

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Alumni Association
Board of Directors Meeting
April 28, 2012
Schmeekle Reserve Conference Room

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Patrick Braatz, David Bruha, Jean Ann Day, Thomas Girolamo, Peter Graening, Jon Greendeer, Melissa Hardin, Thomas Klismith, Jeffrey Kurowski, David Marie, Patricia Noel, Raymond Oswald, Mary Wescott, Steven Zywicki

CONFERENCE CALL PARTICIPANTS: Jamie Beckland, Lee Hecimovich, Joanne Loeffler, Tamara Moore, Patricia Weiland, Grant Winslow

63% participation

STAFF: Laura Gehrman Rottier, Terri Taylor, Dana Mallett, Mary Vils

GUESTS (in order of appearance): Chancellor Bernie Patterson; Interim Vice Chancellor for University Advancement Kathy Buenger; University Relations and Communications Executive Director Kate Worster; Student Government Association President Ryan Rutledge; Student Alumni Association President Caitlin Lindsay

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (Oswald)

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. Minutes from the October 7, 2011, Alumni Board of Directors meeting were approved as published (Zywicki, Graening). President Ray Oswald announced the retirement of three board members: Jeff Buhandt, Kevin Parham and Laurice Biemeret-Freeman. He thanked them for the service they have donated to the Alumni Association over the years. Oswald also introduced the board's newest member, Jeff Kurowski.

UWSP STRATEGIC INITIATIVES UPDATE (Patterson and Buenger)

Patterson spoke about the progress that has been made since the "New Frontiers" initiative was formulated last fall. After gathering input campus wide and community wide, "A Partnership for Thriving Communities" initiative is being developed that will encompass the additional input gathered from five more listening sessions. The first two meetings, held this past spring, were with UWSP's educational partners (regional two-year universities and technical colleges) and with leading health care providers in the region. The third meeting gathered ideas from regional elected officials and economic development executives. The next session, to be held in May, will focus on the major CEOs and community leaders in Central Wisconsin. The last session will be held at Treehaven in Tomahawk and will focus on the needs of the far northern portion of the state. The ultimate goal of all these gatherings is to reposition UWSP so that it is more relevant to community problems and more responsive to community and regional needs.

The four components of the Thriving Communities initiative are:

- Create flourishing local cultural centers with world-class opportunities in the arts and humanities
- Nurture the well-being of our citizens through first-rate professional programs in health care and wellness
- Support businesses in the rapidly changing global economy
- Foster the stewardship of our natural resources, securing their efficient use and lasting value to the region

Patterson noted that currently only 17% of UWSP's total budget comes from the state of Wisconsin; however, it controls 100% of the budget. He believes that this is not sustainable for the future.

The Chancellor mentioned that UWSP, going forward, plans to be more thoughtful about its business model. Toward this end an outside company has been hired to help the university find efficiencies campus wide.

Internally UWSP is developing new revenue streams, and externally it is working with the community in helping to bring more jobs to Central Wisconsin. Currently, there are two initiatives that are already operating and have been very successful in developing private/public partnerships: WIST (Wisconsin Institute for Sustainable Technology) and the Northern Aquaculture Demonstration Facilities (NADF) on the shores of Lake Superior.

UWSP will be providing greater assistance to its faculty—in their research and in their labs—to take what faculty members are producing and applying it within the marketplace. This transfer of technology from the lab to the marketplace is epitomized by the work of Mike Zach, a UWSP professor who is working in nanotechnology. He and his lab are “growing” wires so small that a million wrapped together would produce a cable that is as small as a strand of spider’s web.

Patterson believes that UWSP can develop pre-professional programs (medicine, dentistry, veterinarian, physical therapy, for example) to be among the best in the country. A key to doing this is helping students succeed in every way possible—working with their home communities to get under-represented students into, and through, UWSP. Patterson asked board members to think about ways to help make this happen, what their ideas are, and what stumbling blocks and opportunities may exist. UWSP has acquired the services of NorthStar Economics, Inc. to develop economic impact studies, as well as the consulting services of Joan North, who is the retired dean of the CNR, to develop a blueprint for the Partnership for Thriving Communities initiative.

Vice Chancellor for University Advancement, Kathy Buenger, further emphasized the importance of helping graduates find jobs. UWSP is positioned to excel in the healthcare industry because of the new science building in the works, its strong partnerships with other higher education partners in the region, and its partnerships with local healthcare providers (Ministry, Aspirus, and Marshfield hospitals/clinics). For example, a new dental school is being considered in Marshfield and a new osteopathic medical school may be developed in Wausau. UWSP can collaborate with these ventures.

Central Wisconsin is currently competing with the Green Bay and the Fox Valley areas as a location for a new Medical College of Wisconsin.

Jean Ann Day emphasized the importance of developing a partnership with Native American communities, in central and northern Wisconsin, to pull in students for this initiative. This is especially important with the scaling back of the Upward Bound Program at UWSP.

Jamie Beckland stressed the importance of UWSP keeping on top of fast-developing new technologies, so that both faculty and their students are able to meet the needs of employers.

