



## SAINT JOHN'S UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### National Alumni Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes • Saturday, June 27, 2014 • McKeown Center, SJU

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Upcoming Events

#### **SJU Football Friends & Alumni Golf Classic**

Friday, August 1, 2014 • Deer Run, Victoria, MN

[CLICK HERE](#) to register

#### **West Metro Student Send-Off**

Wednesday, August 6, 2014 • 5:30 - 7:00pm

Klingelhutz Pavillion at Lake Ann Park, Chanhassen, MN

[DETAILS HERE](#)

#### **Summer Campus Visit Day**

*All Alumni are invited to bring prospective students to campus for tours*

Friday, August 8, 2014

[CLICK FOR MORE INFORMATION & REGISTRATION](#)

#### **Move-In Day**

*Alumni are invited to help first-year students and their parents move into SJU!*

Thursday, August 21st, 2014 • 8:00 am - 1:00 pm @ SJU

[DETAILS & REGISTER HERE](#)

#### **Next Board Meeting**

Saturday, September 20th, 2014 • 8:15 am @ SJU

Johnnie Football vs. Concordia

### **Student Fund Goal Reached!**

Our Alumni Board reached our goal of 100% participation in Student Fund giving! All members pledged and contributed - reaching \$48,000.00 in contributions for the Board. Thank you!

### **Welcomes and Thank You's!**

We are happy to welcome all new Board members - including our President Elect, Jesse Stremcha '99. Thank you to all Board members who are rolling off for your efforts!

## **FULL MINUTES**

### **Welcome / Stewardship** - *Jim Platten '74*

THANK YOU to all for traveling to Saint John's for our meeting.

Many Board members arrived early to spend some time at the Saint John's Pottery with Richard Bresnahan and his team. Board President Jim Platten opened the Board Meeting proper by reiterating what Richard had mentioned, echoing thoughts in Benedict's Rule, about how it is vitally important for us all "to appreciate and to care lovingly for all of the goods of this place." Our work needs to be guided by this principal.

### **Introductions & Slate Activity** - *Jim Platten*

The June meeting has become the meeting of the "passing of the torch" where we welcome new Board members, recognize long-serving members for their service as they roll of or move into Ambassador roles, and formalize the transfer of power in the Office of the President (OOP).

#### ***WELCOME new members:***

Rick Speckmann '72  
Jim Bishop '79  
Tom Mahowald '86  
Michael McGreevey '87  
Chris Dardis '97  
Leif Johnson '02  
Josh Benson '06  
Pat Sinner '10 - Young Alum Community Co-Chair/VP

#### ***THANK YOU board members who are rolling off:***

Ryan Vandewiele '97  
George Maurer '88  
Jeff Starbird '75  
Josh Otto '01  
Dick Howard '72  
Aaron Smith '92

Additional thanks to Board members who remain on in Ambassador roles. (Ambassadors are Alumni in good standing that have either served as Board Members and completed their maximum number of years on the board(6) or Alumni interested in learning more about the board and wanting to serve in an ex-officio role for a year to determine/learn more about the opportunity to serve on the board.

## **Office of the President** - *Jim Platten*

Many thanks to Past President Josh Otto for his dedication on the Board - and to Jesse Stremcha for his willingness to step up into the President-Elect position. Josh was presented the traditional "red coat" as he stepped down from his Past President role.

### **Office of the President for 2014-2015:**

President: Eric Burggraff `96  
President-Elect: Jesse Stremcha `99  
Past President: Jim Platten `74

## **Kevin DeVaan Memorial Award** - *Jim Platten*

Jim Platten bestowed the [Kevin Devaan Memorial Award](#) upon Aaron Smith in recognition of his service on the Board which began in the summer of 2007. The Kevin DeVaan Award is presented annually to an Alumni Board volunteer whose effort and attitude inspire us all to do more for Saint John's - following the lead of our belovedly departed Kevin DeVaan `78. Last year's recipient was Dick Howard. The Kevin DeVaan Memorial is located in the Alumni Lounge in Sexton Commons.

## **Summer Class Reunion Discussion** - *Adam Herbst `99*

Director of Alumni Relations Adam Herbst provided a brief update on the status of the decision-making process for moving SJU Class Reunions to the summertime to coincide with CSB Class Reunions. The results from a recent alumni survey were very supportive toward the idea of increasing connectivity with CSB alumnae at reunion events.

While THE final decision hasn't been made officially, it is looking very likely that SJU Class Reunions will, indeed, begin to be held in June rather than at Homecoming - perhaps as soon as 2015. This move would allow more events and on-campus, family-friendly accommodations to be available for alumni - plus allow increased coordination with CSB alumnae events which already occur in June.

It is important to note that Homecoming in the Fall will continue to be a marquee event for the Alumni Board and all of Saint John's. It is expected that CSB involvement in Homecoming activities will significantly increase in this process.

