

MINUTES
CLAHS Alumni Organization Advisory Board
September 24, 2004

Present: Martha Cobble, Paul Dettmann, Jean Elliott, LuAnn Gaskill, Robert Hayes, Larry Hinker, Christina Jenkins, Nancy Moga, Nancy Munnikhuysen, Jerry Niles, Jacqueline Nottingham, Rhonda Owen, Beth Schroder, Mike Schroder, Kellie Trail

I. Call to Order and Introductions

President Beth Schroder called the September 24, 2004, meeting to order at 1:15 p.m. in Squires Student Center. Introductions followed.

II. State of the College

Dean Jerry Niles discussed the accomplishments and potential of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences (CLAHS). The necessary administrative systems are now in place, a major achievement. Dr. Mary Ann Lewis is ensuring a strong commitment to undergraduate services, including special support for entering freshmen. The best news is the availability of funds to fill 24 faculty vacancies and seven new positions. Also, two new departments have been added: Interdisciplinary Studies and Society and Technology Studies, a graduate program.

CLAHS is one of the largest colleges in the university, with 400-plus faculty and 16 departments. The college has received \$7.5 million for research. Last year's publications included 39 books and 322 journal articles. The quality of instruction is also excellent as evidenced by the large number of teaching awards present last year to CLAHS faculty.

In response to questions from the board, Dean Niles said that recent funding shortfalls have placed the college at a disadvantage in attracting and retaining faculty. Virginia Tech's salaries do not compare favorably with those offered by peer institutions.

The alumni giving profile remains similar to that recorded before the merger. Another advisory group will be assisting with the development program.

III. Alumni Relations

Kellie Trail, who became coordinator of alumni relations for the college August 10, discussed upcoming activities. CLAHS now has 41,199 alumni. A large crowd is expected at the college's homecoming event tomorrow. Mike Schroder asked how alumni of departments transferred to other colleges could maintain their links to CLAHS. Dr. Niles said this is an issue each individual must resolve. It is most important that graduates maintain their affiliation with Virginia Tech, and the Alumni Association can help with this. Beth Schroder praised Dr. Niles for his efforts to communicate with alumni regarding the restructuring. It was suggested that the college establish an alumni Web page.

IV. Identity of the College

Jean Elliott distributed the college's new promotional piece designed by Department of Communication students. The theme is "Putting together the pieces of the human experience." There are many interesting initiatives to promote, including the enhanced study abroad program. Computer science and communication students are producing a 12-minute video to capture the college's identity. Filming will occur during the college homecoming event tomorrow. The video will be available on the college Web site.

V. Chartered Universities Initiative

Larry Hinker presented an overview of the Chartered Universities Initiative, which will be considered during the 2005 General Assembly session. Virginia Tech, the University of Virginia, and the College of William and Mary developed the initiative to preserve and improve the Commonwealth's higher education system.

The benefits would include stable funding and new financial resources needed to address non-competitive salaries and insufficient student aid. The institutions also would acquire the ability to manage and finance enrollment growth.

Chartered universities would remain public universities and would be subject to accountability measures. They would have the flexibility to operate more efficiently, enhance quality, and ensure affordability. Unpredictable tuition levels would be eliminated.

This is likely to be the most important educational initiative to be considered in modern times. While it has garnered some legislative support, opposition is expected from those reluctant to relinquish budgetary control. Some legislators also fear creation of a two-tiered system. Larry urged board members to convey their support for the initiative to their delegates and senators.

VI. Nominations for Alumni Awards

Kellie Trail announced that Andrew Rotherham, who holds history and political science degrees from Virginia Tech, was selected for the Alumni Association's CLAHS outstanding young alumni award this year. He works in education and has served as an advisor to President Clinton.

It was agreed that the presentation of the college's outstanding alumni and outstanding young alumni awards would take place during the annual student awards ceremony held each spring. A subcommittee will screen the nominations.

VII. Election of New Board Members and Officers

The board elected the following individuals to terms expiring in 2007: Mark Singer (HRIM), DeAnna Perez (Sociology), Paul Dettmann and Wayne Tripp (EDAD). Gerald Carter was elected to the term expiring in 2005. Elizabeth Edgar will be the new undergraduate representative. Peggy Berger and Katie Young will be asked to continue in their committee posts.

Because there is no president-elect, and to facilitate the transition following the merger, Beth Schroder agreed to serve a second term as president. She was elected by acclamation along with Nancy Munnikhuysen, who will continue as secretary. Robert Hayes remains immediate past president.

VIII. ACC Challenge

Jacqueline Nottingham of the Office of Annual Giving presented an overview of the ACC Challenge, a competition to encourage young alumni of ACC schools to begin (or continue) giving to their alma maters. Discounting gifts to athletics, the 40,000 individuals who have graduated from Virginia Tech in the last 10 years presently give at a rate of 5.56 percent, a figure near the bottom of all ACC schools. It is hoped that this competition will encourage the involvement of young alumni.

IX. Next Meeting Date

The 2005 spring board meeting will be held Friday, April 22, from noon until 4 p.m. It was suggested that a "hard-hat" tour of the new alumni center and conference facility follow the meeting.

X. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Nancy Munnikhuysen
Secretary