GEORGIA PERIMETER COLLEGE
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTOR’S MEETING
Room 4190 Jim Cherry Building
Clarkston Campus 6:00-8:00 pm
Wednesday August 2, 2006

MINUTES

Members Present
Akil Abdur-Raheem, Melinda Mock, Nursing Alumni Representative, Stella Xu, Michael Palma, Stefanie Palma, and Cynthia Heckman, Dental Hygiene Alumni Association Representative

Members Absent (excused)
Terrence Rosario, Lester Leslie, Stephanie Beach, Derrick Shelton

Ex-Officio:
Karen Berson, Director of Institutional Advancement

Guests:
Mark Fitten, Editor, Chattahoochee Review, M. Charlie Smith, Administrative Secretary, Office of Institutional Advancement; Lee Hedden, Coordinator for Development Services.

The meeting opened with the recognition of guest, alumnus, and Editor of GPC’s Chattahoochee Review, Mark Fitten.

OLD BUSINESS

President Akil Abdur-Raheem stated that the minutes and the Financial Report from the June 21, 2006 meeting had been sent via E-mail and the US Post Office. He asked for a motion. After giving the group a chance to look over the minutes again Melinda Mock motioned, and Stella Xu seconded that the minutes be approved and accepted. They were unanimously approved without further question. President Abdur-Raheem announced that this was his first official meeting.

President Abdur-Raheem gave the Financial Report noting the current balance in the Membership Account is $1,552.83. Expenditures for the period total $58.25. The balance in the Scholarship Account is $6,529.04. Gifts to the Scholarship Fund for the period totaled $125.00. The specific expenditures and additions for each account can be seen in the attached Financial Report. President Abdur-Raheem gave the report because the new president elect has not been selected. He asked for questions. Karen Berson had questions about the process for distribution of the Scholars Award. After a brief discussion, it was decided to put it on the next agenda to re-access the specifics of managing and awarding the scholarship. It was motioned and accepted to approve the report. There were no further questions.
Melinda Mock gave the Nursing Alumni Association (NAA) update noting the theme of the 2007 NAA Day will be to celebrate the Nursing Department’s 40th anniversary. The event will be held in the new student center on the Clarkston campus and will have a ‘homecoming’ flavor. Alumni will be invited to tour the Nursing department and the new facilities. Memorabilia is being considered and a logo is being designed for the event as well. Effort to increase publicity and visibility of NAA is ongoing. Locating and contacting Nursing alumni is a major part of that effort. Lastly, application has been submitted to the Alumni Association for chartering, and the husband of an NAA board member has created a new scholarship in her honor. It is a non-specific, second year student scholarship—the Linda Hodges Scholars Fund. Melinda’s report was accepted as information.

Cynthia Heckman gave the Dental Hygiene Alumni Association (DHAA) update. Their meetings were on hold for the summer. The next meeting is scheduled for August 29, 2006 where Director of Advancement, Karen Berson will be the guest speaker. Everyone is invited and it starts at 6:30pm on the Dunwoody campus. DHAA is a young group that was formed in October of 2005. Currently, there are 21 members. Karen Berson noted that, although newly formed, the DHAA has already created and encouraged the formation of three new scholarships, DHAA Scholars Fund, the Sheryl Wentworth Scholars Fund, and the Seattle Study Club Scholars Fund. Cynthia thanked NAA President Melinda Mock for time, advice, and assistance getting the group started. The report was accepted as information.

Karen Berson suggested that since affinity groups entitles dual membership with the GPC Alumni Association, it may be useful to consider selecting a board member (the president or a designee) to go their meetings to welcome them, and talk about the support and benefits they receive by being members. Melinda Mock noted that the NAA bylaws include a non-voting position for an AA representative.

Karen Berson gave the report for the Phone-A-Thon. She explained that the Phone-A-Thon is one aspect of the Alumni Annual Fund Campaign (please refer to handout included in agenda book). It is a test case where 3,500 constituents have been selected. They include present and former board members, donors, and scholarship winners. University of Georgia students at a call center in Athens will make the calls. Research shows that direct mail results in approximately 2% response while telephone solicitation results in 10-15% response.

