Georgia Perimeter College Alumni Association Board Meeting  
Dunwoody Campus, Room NA-2150  
January 28, 2009, 6:00 p.m.  
Minutes

Chair, Melinda Mock Presiding

Present: D. Wayne Adams, Isaac Boring, and Dr. Garry McGiboney

Absent: Brenda Jackson, Derrick Shelton, Stella Xu

Guests: Collins Foster, GPC Director of Alumni Relations; Gay Stahr, GPC Vice President’s Secretary; and Jeff Tarnowski, Vice President for Institutional Advancement.

I. Welcome and Introductions
   Melinda Mock opened the meeting at 6:15 p.m. by welcoming everyone. Board members and Georgia Perimeter College staff introduced themselves.

II. Why are we all here?
   Melinda Mock communicated with members that she is energized about this year and the direction the Alumni Association is heading. The Alumni Association is going in a new direction from the past and beginning with a new start. There have been lessons learned from the Association’s history and this year’s Board will be moving forward with great anticipation. Ms. Mock expressed how pleased and how much she is looking forward to working with Collins Foster, the new Director of Alumni Relations for Georgia Perimeter College, and moving the Association on to new and exciting things.

Wayne Adams’ intention for participation on the Alumni Association Board is his desire to give back to the school what it has given to him. He intends to be available to the college and will be timely to respond to the college’s needs and requests.

Isaac Boring expressed his evaluation of a need for a strong Alumni Association and that he feels students will want to give back and continue a relationship with the college after graduation in some capacity. Mr. Boring is pleased about the new ideas and direction for the Association. He is pleased to be working with Ms. Foster and feels this is a major way for him to give back to the institution.

Dr. McGiboney reiterated Mr. Borings sentiments and extends his comments to include that the Alumni Association Board can also serve to protect and preserve the institution. Dr. McGiboney states that Georgia Perimeter College is a powerful influence in the community and one way to protect the institution is to build its presence, to establish a tradition and legacy that is Georgia Perimeter College. He conveyed that the Alumni Association Board needs to be an advocate of GPC, to speak up on behalf of the college whether to GPC administration, the community, its legislators, etcetera; that GPC must have a voice. GPC has had an influence as strong as UGA, GT and other institutions but the tradition is not as strong or visual as others and needs to be.

Members discussed some issues about how to build GPC’s tradition. Mr. Adams felt that the college lost some of its impetus when the name changed from DeKalb College to Georgia Perimeter College. Mr. Boring felt that GPC has a strong reputation not only in GA but in other states because of its strong students. Dr. McGiboney believes that the public is not aware and that is how to build
tradition. Ms. Foster expressed that the college must find a way to merge the DeKalb College tradition with the GPC tradition.

III. College and Advancement Update

   a. Tough Choices or Tough Times Task Force recommendations

   Mr. Tarnowski began by acknowledging Dr. McGiboney’s state-wide Outstanding Alumnus award which was given to him by the USG. Mr. Tarnowski also noted the Outstanding Student award was given to a GPC student as well.

   Mr. Tarnowski recognized the Alumni Association members here tonight as the core and the future of the Association. He went on to inform members of two public documents that could have an impact on the future of two-year colleges in Georgia. This document from Georgia’s Tough Choices or Tough Times Working Group that was appointed by Governor Sonny Perdue in the Summer of 2008 to look at education in Georgia. The first draft was published September 18, 2008 and the second draft was dated December 15, 2008.

   The working group’s recommendations in September include two suggestions: one, in an effort to make seamless the transition for students from high school to college, combine two-year colleges and technical colleges; or two, keep them the same but change the curriculum for seamless student transition into and between the two systems.

   In the December 15th recommendation it advocates the following action: “Clarify the missions of Georgia’s post-secondary institutions by (a) charging the current Technical College System to administer all technical and 2-year academic programs offered in Georgia; thus building a Technical and Academic College System of Georgia (TACSG); (b) charging the University System of Georgia to focus exclusively on research, 4-year degree programs, and graduate degree programs; and (c) creating and enforcing comprehensive articulation agreements that clearly establish procedures governing the transfer of credit from one institution or system to another.”

