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# Lycoming College AAEB Meeting Spring 2024

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## **Call to order on Thursday, May 30 at 1:05 pm by AAEB President Phil Levesque**

A meeting of the AAEB was held in person on May 30, 2024. Attendees included Holly Andrews, Jamie Brown, Andy Bucke, Joe Ciccone, Bobby Cook, Reb Donohue, Paul Ferrante, Mindy Gunn, Len Hahn, Nancy Hoerner, Kerri Kearney, Jake Kiessling, Donald (DC) Keys, Phil Levesque, Sherry Macpherson, Chuck McCall, Shauna McQuillen, Brad Myhre, Mary-Louise Paucke, Michael Ruddy, Tara Shaffer, Bob Schildt, Brenda Soder, Beckie Sweet, Nathan Tatro, Erica Vargo, Lillian Weekes, & Patrick Welteroth

## **Welcome**

President Phil Levesque announced that the meeting would move directly to President Trachte's address.

## **College Address - President Kent C. Trachte**

Welcome members & reminiscing of former Trustee Bob Shangraw & his wife, Charlene, after her recent passing.

## **Significant Issues Facing Higher Education**

### **Landscape** (demand for higher education)

- Demographic Cliff or the probable 2027 decline due to the 2007-2009 birth rate drop with 8-10% fewer 18-22 year olds then vs now. Hasn't recovered, & positioning ourselves
- Pandemic impacts
  - a) eliminating residential living was proven wrong but a 10% drop in the student "going rate" 2019-2022 wasn't anticipated
  - b) 18% of the Northeast private, liberal arts colleges declined in enrollment (2019-2022) with Lycoming slightly outperforming with a 7% decline. Lycoming gaining market share
- Federal Government "FAFSA debacle" – The Free Application for Federal Student Aid form was simplified
  - a) Retired Tennessee Senator Lamar Alexander pushed through the form, & it wasn't well thought-out

- b) FAFSA glitches - variable changes that impacted the aid calculations, the name change, the system rollout, etc., stopped the forms, & we couldn't send out financial aid packages until April 1<sup>st</sup> impacting May 1<sup>st</sup> deposits
- c) somewhere between 15-20% fewer students submitted forms from last year
- d) rate of suppression of FAFSA is higher in lower income districts than more affluent districts
- e) Colleges moved deposits deadlines to June 1<sup>st</sup>
- f) Acceptability – not what we had anticipated, or projected. Is this just a 1 year blip?
- Inflation – interest rates raised & cost of living is up
  - a) Families assess being able to afford a deposit
  - b) Debt restructuring – pause on projects like Williams Hall
  - c) Lack or “falling” belief on colleges’ worth; less than ¼ of the population thinks it’s not worth it if you have to borrow money. Actual statistics on income indicate that college grads make more money than those without a college diploma
  - d) Politicization – adds to our cost when politicians want to regulate colleges
- Perfect Storm for higher education – we will survive
  - a) Number of schools closing that can't pay the bills, & don't have the revenue such as Keystone & Cabrini. We are nothing like these schools financially
  - b) Lycoming has \$200M endowment with \$140M unrestricted, & we could survive over 3 years without any revenue
- More competitive than we were 10 years ago with perspective students
  - a) 2014 data from an admitted students’ survey ranking us & our peers reflected these variables in the eye of the consumers:

**Advantages for us**

- Cost less/ sticker price
- Friendliness of our admissions experience

**Disadvantages for us**

- Competitors had stronger academic facilities & programs
- General look of the competitors campuses & surroundings were more appealing than us
- In a new survey, we have now flipped this
  - a) Admitted students & parents praise our academic & sports facilities & programs, our campus & surroundings, & our professors & admissions while remaining competitive on cost
  - b) New majors & more enhanced products, plus we have underlying financial strength

**January Retreat with Trustees Update**

Updated our 21 Strategic Plan based on the environment by operating the college on 2 extremes

1. Cut cost & operating so there are no deficits; stop making investments
2. Take calculated risks that keep you competitive & add to market strength

Trustees landed on some cost controls but make some investments to continue the enrollment streams such as baseball & computer science.

- Baseball brought in 38 men that would not have been here
- Average net revenue for those baseball students was in \$20K a year so field will pay itself back in a short period of time
- Computer Science brought in 15 new students; first choice major
- Added a working group of faculty to look for additional academic offerings; staying within the mission of an undergraduate liberal arts & sciences college
- Hiring a consultant to do a more sophisticated market demand data analysis & convert the findings into classrooms, labs, staff, etc.
- With a timeline & ROI, there's room to allocate some endowment money on capital investments
- Moving forward with a men's volleyball team, & studying which women's sport or sports to add
- Field Hockey - we had 10-11 deposits

#### Q&A \*not verbatim

Holly Andrews: You were discussing how we outperform our predicted graduation rate by 11%. 1) Does that still hold true given the enrollment challenges? 2) How are new athletes performing? Are they graduating?