The cost for the phone-a-thon is approx $16,000.00. The anticipated return is approximately $7,000.00. Theory suggests phone-a-thons should be done bi-annually, and should become more and more profitable. Donations should exceed cost in the 3rd year. Analysis of GPC donors reveals that they are largely females over the age of 50. Research also suggests that online giving may be more attractive to younger donors. Phone privacy issues also have to be considered. The GPC Phone-A-Thon will begin in late August and conclude on October 1st.

The Alumni Annual Fund ‘ask letter’ was mailed in June resulting in 26 donors to date, and approximately $1,200.00 in gifts. In 2005, there were 78 donors and approximately $4,000.00 in gifts. $7,000.00 is the most that has been raised in any given year.
Stefanie Palma stated that the return on the investment seemed rather low. Melinda Mock questioned the timing as it is an election year. “Telephones have been and will be bombarded with solicitations until November.”

Another component of the Annual Fund Campaign is the inclusion of a solicitation envelope in the next issue of the Chronicle. The circulation is approximately 20,000 constituents and is scheduled for distribution in late September.

It has been suggested that Alumni Board members can assist the Annual Fund Campaign in four ways. Some of which have already been discussed by the board in prior years. The charge is to implement them.

2. Conduct smaller phone-a-thons and conduct your own personal direct mail appeal.
3. Draft a solicitation letter and mail it to alumni asking for support.
4. Make personal long-term commitment to give a gift every year.

The report was accepted as information.

Lee Hedden gave the Alumni Affairs update. Lee has recently been promoted and will be the liaison for affinity groups in the Advancement Office. She gave members a copy of the on-line membership form and asked for suggestion to revise/edit it. Alumni should be able to use it in the very near future per OIT, she stated. President Abdur-Raheem requested that the membership form also include a link to “Who constitutes an alumnum.” Stella suggested the link be connected after the website has been updated. Everyone concurred. President Abdur-Raheem requested Lee send the template of the GPC website to him until a website committee could be formed. He will start a list of possible updates/upgrades until a committee is formed.

President Abdur-Raheem explained that during the strategic meeting held in July, it was decided to set forth a new mission statement that more accurately and fully describes the aspirations of the Alumni Association. He read the proposed new mission statement. Melinda Mock explained that the proposed statement was taken from the current preamble and the compiled objectives. After the reading, a discussion ensued about the best way to state the desires of the members. After much discussion, Cynthia Heckman motioned, and Stefanie Palma seconded that the following statement be accepted and approved as the new mission statement. “...to establish, encourage, and maintain supportive and beneficial relationships between the College, its alumni, its students, and the community that/which advance the continued growth and development of Georgia Perimeter College (GPC) and its alumni.”

There were no further questions. A policy was made that all stationery should have the mission statement printed on it as if it was a logo. A stamp will be made to use with stationery already on hand.

By-Law Review and Approval

The six changes and or additions listed below were discussed, voted on, and approved by the members.

1. All former students who have successfully completed one or more courses or who hold a certificate, or degree from the College are alumni (Dekalb Community College, Dekalb College, GPC, or Georgia Perimeter College).
2. Associate members shall be individuals who are former or current faculty/staff, or friends, and are not eligible to be regular members. Privileges shall be those of a regular member except the privilege to vote, make nominations, or hold office. (new category)

3. The executive board of the association shall consist of the officers, president, vice-president (president elect), secretary, treasurer, immediate past president and six directors.

4. The president votes only if there is a ballot or to break a tie.

5. All affinity groups will have representation on the board.

6. There will be one student representative on the board. The student representative will be selected by the SGA presidents or by their designated committee.

The remaining by law items on the agenda were tabled because of time constraints. Melinda will mail any additional changes and recommendations to the by-laws prior to the October 4th meeting.

President Abdur-Raheem recommended and Stella Xu nominated Mark Fitten to become a member of the Alumni Association. Stefanie Palma seconded the motion. There was no discussion (rather applause instead).

