

THE COLLEGE OF  
**WOOSTER**

BLACK ALUMNI COUNCIL MEETING  
Saturday, March 3, 2007

Minutes

Attended:

Ashley Blackwell '09	Jilliene Johnson '08	Alicia Scarborough '05
JaQuan Bryant '08	Susan Lee '82	Clark Sheffield '07
Gabrielle Caldwell '04	Sandy Nichols '94	Jennifer Smith '83
James Cleamons '97	Solomon Oliver '69	Shawanda Thomas '99
Jade Davis '03	Sara Patton, Development	Will Torres '05
Derek Gueldenzoph, Admissions	Abdul Rashid '94	Reggie Williams '63
Stan Hales, president	Timeka Rashid '99	Jim Wilson '63, Chairman, Trustees

Attended via conference line:

Amma Addo '04	Tyrone Jones '88	Cassandra Williams
Cato Dzapasi '05	Donna Russell '96	Lawrence Willis '70
Anita Hutchins '76	Cheryl Thompson '86	
Jacob Johnson '01	James Weaver '94	

1. Welcome and introductions  
Meeting was called to order at 2:06 p.m.
2. Comments from President Hales  
President Hales spoke briefly, noting that his final year as president ends on June 30, 2007. This year, he has divided his time among regular business, farewell tours with alumni, parents and friends, and working on the transition to a new president. President Hales is also focused on the current Strategic Plan for the College, with one area focused on diversity. As a result, a Diversity Task Force was formed and a report generated. As a follow up, a Diversity Oversight Group has been formed to ensure that areas of diversity are kept in the forefront. A greater attention has been given to hiring under represented faculty. President Hales noted that a significant amount of time was dedicated by faculty, staff and students and he appreciates their efforts.
3. Brief discussion with members of the Board of Trustees, regarding the Black Alumni Council Mission  
A copy of the five points of purpose was distributed. These points are currently listed in the BAC by-laws.  
Abdul Rashid noted that the overall focus is to build a relationship with students, faculty, staff and alumni. Abdul believes the gap needs to be closed that has formed between the College and Black alumni. He noted that the BAC needs to focus on providing financial backing for Wooster, as well as volunteer support.  
Jennifer Smith asked the question "What would the Trustees like to see accomplished by the new officers of the BAC, when they take office in June?"  
Jim Wilson, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, responded that everyone shares the same goal to increase diversity at Wooster and that, as a result, Wooster will be an improved institution for everyone who attends. Jim also noted that he would like to see the BAC provide greater assistance with recruiting

efforts. There needs to be an individual approach to student recruitment and the BAC can provide the much needed resources for the Admissions Department.

Abdul Rashid said that the BAC is happy to help with any efforts and that they need to be notified of the efforts taking place and how they can assist.

Alicia Scarborough said that Black alumni need to take the initial effort to contact the Admissions Office. She believes that the alumni need to make the initiative to know when Allen Scholar Weekend is taking place and to recruit prospective students by getting out into the community and talking about Wooster.

Donna Russell complimented the Admissions Office on their efforts. She has been in touch with Tracy Stih, in the Admissions Office, and has made calls to prospective students in the past, along with other Black alumni. Donna noted that Black alumni need to work with Susan Lee's area, as well. A key to a successful program, on all fronts, is increased and improved communication.

Timeka Rashid commented that, as you get further away from your graduation at Wooster, it is harder to stay connected with the College. More recent graduates can help keep the connection between current students and older alumni. Timeka then asked about the importance of minority recruitment for the newly created position, Vice President of Enrollment. A brief description of the position was discussed and Stan Hales noted that minority recruitment would be one of several top priorities of that position. Reggie Williams said that the Executive Committee of the BAC will need to review each of the areas, under purpose, that have been identified in the by-laws and develop a plan for how to accomplish each. Jennifer Smith noted that the liaisons each have duties to ensure that the areas under purpose are addressed but also assured Reggie that the purpose will be an important part of the first meeting of the Executive Committee.

Abdul Rashid mentioned that the first Black Alumni Reunion would be planned for fall 2007.

Sol Oliver mentioned that there was a Black Alumni Reunion in 1992. He updated the BAC on the history of the BAC. It was formed in 1982/1983. At that time, Black alumni were not substantially involved with alumni activities. There were larger groups of Black students coming to campus but involvement was not high. The BAC was formed to create a focused effort for Black alumni to connect with the campus, the students, and the needed efforts. The Alumni Director, at the time, was involved and the group got together to create a catalyst for Black alumni leadership. Also, the Black Alumni Scholarship Fund was created and Sol chaired that committee. People came back to campus to celebrate in 1992. This was the first Black Alumni Reunion.

