

Meeting Minutes

Friday, October 9, 2020

Foundation Board

Present: President Richard Lapidus, Jay Bry, Alberto Cardelle, Cindy Carroll, Martin Connors, John Mahan, Karen Spinelli, James Walsh, Jeffrey Wolfman
Regrets: Anthony Mercadante, Nicholas DiNinno, Donald Irving
Also Present: Jasmine Yang

Welcome and Opening Remarks

The meeting was called to order at 8:03 a.m. by President Richard Lapidus, who welcomed the board and reviewed the agenda.

Approval of Minutes from June 10, 2020

President Lapidus requested a motion to accept the minutes for the June 10, 2020 Foundation Board Meeting.

Upon a motion made by Martin Connors and seconded by John Mahan, the directors voted unanimously (8-0) to approve the June 10, 2020 Foundation Board Meeting Minutes. (Request FB-01-20201009)

President's Report

President Lapidus informed the board of the actions the university undertook in response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), then discussed the effects of the pandemic on campus. Following a set of prescribed rules and regulations, the campus opened at various levels of repopulation. To date, approximately 20% of the university's population has returned to campus, while the remainder is still telecommuting. The residence halls are at 60% occupancy by design with testing and tracing protocols in place. Mara residences have been designated as quarantine spaces. The university has conducted approximately 3,500 tests on students, faculty, and staff (based on voluntary or randomly selected participation) with zero positives, thus far. The university has, however, been notified by local public health facilities of 6-7 positive cases and those individuals are in quarantine.

For the fall opening, the university established different modalities for student learning from 100% remote to hybrid, offering only on-campus courses for programs with special requirements, for example, Nursing, which requires the simulation lab. Enrollment has continued to decline with a loss of 300 students due to demographic changes, the decreasing fertility rate, and the pandemic. In response, the university has adjusted its goals and reevaluated its financial management. Budgets were changed, as well as, the overall composition of employees. With fewer students, fewer adjunct faculty were needed.

There is a general shift in composition of students considering college. Latin-X and African Americans now make up 29% of the student population. This demographic change was addressed in the university's strategic planning, which is reaching finalization. It was submitted to the Department of Higher Education and returned with constructive criticism. The focus of the strategic plan is on educational justice, inclusive excellence, impacts of racism, and misappropriated resources to certain diverse populations.

Development

Jeffrey Wolman's report highlighted the Alumni and Development office's achievements for the 2019-2020 fiscal year end. The Annual Fund gifts totaled \$180K, corporate gifts totaled \$1.9M, and grants, both federal and state, totaled \$2.9M. In addition, 8 new endowments were established and a Planned Giving program was launched. Since the launching, 8 individuals and their families have included the university in their wills. One couple has named the university as the sole beneficiary.

While the office did not host the Foundation's golf tournament, it did receive \$20K in donor gifts which have been redirected to support students and programs. Unfortunately, the pandemic and the growing of the alumni base had made participation a challenge. Alumni engagement decreased from 3.7% to 3.2%. Pre-COVID-19 events could not be repeated this year. Instead, virtual events like the Falcon Talks with Alumni were organized. Although successful, these events had not engaged as many alumni as the Alumni Association had hoped.

President Lapidus thanked Connors and the Newman Foundation for moving funds that allowed the Speaker Series to run. In this series, speakers would discuss systemic racism, social injustice, inequalities, and other topics of that nature. Wolfman continued with thanking Unutil for being the primary sponsor for senior capstone projects in Engineering. The grant operations at the university are being reorganized and focusing on corporate engagement.

Nominations for New Directors

Wolfman welcomed James Walsh, the new Alumni Association Board president, to the meeting. He followed by announcing that the former president, Nicholas Smith, would remain on the board as a new director. Additional directors would soon be joining the board, unfortunately, the pandemic makes it difficult to connect with these individuals. President Lapidus thanked the board for submitting a robust list of nominees.

Adjournment

With no further business, President Lapidus requested a motion to adjourn the October 9, 2020 Foundation Board Meeting.

Upon a motion made by Martin Connors and seconded by Cindy Carroll, the directors voted unanimously (8-0) to adjourn the October 9, 2020 Foundation Board Meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 a.m.