Trachte: Graduation rate comes from *US News* (based on 6 years). Latest class would have been Class of 2016-2017. We don't know in terms of graduation but we do know first & second year retention with the first group of baseball players. All but one returned for the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester & maybe 3 of them didn't come back for the second year. So their retention rate was above our normal rate & well above our pandemic retention rate. About 82.5% from first year to second year. Too early to know the graduation rate.

Sherry Macpherson: Relationship & interaction with the City of Williamsport has seemed to increase. Is there a financial focus on that bond or is there another perspective coming from that?

Trachte: Multiple dimensions; one financial with the City allocating some funds to Old City, & they used funds that were received from grants for the redo of Third Street, the Streetscape, & Basin Street, & they partner with us on events that they want on campus. We had the mayor as a speaker; we have relationships with nonprofits. We need to have lots of communication with the community. We need to make sure that we have police support.

Sherry Macpherson: So was the geographic location one of the factors on the Huron study, or was it not attracting students to the college?

Trachte: I'm sure it was a question but not an important factor. We don't have a lot of competitors in large urban areas. Some students do think Williamsport is a big city, & many find more than they expected here.

DC Keys: Last alumni weekend, a group of us located the directory in the Gateway building & thought how useful it would have been for us.

## **Housekeeping**

### **Approval of the Minutes**

One correction to be made on year from 2033 to 2023 under higher education section per Tara Shaffer. Len Hahn moved with a second from Brenda Soder. Minutes approved with correction.

### **Treasurer Report**

Erica Vargo reported that we had a beginning balance of \$2,998.85, & now with deposits & withdrawals, we have an ending balance of \$3,040.85.

Shauna McQuillen motioned & DC Keys seconded. Report approved.

### **New Business**

Interested in the VP position? Talk today or by tomorrow to Phil Levesque or Holly Andrews.

### **AAEB webpage discussion** – Amy Reyes, AVP

Additions/ suggestions from members:

- ✓ No contact info
- ✓ AAEB/ Alum general email
- ✓ LinkedIn profiles per Bobby Cook to quickly scan to see if in the same industry, good mentor, etc.
- ✓ Lycoming email addresses per Andy Bucke if you are retired, etc. Noted by Amy that we can ask but might be an IT department challenge
- ✓ Get approval to use members' emails
- ✓ Hometowns vs current residents
- ✓ Meet the AAEB page
- ✓ Contact, or apply to the AAEB button
- ✓ What would you like to share button
- ✓ Share a Google form on what we want to include
- ✓ Reformat or update the webpage
- ✓ Evaluate the traffic of the page
- ✓ Location of the AAEB page which is a challenge weighing who gets priority next to athletes, etc. Site is a Marketing tool for perspective students foremost
- ✓ Form committee to help with design & support
- ✓ Add Instagram & YouTube buttons
- ✓ Marketing for the AAEB by clicking on page & getting interviews by members on picking Lycoming, etc
- ✓ Use social profiles of members

## **Digital Signs**

We've moved to digital signage on campus. Our clubs & organizations are working with Marketing on ads that go across campus. Homecoming events, alumni events, bricks & licenses, etc., can be seen on the screens throughout the college.

## **AAEB Half Page Ad/ LinkedIn Page**

Magazine - we are utilizing a 1/2 page to promote the AAEB & all the fun things we do. See the QR code.

Had a LinkedIn page but only a few members & aged information. We have better use/control on our institutional pages. Plus, we do have 2 people responsible for our social media presence.

## **AAEB Communications/ Ideas**

- ✓ Have members talk about applying & talk about the awards
- ✓ Have AAEB signs with QR codes linking to more information
- ✓ Get information to juniors & seniors earlier than the Alumni Referral Scholarship at commencement
- ✓ Continue & grow Lyco Senior Week. Engage students with members onsite
- ✓ Revisit last fall's student panel discussion & involve students earlier in the AAEB
- ✓ Positive outcomes came from our discussion such as enhanced security protocols & better advisor updates
- ✓ Push beyond AAEB mission statement so students & alumni truly understand what this group facilitates, & the value that it provides

## **Committee Meetings**

**Alumni Director Report** – Amy Reyes, AVP

### **Advancement update on Days of Giving:**

- ✓ In its 6<sup>th</sup> year, during the 48-hours, 1,573 donors & raised \$623,099
- ✓ Alumni participation is very important to us & as an institution we do extremely well
- ✓ Non-annual donor funds – are friends & family of our athletic programs, corporations, & foundations
- ✓ 897 gifts from alumni on this day with 58 brand new donors (alumni that had previous opportunities)
- ✓ Look at trends as to why we might be down donors such as what decade is down; is it sports, Greek life, etc? Only item to attribute to being down a bit might be student loan payments restarted October 2020 for certain years
- ✓ Demographics play a role with donors so we are trying to be intentional about where they are in life
- ✓ Trends for giving 1 years vs another; we lose about 1/2 every year
- ✓ Lot of people hold their gifts now until the event
- ✓ Platform change – GiveCampus (3 year contract to continue this form)

