covering topics such as Health and Wellness, Residence Life, Safety, Special Academic Services, Financial Matters, Leadership Opportunities for students, Career Development Center, Long Distance Parenting, and more.

We are also putting together a "meet up" time and place for interested members of the Parent-to-Parent Yahoo group. They will have special name tags so they can easily identify each other.

Melody thanked everyone for their valuable input over the years. We'll be trying out this new schedule in the fall and will review it annually to make changes as needed.

She also explained that she will need at least 2 volunteers to help staff the Parents Association Table. We'll be starting around 8:00 a.m., and volunteers should be done by 3:30 p.m. (Lunch will be provided.) Anyone who is able to assist should please contact Melody to let her know.

We are going to try to get as many parent email addresses as possible at the Parents Table. If anyone has any other suggestions regarding how and when we might collect those, please let Melody know. We would also appreciate advice regarding when and how to get parents to complete evaluations of Parents Orientation and the student check-in process.

Melody went on to say that several members of our board will be leaving us this May, when their sons and daughters graduate. She expressed thanks to Melissa and Steve Delmonte, who were present, and to Melissa Rinn, Mary Jo & Steve Telesca, and Jennifer & Paul Lange, who couldn't be here, for their insightful comments and suggestions, their enthusiasm, and their sincere concern and interest.

Fall Family Weekend is scheduled to take place Sept 20-22. Our Parents Advisory Board Meeting will be held that Saturday, from 8:30-9:30, followed by the Annual Parents Association Meeting at 10:00 a.m.

Adjournment

Katie thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting at 11:20 a.m.