   Members posed questions to Mr. Tarnowski on the subject however Mr. Tarnowski stated that the college does not have any recommendations except for people to be informed and if they have questions, to raise them.

   Dr. McGiboney mentioned that he has already spoken with his local representatives and they have been redirecting him to the Governor’s Office. He has been told that the Governor needs to hear from the public.

   Mr. Boring asked if anyone knew why the task force was formed. Mr. Adams responded that when a student graduates from a technical school they cannot transfer to an upper level institution. Mr. Tarnowski responded that the Tough Choices is a national study.

   Mr. Boring asked how and or what is the best way to provide accurate information out to the students and the public. Dr. McGiboney suggested word-of-mouth.
Mr. Boring asked Mr. Tarnowski if he knew what the other two-year institutions’ reactions were to the recommendations. Mr. Tarnowski has heard that the other two-year institutions are not in favor of this merger.

Mr. Adams asked Mr. Tarnowski what would happen to the Transfer Admission Guarantees (TAGs). Mr. Tarnowski stated that they would probably not continue.

Dr. McGiboney articulated his concern that this merger would create a vacuum of young adult students that will not have anywhere to go.

b. 2009 Advancement update

Mr. Tarnowski discussed the issue of economy and the strategy of Advancement to continue to increase the level of major gifts to GPC. The institution has taken a look at the strategic priorities and emphasizing the scholarship piece.

IV. Future of the Office of Alumni Relations
Ms. Foster first thanked members for their warm welcome since she joined GPC in December. She reiterated to the Board that she is hitting the ground running with the intention of building on the momentum and enthusiasm of the Board members and intends to make as much progress as she can before she takes maternity leave beginning in April. She assured the Board that between her and Mr. Tarnowski they would make sure the momentum carried on throughout her leave.

Ms. Foster began by meeting with individuals to find out their expectations and to convey her own expectations of the Board. Ms. Foster expects the Board to continue with their commitment and excitement. She envisions in a few months that the Board will begin to grow and also expects patience as the Office of Alumni Relations and the Board itself gets a few operational items in order so that when they do begin attracting new Board and alumni the proper infrastructure is in place.

Areas of focus:

a. Role of Alumni Relations vs. Institutional Advancement

Ms. Foster has been working with Vicki and the IA team to define and distinguish the role of Alumni Relations vs. Institutional Advancement but also reinforced the idea that the two departments will always work very closely together.

b. Defining what Alumni Relations means at GPC

Ms. Foster has been speaking to students, faculty, administrators, and Alumni to get input re: what the collective GPC community wants its Alumni Association to be. Through these meetings Ms. Foster is not only building internal relationships with college departments, she is also gaining buy-in for the OAR and establishing a sense of ownership in the AA with other departments.
c. Office of Alumni Relations staffing plan

Ms. Foster articulated to the Board that she is fortunate to have the Vice President and the President supporting her and the OAR; they understand the value of having connected Alumni. Ms. Foster intends to finalize the two Assistant Director positions before her maternity leave so they can be posted and applications collected while she is on leave. She intends to fill those positions immediately upon her return in mid-July.

d. Board development

Ms. Foster will focus on building the Board and emphasized a recommendation made by Mr. Boring in their one-on-one meeting re: the importance of developing a Board that is as diverse as the GPC student/alumni population. She expressed the need for each campus and program to have representation on the Board.

e. Alumni identification and segmentation

Ms. Foster informed members that there are approximately 500,000 Alumni that have attending Georgia Perimeter College according to the current definition of a GPC “alumni.” She believes that segmenting the group via a ranking system will make the Association’s outreach efforts much more manageable. A list of all former students is expected to be received soon from the Office of Institutional Research; however, that information will be the address/contact information at the time the students applied to GPC so much of the data will be obsolete. However, the OAR can work with a mailing house as well as other avenues to update information (i.e. an online contact info update form).

