Alfred University Parents Association
Annual Meeting
September 22, 2012

Minutes

Call to Order
Parents Association President Katie Rommel-Esham called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. There were approximately 35-40 people in attendance. Members of the AU administration included President Charles Edmondson; Kathy Woughter, Vice President for Student Affairs; and Melody McLay, Director of Summer School, Summer Programs and Parent Programs.

Parents Association President’s Report
Katie welcomed everyone and provided information about the Parents Association and the Parents Advisory Board. We’ve discussed many important issues over the years and have made recommendations for positive changes. The University administration has been responsive to our suggestions.

The Parents Advisory Board met earlier in the day. During our meeting we had an interesting presentation from Corry Unis, Director of Admissions, regarding how the University recruits students and the market areas in which they recruit. We also had report about the opening of the fall semester from Vice President Kathy Woughter and an update on summer residence hall renovations and cleaning provided by Vice President for Business and Finance, Giovina Lloyd.

Katie encouraged parents to subscribe to the Alfred University e-news to keep up-to-date on current happenings and issues, and asked if any of the new parents in the room had joined the auparent2parent Yahoo group. Only one couple was aware of it and had joined. To join the group, just send a message to Jodi Bailey at baileyj@alfred.edu. To subscribe to the Alfred University e-newsletter, you can just send an email message to enews@alfred.edu. Melody explained that this information is also included in the Parent Handbook.

Katie encouraged new parents to consider joining the Advisory Board. If interested, please contact her or Melody McLay. She then introduced President Charles Edmondson.

President Edmondson’s Remarks
President Edmondson thanked the parents for entrusting the University with their precious children and also thanked everyone for staying involved. He went on to explain that we are currently facing one of the biggest challenges higher education has ever faced. In this global economy, our graduates are competing for jobs with other students all over the world. Also, there has been a demographic change in this country. When he went to college, continuing growth in higher education was expected and was the norm. Now our country’s population is made up of more older people than college-aged people. We have had to adapt to a new model. But, he is happy to report that the University has been able to weather the storms and we are now in the most stable condition we have ever been in our history. Also, as the number of high school graduates has begun to decline, we’re having to deal with some of the consequences of inequality in our society and culture. During the past five years we’ve admitted classes of students who expect to spend fewer hours per day studying. We have to address this effectively - we have to engage
them. Their breadth of ability and their interest in social problems and learning how to address them, is great. As you stay engaged with your student, please don’t forget to remind them of the main reason why they are here. The primary mission of this university is academic. University life has many activities to offer, but we must emphasize the academics. The people our graduates will be competing against out in the world are not neglecting this – they are focusing on academics. It will take all of our combined engagement to make sure our students are well prepared.

President Edmondson went on to explain that he spends at least 40% of his time doing fundraising for the University. A campus this size requires a lot of financial support to run. We know that our recreational and health facilities need upgrading, and we’re working on that, but the next real big investment needs to be in the residence halls. Rather than being just reactive, we must be proactive. We need to address safety issues first and foremost, but these residence halls, for the most part, are older and other aspects relating to comfort, attractiveness and convenience also need to be updated to meet the needs and expectations of today’s students.

If anyone has a question please feel free to contact any of us here at the University. If you don’t know to whom you should direct your question, you can always contact his office for assistance.

Katie thanked President Edmondson and then introduced Kathy Woughter, Vice President for Student Affairs.

Student Affairs Update
Kathy Woughter reported that we had a wonderful opening this fall. She hasn’t gotten any emergency calls in the middle of the night yet this semester. It’s unusual because this is a time when students sometimes tend to try to test the limits. It is a credit to our students that there haven’t been any major problems. She checked with the Residence Life staff and the faculty and they all agree that the students are active, engaged and interested, but are staying safe.

The renovations completed over the summer in Cannon and Barresi were great and included bathroom renovation, sprinkler upgrades, improved lighting and flooring.

Ade Dining Hall is not yet open. The renovations in that building began last spring and were supposed to be done by mid-August. The reasons for the delay in opening are not the fault of the dining hall staff. A couple of construction companies have been working together on the project and there have been some unexpected issues (e.g. the lighting fixtures haven’t arrived yet) and we don’t want to open until it is completely done. It will be open this semester, but she can’t give a specific date yet. The downstairs is nearly done and is open. They are serving meals out of the retail establishment there. It looks great. They are still waiting for TVs to be installed and a few other things like that, but there’s already been a big improvement.

Once Ade is open, we’ll be using a new pasta machine from Italy to make fresh pasta. The dining services staff has already been experimenting with recipes. We also have a smoker, a gelato machine, a peanut butter grinder, and a station called Pure, which will offer all vegetarian and raw foods, presented beautifully. We have been trying to include more products grown or sourced locally, and we’ve instituted a better signage program so students can be aware that food is local, that organic eggs are available, etc. Sometimes locally grown fruits and vegetables don’t look as nice as the food we’re used to buying in grocery stores, so we also have to educate the students regarding this.