Patterson thanked board members for their current and future input, as well as all the work they do to promote UWSP.

Buenger handed out a summary report called “The Operative Word in 2012 is *Push*,” that highlights what the Foundation has been working on during the past six months. Areas highlighted included their leadership in the “Healthy Communities” initiative, increased efforts in diversifying the channels of annual giving with online tools, visits with alumni and friends, VIP events, and an expansion of Founders Day on July 21 featuring a suite of newly created philanthropy awards that will be given during a semi-formal banquet.

UWSP COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE (Worster)

Kate introduced herself as the new Executive Director of the University Relations and Communications Department. She played a 45 second video commercial developed for use during the TimberSports event at Treehaven this past spring. The commercial tells a video story about students’ experiences at the university without using words, just pictures.

For the first time ever this May, UWSP’s commencement will be live streamed on the internet so that distant family and friends can watch. The student stories featured on the university’s website are also being updated by URC. Additionally, Worster is in the process of developing the different stories, to tell to the different audiences and stakeholders, needed for a successful Partnership for Thriving Communities initiative.

Steve Zywicki asked if there will be any more hard copy *Pointer Alumnus* newspapers. Ray Oswald noted that the Communications Committee had a lively discussion about this very topic. The committee felt that the publication is a critical communication piece, not only for the Alumni Affairs office but for the entire university. He also noted that the *Pointer Alumnus* requires a lot of time, money and manpower to create. The committee discussed the possibility of the publication evolving into a university wide magazine in which parents, faculty/staff, students, etc. had input, in addition to UWSP alumni. The committee considered the possibility of including the magazine with a targeted gift level to UWSP to help pay for it. Changing the name from the *Pointer Alumnus* to something broader was suggested.

Tom Girolamo pointed out that older alumni are generally not as tech-savvy as recent graduates and may not be happy with a digital-only version of the newspaper. He suggested that digital versions be as easy to print out as possible. Girolamo noted that communication pieces targeted only to alumni do have value, whether they come from the Alumni Association or from the individual colleges.

Oswald responded that perhaps the recipients of the publication should be the ones who decide the form in which they receive it. The cost of the newspaper could be based on this with the emailed version being free.

Zywicki pointed out that other four-year universities in Wisconsin publish a printed newspaper/magazine and felt that UWSP should do so also. Emailed newspapers are easier to overlook he noted. Worster agreed, and added that the goal with any publication is to reach the majority of its audience; the *Pointer Alumnus* as a digital-only publication does not currently do this as we only have emails for 31% of our database.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (Rutledge)

Rutledge reported that the group gave away over \$60,000 in scholarships to incoming and current students. SGA secured funding for a newspaper readership program that provided free national newspapers to students. It also more than tripled the budget of the undergraduate research fund to help improve both the quantity and quality of research done at UWSP. Currently, SGA has a partnership with the Community Greenhouse downtown and so far has given it approximately \$35,000 dollars for student interns. Lastly, SGA worked with the Alumni Affairs office and the Foundation to create the first ever UWSP class gift for 2012. As of the date of the board meeting, over \$5000 has been raised and will be directed to freshman scholarships.

STUDENT ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (Lindsay)

The group is focusing on its mentoring program called AMP (Alumni Mentoring Program) that matches students who wish to be mentored with alumni who work in an occupation/ field of interest to that student. This coming fall, close to Homecoming, the next session of this program will have students personally meet the alumni who are mentoring them (and will hopefully be in Stevens Point for Homecoming). The SAA is continuing the pen pal program started last year. Some of the group's members traveled down to Menomonee Falls to meet the 4th graders who they have been corresponding with over the past several months. The purpose of the pen pal program is to encourage the grade school children to consider college as a future option, particularly UWSP.

NEW BUSINESS—OPEN DISCUSSION

Melissa Hardin mentioned that she appreciates the fact that board members' opinions are being sought in regard to the Thriving Communities initiative. By providing direct feedback and input, she feels that she is personally providing something substantive during the board meetings.

Jean Ann Day spoke to a member of the Old Main Neighborhood Association and learned that the group would like better communication with the university, especially in regard to noise and traffic issues in the neighborhoods close to campus. Dave Marie suggested that members from different student organizations be invited to future board meetings to speak about their organization. These students would also learn about what the board is and does, as someday they will become alumni and future board members.

Steve Zywicki would like more person-to-person dialog with university line officers during board meetings, rather than have someone give a presentation and then leave the meeting. He would like the board to play more of an advisory role in the steering and shaping of UWSP. Zywicki wanted a future discussion with key decision makers about the budget for the Alumni Affairs office. He noted that the office funding has been cut, but there is desire for more outreach to alumni from the office and from board members. He noted the recent loss of alumni printed publications, chapter support from the office, staff travel to events, and the assistant director position being reduced from full time to part time as examples.