Dr. McGiboney suggested that our current marketing materials be modified to include a request for alumni to identify themselves via the website or contacting the OAR. Ms. Foster will be meeting with the department of Marking and Public Relations January 29, 2009 to discuss strategies to connect with those former students.

Ms. Foster stated that the Board needs to clarify the definition alum. Dr. McGiboney suggested that the responses from surveys and membership drives will define the term.

f. Membership

Ms. Foster conveyed to the Board that the current alumni records in Raisers Edge need to be assessed and cleaned up as a starting point to maintaining usable data on alumni. The challenge is that there have been several “hands” involved in the maintenance of the database and a thorough review of information is required. She explained to the Board that some alumni who are shown to have paid dues at some point are not properly coded in RE and that no attempt to collect annual dues has been made since 2009 (except for the nursing alumni).

g. Communications
Ms. Foster told the Board the OAR and the Board need to review what information is currently being communicated, the formats used for communication and the timing. She informed the Board she will be attending a webinar on February 4, 2009 titled, “How to engage alumni through Facebook and LinkedIn” and reiterated how important it is to proceed with social networking sites and the sensitivity to managing the content that can be association with the GPC brand.

V. Alumni Surveying
   a. GPC groups to be surveyed

Ms. Foster informed members that the Office Institutional Research already conducts several surveys which can be modified to include questions re: alumni relations.

b. What do we want to know from respondents?

Mr. Tarnowski suggested that Ms. Foster bring the current Institutional Research survey to the February meeting for discussion. Ms. Collins stated she has a copy of last year’s survey and she will get it out to the Board.

Ms. Foster suggested other things that can be done outside of the Institutional Research survey such as the Alumni website where alumni can participate in a survey or provide feedback and ideas on how to improve the Alumni Association.

Dr. McGiboney inquired if the Alumni Association link or an awareness piece can be added onto the TAG website as well as other places on the GPC web? Mr. Tarnowski made note of the suggestion and will look into it.

Ms. Foster expressed to members the importance of having a menu of options for alumni to choose from when they are asked to join the Association and get involved. Ms. Foster has been reaching out to current students and faculty to get feedback on how the Alumni Association can specifically benefit their classrooms. Ms. Foster feels that faculty involvement is imperative to the success of the Association.

Mr. Boring relayed well the Student Success seminar series was received by students and how many alumni have come back to attend and/or speak at the series.

Dr. McGiboney suggested that most people seek “social capital” in many instances and not “benefits” that the college may offer in response for being involved. He proposed that the Association base its infrastructure on what the feedback is from those former students Ms. Foster talks to….“They will come to build it”. He indicated that the webpage is very important.

VI. Action Items
   a. Review of Alumni Association fund balance

Ms. Foster shared with members the current Financial Report and stated that as the membership grows, the report can be as detailed as the Board needs it.
b. **Meeting schedule for 2009**

Ms. Foster explained to members that the meetings will be rotated to be held on the various campuses of the college during the year.

Dr. McGiboney recommended that a sign be displayed on site when the Alumni Association Board meets to provide awareness and presence.

c. **Alumni Board member roster**

Ms. Foster will update the roster and distribute to the Board members when the minutes go out.

d. **Additional survey questions back to Collins by 2/4/09**

e. **Charter Associations**

Ms. Mock asked members to consider an item not on the agenda. Ms. Mock asked the Board to consider the formation of a new tradition for the Alumni Association of presenting a gavel to any newly formed affinity groups. It was motioned, seconded and unanimously approved to accept the proposal without any further discussion.

Ms. Foster will purchase the gavel for the Nursing Alumni Association president who will be taking office at the February 26, 2009 annual dinner.

VII. **Next Meeting**

a. **Wednesday, February 25, 2009 @ 6:00 p.m.**

Ms. Mock shared with members that the Board will meet again on Wednesday, February 25, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. The location and agenda will be provided to members prior to the date.

Ms. Mock thanked members for their attendance and adjourned the meeting at 8:23 p.m.