Adam expects the University to make a formal announcement of the final decision later this summer.

## **Forward Ever Forward Campaign Update** - *Troy Fritz '88*

Troy Fritz, now Executive Director of Major Gifts, was welcomed back to Board activities and provided a brief update on progress on the Forward Ever Forward Capital Campaign for Saint John's. Things are going very well: we are at approx. \$120M in commitments with two years remaining in the campaign slated to end in 2016. Visible fruits of the campaign are well underway including the new baseball stadium (which may also be endowed with lights for night games and practices), tennis courts, and track improvements. Among the less visible, but no-less important work are improvements to the campus electrical corridor which are also underway.

## **Gay Alumni Club** - *Adam Herbst*

Adam Herbst presented a brief update on the formation of a Gay Alumni Club at Saint John's. While the idea can be somewhat controversial at a Catholic college, the creation of this group is about providing a means for more alumni of Saint John's to stay connected with the community. This is about dignity of ALL people, and not a gay rights advocacy group.

Board member George Maurer '88 (who was unable to be at the meeting due to his cross-country fund-raising bike trip) is helping the Institutional Advancement Office to establish this Club. Look for first events to take shape before the end of 2014.

## **Trustees Report** - *Tom Nicol '91*

Tom Nicol is our Alumni Board representative on the Saint John's Board of Trustees. CSB and SJU Trustees typically meet jointly four times each year. Tom sits on the Resource Development Committee and the Buildings & Grounds Committee and will continue to provide updates to the Alumni Board. In addition to regular business, of concern at recent Trustees meetings was the slightly lower enrollment numbers for the upcoming 2014-15 school year.

Following a trend across MIAC schools, at time of the last Trustees meeting, enrollment at SJU was 54 students short of their goal. Saint Ben's has exceeded their goal for the year.

## **Institutional Advancement Update**

Reorganization in SJU's Institutional Advancement Office has created new opportunities for the following staff members:

Michael Cummings is now Senior Development Officer  
Raj Chaphalkar is now Director of Annual Giving  
Ryan Minnehan is now Assistant Director of Annual Giving/Reunion Programs

## **Committee Reports**

Committees recapped their efforts for the year and provided updates on upcoming and ongoing initiatives and events.

## **Resource Development** - *Jesse Stremcha '99*

The Board gave a collective pat on the back to all as all committed pledges to the Student Fund were secured by time of our Board Meeting. Our goal was 100% participation. Our total dollars donated: \$48,000.00. THANK YOU to all for your dedication and financial support.

The Resource Development Committee was very active this year: leading reunion class committee and LYBUNT (last-year-but-unfortunately-not-this-year) initiatives; making thank-you emails and calls to 1st-time givers; and helping with the Give SJU Day - a HUGE success - generating \$114,000.00 (538 gifts) in one day. Great work gentlemen!

## **Bededictine Way Committee** - *Andrew Spaanem '06 & Dick Howard '72*

The Benedictine Way Committee continues to focus on service activities. There are regular opportunities for Board members to volunteer at Minneapolis' People Serving People and Saint Paul's Dorothy Day Center to assist those in need. The "Johnny Day of Service" (May 3rd) was a great inaugural event - organizing service efforts by Johnnies across the U.S. Look forward to even more momentum building for 2015.

The Benedictine Way Cohort Groups are regional groups that gather to discuss how the Rule of Benedict informs our lives. The committee looks forward to another cohort group starting up in Chicago.

The committee looks forward to assisting with events like the Fr. Don Talafous OSB event held this year at the Science Museum of MN. The goal is to continue to recognize luminaries in the Saint John's community and beyond whose efforts keep Benedictine ideas alive..

All are invited to contribute to the Benedictine Way Fund which helps to support Committee activities and events.

There are still just a few seats left for the 2015 Benedictine Heritage trip to Italy. Any interested alumni should [contact Dick Howard](#). See the itinerary [HERE](#).

## **Member Development Note**

All are encouraged to keep Board V.P.'s [Jeff Murphy '85](#) and [Todd Stoffel '90](#) in our thoughts as they are in transition in their careers. Both have great work experience in executive positions. If you have any leads or opportunity ideas for them, you are encouraged to reach out to them.

## **Alumni Connections** - *President Platten and Chris Duffy '04*

The SJU Standup was another great success - held this year April 15th at Mariucci Arena. 150+ alumni attended and raised \$2,500.00 for the J-Club. Venues being considered for the 2015 StandUp: Jax Cafe and the Saint Paul Saints new ballpark in Lowertown Saint Paul.

The Senior Banquet in May at SJU's Guild (Rat) Hall was the best-attended in memory. Great turn-out by both students and alumni. All Board members are encouraged to attend next (and every) year!

