

Cornell Alumni Association Annual Meeting FY19

2019 Annual Meeting Minutes

The 2019 Annual Meeting of the Cornell Alumni Association took place via conference call on Wednesday, June 12 at 12:00 p.m. eastern time.

Attendees:

Jenny Barnett, Alicia Hughes '95, Betty Wong Ortiz '94, Rob Rosenberg '88, David Steward '79, Michelle Vaeth '98, Katlyn Wilcox

Call to Order – Betty Wong Ortiz

Quorum Present: Betty Wong Ortiz, Rob Rosenberg, and Michelle Vaeth. With that, Betty called the meeting to order at 12:02pm and reviewed the agenda.

Bylaw Changes Discussion – Jenny Barnett discussed the proposed bylaw changes that were discussed at past meetings that have not been finalized. The Cornell Alumni Association and the Cornell Alumni Magazine bylaws were not in line. This will allow for both sets of bylaws to reflect board turnover on the same schedule, with each board member serving a three-year term with the possibility of serving one additional term. The language around the number of members is also changed to be “up to” 12 members. By making these changes, the CAA and the CAM bylaws now match.

The motion to approve these changes were unanimously approved by the board.

Cornell Alumni Magazine (CAM) – Jenny Barnett

In the past few years, class dues and subscription numbers have been declining; subscriptions are down eight percent. We have had a number of new subscribers over the past year which will hopefully decrease the overall decline. The budget for FY20 is similar to that of FY19 with a net profit of \$50,000 for this year. It was a strong year in advertising by encouraging people to larger pages, the Chamber of Commerce is using the magazine as a platform as well as Inns of Aroura. Inns of Aroura is advertising a page an issue now. The advertising has been the most health in years. The staff have done a lot of outreach to increase these numbers.

Jenny shared a number of key findings from the 2018 CAM/Ezra survey regarding CAM's impact on readers. The magazine performed very strongly, and CAM clearly promotes engagement: it resonates strongly with readers, strengthens their connection to Cornell, and motivates them to take meaningful action.

Betty Wong Ortiz commented that these are great results, and David Steward suggested that Jenny share them with the CAM Committee. Rob Rosenberg asked if it was possible to bring this feedback on the magazine to the attention of the Trustees. Michelle suggested it could be added to the agenda of the Committee on Alumni Affairs when they meet in Ithaca in October. Jenny said that she had spoken to the Alumni Affairs Committee about CAM in 2015, shortly after she came on board as Editor & Publisher, and she would welcome the opportunity to give them an update on CAM and share the survey results with them.

Jenny included a staffing update which included Adele retiring as of 12/31/18 and is doing freelancing work for the magazine. They have hired a new office manager, Laura Britton.

Alumni Engagement Strategic Plan update – Michelle Vaeth

The final endorsed Alumni Engagement Strategic plan was shared with the board. Michelle thanked Rob Rosenberg, a member of the Cornell Alumni Advisory Board, for all of his dedication and hard work he put into the strategic plan over the last year. Over 1,000 alumni had direct input to the plan. Over the next few months the Alumni Affairs team will be focusing on plans to execute the work the strategic plan highlights. Michelle walked through the strategic plan with the board discussing the engagement imperatives, the areas of focus, the operational imperatives, and the outcomes that will measure success. There was a large focus with alumni on the lifelong journey and meeting them where they are no matter what stage of life they are in. This includes geographically as

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well. Career support was highlighted by alumni as a crucial aspect in connecting with the university. Alumni would love to turn to Cornell when at they are at a pivot moment in their career to provide alumni career support including their volunteer career. The plan was endorsed two weeks ago by the Board of Trustees and with commencement and reunion now complete, the staff are pivoting to develop executional plans and defining the priorities for the year ahead.

Update on Overall Alumni Engagement – Michelle Vaeth

A goal was set at 91,000 alumni to engage in the life of the university—attending an event, making a gift, voting, becoming a member of their class, or receiving a magazine or digital/online opportunity. Currently with two weeks of counting yet to go, we are at approximately 76,000 unique engagements; it's about where we were last year at this time. The needle moved a bit on volunteer donors, it's approximately a two percent increase from last year. Michelle discussed a number of events that have taken place over the last year including Homecoming, TCAM, the faculty speaker program, CALC, many regional events, CEN, APLC, the inaugural First Generation Summit, Reunion, and many more. At CALC the strategic plan was open to all alumni for discussion and input. There was a lot of feedback received and changes made because of which. CEN featured 15 Cornellians who made the Forbes 30 under 30 virtually which sparked a few in person events in New York City, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco. The Cornell Alumni Magazine featured the 50th anniversary of Willard Straight Hall; which more events highlighting the anniversary over Homecoming 2019.

Adjourned at 1:03 p.m.