

# Alfred University

## Alfred University Parents Association Meeting September 20, 2014

### Call to Order:

Association President Katie Rommel-Esham called the meeting to order at 9:10 AM.

### Parents Association President's Report:

Katie thanked everyone for coming and introduced Bonnie Dungan as the new Director of Summer and Parent Programs since Melody McLay's retirement in April. She then invited anyone who wants to join the Parents Advisory Board to let her or Bonnie know. She then introduced President Edmondson.

### President Edmondson's report:

President Edmondson thanked everyone for their involvement in the Parents Association; spoke about the greater set of challenges that face us as administrators, educators and parents and we need parents as part of our involvement. He is not a fan of the term "helicopter parents" as he wants them to be involved. He indicated that we can't do it alone. He wanted to clarify that while it is typical that when the President of an institution is asked to speak to a group of parents they think it will be with regards to a request for money. True as that may be that is not what he is here to talk to them about. Life and your student's future is very challenging at best. Many of the jobs American's hold today (~1/3) didn't exist 20 years ago. Many of the occupations currently out there did not exist years ago. One CEO forecasts that as of 2030 occupations in Europe and America will be jobs that currently do not exist today. Children come here for many goals... vocation is not only job, it's our self-worth. We derive our identity through what we do work-wise. For example, in Norway, they live to work. Not so in America; we work to live. It's more than just earning enough to live; it's also a sense of worth. He indicated that education so very important in the world of work. Detailed curriculum is needed for the jobs which will exist in the years ahead. What we do know is that the requirements to fulfill jobs will evolve certain basic skills, communication, calculation; no substitute for those. Our students, your student needs to become competent to take on new things. They must be resilient to take on daunting tasks. He says for parents to be helicopter pilots, to put more attention on encouraging your student to work hard academically. He mentioned that over the last 40 years attitudes and expectations of studying has decreased greatly – to sometimes no more than two hours per week; totally inadequate with what the future holds. He asks that parents encourage their student to make the maximum effort academically. Never has there been a greater opportunity to learn other than now; learning will always happen but not on the level of now.

He also talked about motivating students to be aware and take responsibility for their own safety. He talked about the national scandal of sexual assaults and while we are in a very safe environment in comparison and we are honest in our reporting of such cases, nothing takes the place of student self-safety and thinking in advance. He said that being a parent is the hardest thing ever but each and every one of those here has done a stellar job. He closes with asking parents to please stay engaged with student about social aspect of college life. It (social aspect of college life) is critically important but safety needs to be forward thinking. Good judgment is a must. Alcohol use, drug use, relationships all play a part in college life so he asks parents to stay engaged; help your student make good decisions; we will do our part as best we can but we need your help to keep them always thinking safety first.

### PAB President's Report:

Katie reported that on the AU Parent-2-Parent Yahoo group and from the concerns/conversations that were circulating is how we decide who from the University administration we will ask to come and share information with the Board. She explained, for example, last spring due to the changes in meal plans and dining options, the Director of Dining Services, John Dietrich, was invited to explain these changes. Based on the topics that have surfaced prior to Fall Family Weekend we invited our Vice President for Business and Finance, Giovina Lloyd to address these issues. She shared with the group an overview of renovations that have taken place, rotational plans for renovating residence halls and discussed the issues with regards to one-third of our custodial staff were new, including the supervisor and the new plans he has under way to make sure our facilities are maintained. She indicated

that because Wi-Fi seems to be another concern we will be inviting our Director of IT services, Gary Roberts, to our next meeting. She added that at Geneseo, ~40% of bandwidth is utilized by Netflix and that could be part of the issue here; that this is a very different world than before and the technological demands are huge which add stress to the network infrastructure. There was discussion about the website and that our web team is working to make improvements but staff dedicated to this is very small and dragged in many directions however they are aware of the problems and are working on improvements. Dining and meal plans were also discussed and Katie made a suggestion of having a FAQ for dining plans added to the website and we will share that information with the Director, John Dietrich. She also shared that John and his staff are very visible in the dining halls so asked that parents encourage their students to seek them out for help; drop suggestions in the “suggestion box” provided. From all indications we’ve received it seems that Orientation check-in went very well, utilizing the new Health and Wellness Center an move-in was a huge success and thanked the football team for their help.