Gehrman Rottier reassured the group that the Alumni Affairs office is not being targeted for cuts and that every department on campus is facing funding reductions. The office is working on more focused programming efforts and is also working to utilize its corps of volunteers in more creative ways to increase engagement, while at the same time assisting with diminishing human resources.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Executive Committee (Oswald)

Discussion was held about the Alumni Association's outward communication efforts and how these efforts can be improved. The all-campus picnic during Homecoming will be moved from the front lawn of Old Main to the student recreation fields to enable a larger and more diverse event. The committee reviewed the talking points note card

created Gehrman Rottier for board members to distribute to the general public. The card highlights key facts about UWSP to help create awareness about, and to promote, the university. Lastly, the committee will be reviewing the Board of Directors constitution and looking at committee structure over the summer.

Communications Committee (Oswald for Beckland)

Committee members met with Kate Worster and had a lengthy and lively conversation about social media and how UWSP can tap into it. Oswald commended Pat Weiland who is organizing and running an alumni chapter event in Los Angeles in June. This event is focused on networking among alumni in California.

Program Support Committee (Graening for Priddy)

- Travel program (GoNext)—This year's trip is to Ireland in September. Next year's trip will be a steamboat tour up the Mississippi River, beginning in New Orleans and ending in Memphis. The committee felt that a non-international trip in 2013 may attract more participants.
- US Bank credit card—The Alumni Association is still paying off the advancement and will break even in 2017, after which the cards should generate about \$11,000 a year in revenue.
- Sentry insurance—Sentry has given the Alumni Association \$10,500 to promote the company among alumni.
- GradMed insurance—So far there has been a lower contribution than in the past. Laura will be looking into this. UPDDATE: Due to the new insurance laws and longer coverage for children, there is less of a need for this insurance among recent graduates. There has been a decline overall for GradMed in this area.
- Office Depot—The association received its first check from this affinity group. Buyers receive a discount, and the association gets a royalty, if products are purchased through the Office Depot portal on the Alumni Affairs website. Committee members felt that this benefit should be publicized more widely.
- Long-term care—A mailing was sent out recently to alumni. Still waiting to measure the response.
- Diploma frames—After a long period of no activity ... a frame was sold online last week! The association will have a table at commencement in May to sell diploma frames, as the profit is quite large on these items (35%).
- Amazon.com and CafePress affiliate programs—The committee is considering these as revenue generating opportunities for the future.

Nominating Committee (Braatz for Winslow)

There are four seats open on the board. The committee is recommending the following individuals: Jessica Lahner, class of 1998 from Burlington, WI; Michelle Fitch, class of 2003 from Superior, WI; Sam Dinga, class of 2004 from Stevens Point, WI; and Brian Valleskey, class of 1997 from Island Lake, IL. This group was approved by the board (Girolamo, Marie) and will be invited to attend the next meeting in October.

The committee recommended that all the board members whose terms expire in 2013 be invited to serve another three year term. Gehrman Rottier will send invitation letters to these individuals. Winslow has agreed to be the mentor for Jeff Kurowski who is the board's newest member. Braatz reminded members to fill out and return their skills survey if they have not already done so.

First Nighters (Bruha for Nigbor)

This is the 39th season for the theatrical performance productions. The Alumni Affairs office, along with First Nighters committee members, have been talking with the College of Fine Arts and Communication about the college taking greater control over the program, with Alumni Affairs personnel assisting rather than driving it. There are several reasons for these discussions:

- First Nighters is more community focused than alumni focused in its concept and design.
- At present, the Alumni Affairs office does not drive an alumni event series like this for the other three colleges, but rather assists with events and event series by the colleges.
- If COFAC does take the reins for First Nighters it will allow for more direct involvement of students in planning, setting up, and running of the opening nights.

Patty Noel felt that COFAC assuming control over the program is a natural transition and that the college is more than capable of taking the reins. Tom Girolamo suggested that Mary Ann Nigbor be recognized for her 40 years of service to the First Nighters program, perhaps during its 40 year anniversary next season.

Events Committee (Hardin)

Committee members felt that it would be best to dissolve this committee so that members' talents could be better utilized on other committees. Hardin suggested that future board meetings include an agenda item for representatives from different alumni chapters to talk about what is going on within their chapters. Hardin felt that discussions about what works and does not work within chapters would be very beneficial to chapter leaders. A motion was made and passed that Events Committee members disperse into other committees (Hardin, Oswald). Tamara Moore suggested that thank you notes, that are signed and sent from the entire board, are very important because there are many volunteers working very hard for the Alumni Association. Having members of the board recognize volunteers for their efforts sends a strong message that we appreciate what they do, both for the office and for the association.

Alumni Association Update (Gehrman Rottier)

Gehrman Rottier handed out several pages showing what the association has been doing since the last board meeting. (See attached.)

The board also recognized and thanked Dana Mallett for her four years of service to the Alumni Affairs office as its assistant director. Dana and her family are moving to Illinois for new career opportunities.

Motion made to adjourn the meeting (Oswald, Bruha). Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary C. Vils
June 1, 2012

Be sure to mark Friday, October 19, 2012, on your calendars for our next Alumni Board meeting.