We are entering into a lease agreement with a company that provides fitness center equipment. In a couple of weeks, we will be getting all new, modern equipment. We’ll be on a 3-year lease cycle now, so will be upgrading regularly.
Our new softball field is almost ready. When complete, it will meet NCAA standards, so we can now have softball games on campus.

The women’s locker rooms in McLane have been renovated. Female students now won’t have to share their locker room facilities with faculty and staff.

Ground has been broken for the new McLane Annex recreation center. There will be large space with 3 courts that can be used for basketball, tennis, volleyball, etc. There will also be a smaller, multi-purpose room that can be used for exercise classes and other activities.

We have moved to a new emergency communications system called E-2 Campus. You may have received several messages already this semester. If you are not getting these messages, and wish to, ask your child to go on E-2 Campus in Banner and sign you up to get those notices. Once you are signed up, you’ll get all the same notices that the students get such as when the power is out, when it is restored, when water is turned off in a building, when it comes back on, etc, as well as messages regarding more serious situations and emergencies. We are still getting used to this new system and figuring out the best way to use it. Please be patient as we work through the glitches.

It has been great to see the level of student involvement so far this year. We did a True AU Leadership Week earlier in the semester which involved students educating students. The program was conducted by the Judson Leadership Center and we were delighted with the level of participation.

We have been doing hikes every Friday night and the number of students attending these has increased. We are also holding the second annual Horse-to-Holler Hike on Saturday, September 29th, to promote the great outdoors and highlight the beauty of this area. It is a 7-mile hike that goes from the Equestrian Center through state forests, the Foster Lake property and some personal property that owners have opened to us, and ends up at Pollywog Holler. There will be refreshment stations along the way, including a s’mores station that Kathy will be staffing. Hikers will be bused back to the Equestrian Center or the campus. We’re capping it at 150 participants this year.

We conducted a survey of parents who came to campus for New Student Check-In and Parents Orientation. There were 60 responses and we got some great information. We were interested in finding out how they felt about the content presented and what more they would like to hear about. If you have any suggestions regarding this, please let us know.

Q: The E-2 Campus alert about a student being assaulted on campus came very early in the morning – around 6:45 a.m., and there wasn’t enough information in the message, so it caused great concern. Parents didn’t know who had been attacked so they tried to reach their children, but many students were still asleep.
A: We are required to notify our students immediately of any threat or potential threat – based upon the information we have. In this instance, an Alfred State student was punched and his wallet was stolen around 2 a.m. on our campus – our students were not the perpetrators, nor the victim. The victim didn’t report the incident until several hours after it occurred. As soon as we had that information, we communicated it to our students, and anyone else signed up to receive the E-2 Campus alerts. If we have closure (i.e. an arrest is made) we will send notification of that. There hasn’t yet been an arrest in that case.

Q: Is the content of the E-2 Campus voicemail messages the same as the email messages? Can you opt to receive a text or an email message rather than an actual phone call?
A: Alerts are sent via all of these methods. How you receive them depends upon the how you are signed up in Banner. If you want to change how you receive the alerts, you can ask your son or daughter to go into Banner and change the setting.
Comment: The actual message was vague enough to cause concern. It said “check your Alfred email for
more information,” but parents don’t have AU email addresses.
Response: The messages are primarily targeted toward students – that is why they say to check your
Alfred email. In a major emergency we would also post information and updates on our main website. In
this case, it was not reported right away by the victim, and by the time we knew about it, we also knew it
wasn’t an immediate threat to the students.

President Edmondson added that the University is required to report these things due to the Clery Act.
We have to make information available as soon as possible, telling exactly what the victim reports. We
are not given time to investigate before sending the alert.

Q: What are the parameters of the Clery Act? Do only things that happen on campus have to be reported,
or does it also include things that happen within a certain distance from campus?
A: We are only required to report what happens on our campus, but would also send alerts about other
things that happen in the area that might impact the health and safety of our students.

Kathy suggested that this would be a good topic to have a separate information session about at Spring
Family Weekend. Melody will contact the Director of Public Safety to see if he is available to do that for
us.

Q: Did Alfred State have to report what happened?
A: Since it was not on their campus, they weren’t required to, but they did.

Comment: The message said just that an Alfred student was assaulted. It didn’t give any other details so
this caused great concern.
Response: In this case more information was sent out in an AU mass email. Kathy said she will work on
this to see if additional details can be included in future E-2 Campus alerts. She thought that the alert did
specify an Alfred State student was assaulted.

Katie mentioned that AU recently instituted a zero-sort recycling program. All students were given
recycling bins for this. This is a very sustainable and eco-aware campus. Students should put their
personal recycling in the bin in their room, and then take it out and empty it into the larger recycling
receptacle outside their residence hall.

Q: Health care is available on campus Monday through Friday. What if a student has a health emergency
on the weekend?
A: The AU Ambulance Squad operates every day. The Health Center is staffed Monday through Friday
but if a student has a serious health issue in the evening or on the weekend, the student can just call 911.

Q: Is a bus service available?
A: Yes, there is a daily shuttle to Hornell, also a local shuttle service that provides service daily. To
travel further, there’s a once daily bus that leaves from the bus stop downtown.

Katie thanked everyone for coming. The meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.