The question was raised as to how the BAC should effectively put together the 2007 Black Alumni Reunion.

Abdul Rashid suggested that we move forward with the agenda, as printed, and come back to the Black Alumni Reunion at the noted time.

#### 4. Update from Admissions

##### a. Information on the recruiting efforts for the class of 2011

Derek Gueldenzoph, Dean of Admissions, gave a brief background on the history of the stated goals of his office. The goal, for admissions, is to have 6% of the incoming class be African American. This is only one part of the many goals for other under represented groups. The target for total students in the incoming class of 2011 is 540. To meet the 6% stated goal (from the College's Strategic Plan) is 32 to 33 students. To put this in perspective, Derek gave statistics from previous years. For the class of 2010, there were 27 African American students enrolled and for the class of 2009, there were 14 African American students enrolled. Because of these low numbers for African American students enrolled, the Diversity Task Force was created. The 27 African American students enrolled in the class of 2010 made up 5.4% of the class. Derek and the Office of Admissions continue to work toward the 6% goal per class. Derek noted that, in order to have the minimum of 6% enrolled, the College needs to have applications from African American prospective students. The BAC can greatly assist in encouraging African American individuals to apply to Wooster.

Derek focused again on the class of 2011 to discuss that over 3,000 total applications have already been received this year. This is a record high for the College. Additional good news is that applications from African Americans have increased 38% this year. There are 144 applications from African American applicants, as of today. As of this time last year, there were 104 applications.

Abdul Rashid asked why the target of 6% was chosen.

President Hales responded that previous Strategic Plans for Wooster have noted the importance of under represented groups. In reviewing historical records of African American matriculates (admitted students who choose to attend Wooster), a 6% goal was an aggressive target that the College felt was attainable.

President Hales noted that it was important to identify a goal that was a stretch to reach but not unattainable. 6% was the goal chosen and, in future times, the College hopes that the goal can be raised.

Timeka Rashid asked about the current retention rates of African American students. She noted that, in her class of 1999, 35 African American students arrived in the fall of 1995. Of those 35, only 7 graduated. As a result, Timeka noted her great interest in retention.

Susan Lee referred to information she received from the Registrar's Office. She said that only one African American student from the class of 2010 had withdrawn, due to financial reasons. A current student noted that he was aware of three students from the class of 2010 who has withdrawn. Susan Lee said that she did not have information beyond what was provided by the Registrar's Office, but noted her concern for the discrepancy. Susan recommended that the College create a withdrawal report. She noted that it should include the student's name and ethnic code, with the option of providing the reason for withdrawal. Students are currently given the option of reporting their reason for leaving the College during exit interviews conducted in the Dean of Students Office. President Hales responded that the Buckley Act may prevent Wooster from creating such a report, but that the College should look into the possibility.

Timeka Rashid asked if there are peer mentoring programs at Wooster. Susan Lee responded that there are. They include social activities, peer mentoring programs (peer mentors are paid).

James Weaver suggested that there seems to be a disconnect with the BAC on recruiting. He asked "What does minority mean?" and "Are international students a part of minority recruitment?" James feels that the BAC needs to define their objectives and set tactics. James noted that Hayden Schilling and Dale Perry are individuals who have helped in the past.

Anita Hutchins asked if we look at recruitment and retention for all classes, along with faculty and staff as a part of the College's goal. Anita mentioned that Sol Oliver and others, at the time, were instrumental in her success at Wooster. She asked how many current African American faculty members are at the College. President Hales responded that there are 8 current members of the faculty. Someone asked if the Diversity Task Force document could be made available to the Black Alumni Council. President Hales said that he would make that happen.

Donna Russell asked members of the BAC to sign up with Tracy Stih in the Admissions Office. Tracy runs the Alumni Admissions Representative (AAR) program. Donna mentioned that all AARs receive applications that have the fee waved, so they can pass them out to prospective students.

Tracy Stih's information is as follows: phone: 330 263-2001 or [tstih@wooster.edu](mailto:tstih@wooster.edu).

Lawrence Willis asked why students leave Wooster. Susan Lee responded that most leave for financial reasons. She agreed that we need to have better statistics to understand why students leave.