She then introduced Vice President for Student Affairs, Kathy Woughter

#### Vice President for Student Affairs’s report:

Kathy thanked everyone for coming and handed out key chains to all in attendance as she shared the great news of our new Saxon mascot who you will see through the weekend. She also asked that parents encourage their student to get involved with our new incentive “Saxon Fridays” to promote AU Pride and Spirit and wear purple and gold.

*Safety:* She talked about safety and how important it is for students to be and feel safe. The Residence Life staff are working with our Wellness Center staff on programs involving safety as September is “National Campus Safety Month.” Some of the activities are to have students sign up for “Circle of 6” so if something is happening they will have someone to call. Also they encouraged students to sign a pledge “No More” meaning they pledge not to engage in dangerous behavior and to be a good bystander in that if they see something they report it vs walking away. There is also a campaign from the softball team and swimmers for campus safety similar to a community watch program. While it has always been polite to hold a door open for someone behind you, we don’t want it happening in our residence halls. Students are being encouraged to not let anyone they don’t know into their residence hall and if they see someone in the hall who they don’t know they should contact a staff member.

*Dining:* Both dining halls were significantly renovated over the past two years. One (Ade) is a “board” (dining) hall and the other (Powell) is a retail facility. The changes were made to meet the needs/demands of groups of students for example, because some athletes were finding it hard to get to the dining hall after practice, an hour was added to the dinner time in Powell; a sushi station was added, vitamin water was added. These changes came from the focus groups John held last semester. She also commented that while parents may still be confused about how the plans work, the students seem to understand them but if they are confused have them seek out John and his staff. Parents are welcome to call John as well.

*Career Development Updates:* She then handed out the CDC Outcomes report which is employment data collected from students who graduated a year ago (full report will be available on the CDC website at [www.alfred.edu/cdc](http://www.alfred.edu/cdc)). She discussed some of the highlights of the handout such as of the 80% of the undergrad students who responded one-year out, 57% are employed; 37% are attending graduate school; 2% are still seeking employment; and 2 out of the population are not seeking work – volunteering to step out of the market so-to-speak. And they’ve added a new category, “underemployed” meaning they indicated they are working part-time, not in their field of study and the director makes this determination based on the information received back from the student. If someone reported that they are employed and going to grad school they are reported in both categories. She mentioned that they can also find information on salaries however not everyone reports their salary so what is there is what has been reported. She also stated that the Director of the CDC, Mark McFadden, encourages students to come early and come often. They have a large alumni network and many attend scheduled career days. Please encourage your student to attend as networking is key. Also they have a program called “Resumania” where all in attendance will receive free resume paper and the staff will review students resumes.

*Athletics:* Off to a great start and we have an awesome coaching staff – new coaches for football, soccer, volleyball, basketball just to name a few.

*Leadership:* We currently have the highest number of students enrolled in our “Gary Horowitz Certificate Leadership Program” which is great!

*Orientation:* Parents were surveyed about orientation and Kathy will post results online but some of the highlights were that 100% found the tables they needed; food was great and there was plenty of food and seating. Information provided during check-in was

good and information shared about emergency response was good. Full results will be posted on the student affairs assessment page.

Questions/Comments were then fielded:

- Q: *Concerns were raised about the cleanliness of the halls and surprised with the conditions on move-in*
- A: Information was again shared that approximately one-third of the staff were new including the new director who comes from a health background and has many new ideas and plans to implement for the coming year.
- C: *Workstudy:* Deb Brewer then asked about workstudy and not enough jobs and would it be possible to train students to clean.
- C: *Computer usage in Openhym:* parents didn't realize they needed to purchase a router – they don't. Ethernet cords are available from ITS; however another comment was made that the Ethernet cords don't work with Apple computers. Parents were encouraged to have their student contact ITS with specific location of problems and detailed information of the problem and ITS will work with the student to resolve the issues as fast as they can.

Parents Advisory Board President Katie indicated that if any parent wants to be on the Board just email her or Bonnie. She then said that if anyone had any suggestions for future meetings to also email her or Bonnie.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 AM

*Respectfully submitted:*

Bonnie Dungan  
Director  
Parent Programs  
Alfred University  
10/3/2014