Incoming CSB/SJU Student Send-Offs are happening in July & August. Alumni are invited to attend send-offs in their area to welcome new students to the community. This is a great opportunity to spread the good vibes of the CSB/SJU alumnae/i spirit to incoming Johnnies and Bennies and their families.

The Alumni Connections Committee is looking for alumnae/i support to create an East Metro send-off event.

[Homecoming](#) approaches October 3 & 4th, 2014. Alumni Board members are active at Homecoming each year assisting with bestowing Alumni Achievement Awards, spreading hospitality across the Celebration on the Tundra, and attending the Homecoming Banquet on Friday night.

See the [Events Page at SJUalum.com](#) for a complete listing of upcoming events.

## **Alumni Recognition** - *Raj Chapulkhar and Jeff Starbird*

Raj and Jeff have been notifying all winners of the 2014 Alumni Achievement Awards. In the mix this year: a nuclear physicist, a radio host, a high school principal, an attorney, a doctor, an astronaut - and others! Awards will be bestowed at Homecoming - Alumni Board members will assist with award ceremonies.

REMINDER: The Walter Reger Award will be bestowed on two recipients this year:

- a) Canning Fok '74 - Canning has been informed, but cannot attend as he lives abroad.
- b) Jim Platten '74 - A big round of congratulations to Jim!!

As the alumni community continues to live long and prosper, the Committee is considering adding additional awards for alumni past 50 years from graduation. Look for news on this later.

## **Young Alumni Community** - *Ryan Minnehan`10 for Pat Sinner`10*

The Young Alumni Community is a joint venture with CSB alumnae to keep young alums connected. The venture has 5 CSB and 5 SJU leaders that organize service, social, development and outdoor/recreational events. Pat Sinner`10 will be the YAC Alumni Board representative for 2014-15. The next YAC event will bring 250 young alums to Target Field's Budweiser Deck on August 15th.

## **Student Preparation** - *Ted Kain`12 for Mike Koalska`90*

The Student Preparation Committee promotes, fosters and supports opportunities for networking current students with alumni.

The November 5, 2014 [Career Expo](#) is organized jointly with CSB alumnae. Alumnae/i can participate in career seminars to share work experience and guidance, the career fair to recruit current students for internships & employment, and the networking reception to give students a chance to talk one-on-one with alums and gain networking confidence. 160 alumnae/i participated in 2013. All are encouraged to participate again this year. Alex Kofoed`07 will help to organize from the SJU side.

In the Spring, the committee helps to organize the MN Private College Job & Internship Fair Reception at Securian in St. Paul. This event, held the night before the Job & Internship Fair, allows students another opportunity to practice their elevator pitch and network with alumnae/i. Alums are invited to attend the pre-reception networking & dinner.

The Take-a-Johnnie-to-Lunch Program continues to gain momentum. Committee members have been making regular visits to SJU to solicit Johnnies to sign up for the program. Board members are encouraged to reach out to faculty members in their majors to help facilitate connections.

The committee also continues to work on opportunities to develop international internship opportunities for students.

## **Student Recruitment** - *Brian Traxler`01*

Brian Traxler reported that enrollment for 2014 was at 444 at time of the meeting vs. goal of 475. This has been a challenging year for SJU enrollment - as it has at many other MIAC schools. Admissions is planning a special [Alumni Campus Visit Day](#) for Friday, August 8th - as an extra opportunity for alumni to bring potential students in for a visit. All are encouraged to continually be on-the-look for students in their neighborhoods who might be interested in visiting CSB/SJU

The Student Recruitment Committee aims to have 2-3 joint student recruitment meetings with their CSB counterparts each year.

**Our Next Board Meeting will be 8:15am Saturday, Sept. 20, 2014 @ SJU**

**Our Thursday, January 22, 2015 meeting at the St. Paul Pool & Yacht Club will be our first joint meeting with our CSB counterparts. Look forward to a meeting and then social following the meeting.**

### **Office of the President Report** - *Eric Burggraff '96*

Newly appointed President, Eric Burggraff, emphasized that in addition to all of the good that we do for SJU, being a member of this Alumni Board is an opportunity for open networking. We are all encouraged to “talk shop” as much as possible to continue to build strong relationships both within Board activities and beyond.

President Burggraff also reiterated a few key goals he thought would be important for us to capitalize on:

- Establishing another Benedictine Way Cohort Group in another city
- Establishing international internship opportunities
- Leveraging our reputation as a great network

The OOP will be working through the slate and committee assignments in coming days. If Board members have specific interest in a specific committee, they should be in touch.

Also, it was suggested that for an upcoming Board meeting we invite a faculty member to provide some insight into our conversation.

Thank you all for your attendance and participation at the meeting. And - thanks for all you do for SJU!