Derek Gueldenzoph noted that financial reasons are often a concern for leaving but that financial aid is packaged based on need and is packaged for all four years. Derek said that there is a maximum of \$4,500 in funding that is considered "self-help" and consists of \$3,000 in loans and \$1,500 in work study. Beyond that, the capacity to pay (determined by FAFSA) is determined and the need is met 100%.

b. Allen Scholar Weekend

Derek gave an update on Allen Scholar Weekend, which was in session at the time of the BAC meeting. Twenty students are intending to come to campus this weekend to participate. There are an additional

10 students who, because of conflicts, could not come to campus. They will participate through their high school counselors. Allen Scholar awards are as follows:

\$23,500 max, per year, for top 15 students

\$18,000 max, per year, for 2<sup>nd</sup> tier of 15 students.

Derek would like to see the pool of students applying for Allen Scholarships grow.

Derek said that the support of current students on campus is great. There are also staff, faculty, and alumni that participate.

Program for Allen Scholar Weekend

- Panel discussions on life at Wooster
- Dinner
- Basketball game (play-off game)
- Essay writing
- Interview
- Experience in the classroom

Jacob Johnson asked how many students in the class of 2010, who participated in the Allen Scholar weekend last year, are now at Wooster. Derek responded that they yielded 12. The prior year there were only 7.

Jacob also mentioned that he lives in Michigan and met Crys Latham, who was employed in the Admissions Office. He built a relationship with her and was concerned to hear that she no longer works for Wooster. He asked if the College could explain. Derek responded that he can only state that Crys no longer works at the College.

Abdul asked if we could move on to keep in line with the agenda.

#### 5. Black Alumni Council Outreach Initiatives

Abdul gave an update on the current Executive Committee of the BAC. Artricia Love has stepped down as Student Liaison. Amma Addo has been appointed to complete Artricia's term.

##### a. Black Alumni Reunion

Amma Addo put together a document which was distributed, regarding activities for the future. The main project is to put together a reunion. She is looking for a couple of alumni and students to help make it happen.

A date for the reunion was discussed, between fall 2007 and spring 2008. Sandy Nichols expressed that spring (April) can be very nice or very snowy in Wooster. She suggested Homecoming weekend – October 6<sup>th</sup>.

Donna Russell noted that Oberlin had a Black Alumni Reunion that was very successful. They arrived on Friday evening and had activities through Sunday morning.

Please let Donna Russell or Amma Addo know if you are interested in helping with the Reunion.

Reggie Williams said that there is an African American art exhibit in the fall of 2007. Dates are not yet identified but Sandy Nichols said that she would contact Kitty Zurko, in the department of art, for more details. Reggie went on to say that the Harmon and Harriet Kelly Art Collection will be coming to Wooster, along with 7 pieces that AT&T have agreed can join the Collection, temporarily. Reggie noted that the Kellys will be in Wooster, along with the President of the AT&T Foundation, for the opening of the African American exhibit.

Sandy Nichols made a motion that, if the exhibit will be open by Homecoming weekend, October 6<sup>th</sup>, which should be the weekend of the Black Alumni Reunion. There was a second and the motion carried unanimously.

In the effort of time, it was requested that we move to the Black Alumni Council Election.

b. Student retention efforts – postponed (as well as discussed earlier)

c. Alumni Regional activities – postponed

6. Black Alumni Council Elections - 2007

a. Power point presentation with details for nomination and election process

Jennifer Smith led a power point presentation with the details of the elections. A copy can be found on the BAC web page.

JaQuan Bryant, president of the BSA, asked if the BSA will be given a recommendation for the Student Liaison, who will be chosen by the BSA. Jennifer responded that they would not be given a recommendation but that each person who nominated themselves would be required to provide information that would help the BSA make their decision. Jennifer also noted that the BSA should be familiar with each candidate who self-nominates, since they must have graduated in the past four years.

b. Official opening of nomination process

Jennifer Smith announced that nominations were not officially open. Nomination forms may be found on the BAC web page. In addition, each Black alum received an official nomination form, along with details and a copy of the by-laws, in the mail this week. Nominations are due back no later than April 9<sup>th</sup>. Elections will take place in April, by web and mail. Elections will close on May 4<sup>th</sup>. Newly elected officers will take over on June 9<sup>th</sup> at the Black Alumni Council meeting.