Cynthia Heckman recommended that all future meetings began at 6:30 p.m. and end at 8:30 p.m. to allow for traffic challenges and distance. There was a consensus and the new time will become policy.

An attempt to vote on issues between regularly scheduled meetings will be made. Ideas and suggestions about the by-law revisions, additions, and changes can be sent to the President or the Advancement Office. The Advancement Office will forward to the President who can then forward them to the officers and board members to vote yes, no, or need further discussion. This is an effort to shorten meeting times and strategically select agenda items.

Stefanie Palma questioned if the College had approved any of the suggestions for GPC Alumni benefits, i.e. access to the gyms, pools, computer labs, libraries, etc. She also asked for comment on membership levels i.e. gold, bronze, silver etc. Melinda responded that this question had been covered in the Strategic Plan. Karen Berson informed the members that her understanding was that the insurance was in place. She needs a written directive from AA requesting that the College responds to specific requests surrounding benefits. Karen will give to list to the Vice President of Institutional Advancement. President Abdur-Raheem stated that he would forward to members, then to Karen Berson, a proposal for benefits that could be possibly be implemented/started immediately, and later a list that will may need a bit more research or time to implement.

Copies of the student newspaper "The Collegian" were passed out. It was suggested to submit an article about the Alumni Association to build awareness in each issue. The editor is actively soliciting for articles about GPC happenings. It was suggested to include a membership brochure in the publication periodically to solicit membership. Before a formal campaign can be launched the benefit package must be in place. Mark Fitten volunteered to write the articles and
to become the liaison for AA and the “The Collegian”. Stella suggested writing about the Alumni Scholarship and members concurred.

Committee Review and Approval, Committee Chair Selection, Review and Approval of Chartering of Constituent Units, and Approval for Annual Dues were tabled until the next meeting. The complete strategic plan draft will be sent to Board Members before the October 4th meeting.

President Abdur-Raheem asked for further questions, there were none. He thanked the members for their participation and adjoined the meeting.

Action Plan Summary

- Lee will research and report back who won the last Alumni Scholarship.
- Charlie will include the most recent Alumni Scholarship contract to the next Agenda Book. Members will decide at the next meeting how best to manage and disburse the scholarship (remind Akil to include on the next agenda).
- Charlie will check status of parking decals and report at next meeting.
- Charlie will verify that all board members have received the Annual Fund Campaign letter and send them one if they haven’t.
- Charlie will include Advancement Office contact info in the next Agenda Book
- Association will look at forming a web page committee. Stella and Mark volunteered to serve on it.
- Lee will check with Delita about getting the GPC template for the Alumni Association to Akil for the Web Page Committee.
- Lee will contact photographer about new pictures for members…perhaps at next meeting.
- Lee will check with Gay to find out when donor giving on line is expected to be ready.
- Lee will include the mission statement on all Alumni Association stationery and publications, including return envelopes. It will also be printed on the inside and outside of the Agenda Book cover.
- Charlie will have a stamp made with the new mission statement to be used with stationery already on hand.
- Lee will invite a Continuing Education and a Marketing and Public Relations representative to each meeting.
- Charlie will set all future meetings to begin at 6:30 p.m. and end at 8:30 p.m.
- Board members will send their ideas for by-law changes to the President, Lee Hedden or Karen Berson prior to the next meeting. The Advancement Office will make its recommendations, if need be, and forward the president/executive team to consider for the agenda.
- Members are invited to tour the Advancement Office beginning at 5:30 pm on October 4, 2006.
- President Abdur-Raheem will email board members a list of the GPC Alumni current benefits and suggestions for new and or upgraded benefits prior to the next meeting. Board members are asked to edit, make additions and return immediately.
• Mark Fitten, will submit an article for each issue of “The Collegian” to increase the awareness of the Alumni Association at GPC. The article will include information about the Alumni Scholarship and possibly the online application. He will serve as the liaison as well.

• Melinda Mock and President Abdur-Raheem submit the entire draft of the strategic plan to Board members for review prior to the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted by M. Charlie Smith