7. New Business

a. Abdul Rashid – stepping down as president

Abdul announced that this is his last meeting as BAC president. Jennifer Smith, president-elect, will take over as president in June. He thanked his cabinet and the efforts of all the Black Alumni Council members.

b. Celebration for Abdul Rashid, past president

Sandy Nichols noted that there will be a celebration for Abdul at the fall BAC meeting for his three years as president.

c. Hands Linked

Alicia Scarborough introduced a new initiative, which is called Hands Linked. She said it stands for:

H – Help

A – Aspire

N – Networking

D – Development

S – Success

Hands Linked has written a Lilly proposal, with the assistance of Lisa Kastor (Career Services), Susan Lee (Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs), and Sandy Nichols (Alumni Relations). The grant is to provide funding for a dinner to assist students of color with career development and other aspects of life after Wooster. This program will be open to all students. The idea is to have 3 alums (5 – 10 years out from Wooster) to participate. Alicia is hoping to get involvement from alumni that we may not already have involved. The date is March 29<sup>th</sup>.

Alicia would like BAC members to contact her if they are interested in the Hands Linked program.

Alicia Scarborough – 404 734-6294 (cell).

Anita Hutchins noted the importance of making sure that first-year students are aware of the program and can participate.

d. President-Elect Grant Cornwell

Jim Wilson asked Sol Oliver, who was chair of the Presidential Search Committee, to introduce Grant Cornwell. Sol Oliver accepted and gave a brief description of the Presidential Search Committee.

Fifteen members on the committee, including faculty, trustees, alumni, staff and students. They reviewed a number of candidates and narrowed it to three candidates, all of whom came to campus. The

Committee recommended Grant Cornwell to the Board of Trustees, who accepted the recommendation unanimously. Sol was pleased that Grant Cornwell accepted.

Sol introduced Dr. Cornwell, giving a brief biography, noting that he received his undergraduate degree at St. Lawrence University, followed by a masters and doctorate in Philosophy in Chicago. Dr. Cornwell then returned to St. Lawrence as professor, followed by dean, and now as vice president of academic affairs. Sol said that one of many things that impressed the Committee, was Grant's commitment to faculty and student diversity. He has a national reputation and a strong ability to relate to others. Dr. Cornwell will become the College's 11<sup>th</sup> President on July 1, 2007.

Dr. Cornwell thanked Sol for the introduction and said that there were many things that attracted him to Wooster, including Wooster's legacy to education, which is well known. Dr. Cornwell noted that he was not looking to leave St. Lawrence, but the opportunity to be associated with Wooster attracted him, along with the challenges that Wooster faces – including diversity. He would like to help champion Wooster's commitment to diversity, while he is president. Dr. Cornwell said that he will lean on the BAC hard to encourage progress in the areas of student, faculty and staff diversity. Dr. Cornwell also noted that diversity issues are at the heart of his scholarship.

e. Student Advocates for Diversity

JaQuan Bryant, president of the Black Student Association, introduced Student Advocates for Diversity. He said that they are handling issues of diversity and believes this needs its own task force. The Student Advocates for Diversity have produced a report (the report will be added to the BAC web page). They are asking for proactive measures to improve diversity. JaQuan noted that they have made 6 recommendations (please see report for details). They are also producing a survey on the climate of diversity at Wooster. This will be given to all students and he hopes to receive a minimum of 500 responses by the end of classes in May.

f. Housing Issues

Jade Davis '03 welcomed Grant Cornwell as president-elect. Jade also noted that there is a reoccurring issue on campus regarding housing for Black students. Jade said that there was a document created as a result of the Galpin takeover in 1989 that allows 5 houses to be used for various Black student programs. The plan that has been announced for next year is that the Kennedy Apartments will be used as the housing, along with an RA. Jade is not pleased with this decision. He said that Men of Harambee, Dream House, Denee House, and the Women of Images make a great difference in the ability to retain Black students at Wooster. Jade wants the document that was created in the late 80's, as well as a document that President Hales created, to be reviewed before final housing choices are confirmed. Jade reiterated that men who participate in the Men of Harambee are more likely to graduate than those who do not. Abdul Rashid agreed that the housing issue was important to discuss. President Hales agreed to research the former housing policies and follow up.

8. Discussion

Jennifer Smith reminded everyone to participate in the upcoming nominations and elections.

9. Announcement of next meeting

Saturday, June 9<sup>th</sup>

Time TBD

10. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 3:59 p.m.