- ✓ We were able to offer more challenges; it was relatively friendly
- ✓ It totaled donations in real time & allowed us to see analytics on how far the outreach increased
- ✓ A few platform issues that need to be worked out regarding the challenges page

### **1812 Leadership Giving Society Initiative** – ways to grow our pipeline of major donors

- ✓ 433 donors in our FYTD gave more than \$1819
- ✓ 450 donors is our next goal with a Trustee pledging \$1000, if reached
- ✓ Followed by 475 (goal the next year), & so on

### **Endowed Scholarship Match**

- ✓ 100% up to \$500K; 50% up to \$100M
- ✓ Minimum commitment of \$25K
- ✓ Match available until June 30, 2025 or until pool of matching funds is exhausted
- ✓ Gifts may be outright or pledged over a period of time; must be fulfilled by June 30, 2025
- ✓ Thus far 37 commitments; over \$2M pledged & over \$1.6M received
- ✓ 18 new endowed scholarships; additions to 19 existing endowed scholarships

### **Admitted Student Letter Writing Campaign**

- ✓ 237 cards mailed from our generous alumni time
- ✓ 15 “deposits pending”
- ✓ 12 enrolled in the fall

\*\*Holly Andrews suggested that she’d pay 3 “deposit pending,” if letters were written by her.

### **End of Fiscal Year Initiative**

- ✓ 2800 donors; at 2300, & need about 500 more
- ✓ Running gift giving campaigns for \$25 or more

### **Alumni Events**

- 6/13 Harrisburg Senators
- 6/15 Knobels
- 7/4 Sydney Australia trip
- 8/8 Lehigh Valley Iron Pigs
- 9/7 Wisner Locker Room Dedication
- 9/14 Phillies
- 9/28 Longwood Garden
  
- Los Angeles
- Denver
- Bald Birds Brewing Audubon

- Versi Vino
- Coach Ditzler Recognition

## **Homecoming – October 4-6, 2024**

### **Alumni Weekend**

- ✓ Pub Crawl dedicated to Alpha Rho Omega
- ✓ Alpha Rho & Lambda Chi Alpha no longer active on campus. The sorority will be celebrating their legacy on campus this weekend
- ✓ Alumni Awards celebration is tomorrow at 9:30 in gym; 2 former AAEB members receiving awards
- ✓ Cornhole & coolers at 2:00 with the AAEB
- ✓ Campus images – a 4 pack of postcards are in the rooms; hopefully sent to perspective students

### **Addressing Student body panel concerns & update – Chip Edmonds, EVP**

#### **Campus safety:**

- ✓ Reached out to 3 different external firms to help audit campus which indicated that we have a pretty safe community
  - 1) A physical review of campus including lights, locked buildings, & points of access (only with ID or badge)
  - 2) Staffed appropriately - to capacity, prepared to respond to an emergency, & all types of situations; best practices during a situation
  - 3) Communications plan – response to emergency, plans, & better communications
- ✓ Open forums & a campus survey used to address physiological concerns, diminished trust, & lack of transparency with administrators
- ✓ We've seen the tone move more positively
- ✓ Grants, funds, & resources available - such as OVW Grant (Violence against Women on campuses), Title IX efforts, the Alliance House, & 2 additional staff positions
- ✓ Change the perception regarding immediate response, & acknowledge that faster responses are needed while maintaining parties rights. Also being intentional about communicating back while following the layers of response such as contact by Dean of Students
- ✓ Law enforcement is contacted. If no action is deemed necessary based on their experience, we can make suggestions like getting assessed

#### **DEI Initiatives:**

- ✓ Concept of intersectionality from some students during panel – feeling pushed into their group vs connecting with different groups, & what's actively being done to help students feel like they belong
- ✓ Greater diversification of faculty members but still needing to increase our African American staff

- ✓ LGBTQ – we are represented
- ✓ Survey may help us find commonalities among students
- ✓ Freshman seminars – DEI seminars are available & we are looking at how to integrate this better into our hiring processes
- ✓ Freshman Orientation – clear about our expectations for students. The Warrior Honor Pledge is read & it is our exception as a code of conduct

### **Transitions/ Student Affairs:**

- ✓ Department of Economics Phil Sprunger is stepping out of Provost & Dean of the Faculty role into a faculty position with Sandy Kingery as the interim role
- ✓ Susan Ross is retiring as the Dean of the College
- ✓ Dan Miller is retiring as Dean of Students in 2025
- ✓ Campus Life's Kate Hummel leaving for a new role
- ✓ Will look to redefine & restructure some roles
- ✓ Students disengaging/ wanting to be alone has been happening over the years, & it is part of both our DEI & transition portions
- ✓ Preparing & hiring so students won't be impacted in the fall with position changes
- ✓ WRLC & how Lycoming should move forward with a traditional radio station vs an online format. Found having a frequency is an important component. So it's now a matter of evaluating capacity, technology, & determining a club or organization

### **May 31 Meeting Continued at 8:45**

#### **Tour of Baseball Field – Coach Rick Oliveri**

#### **Overview**

Played 9 home games on field. Working on the press box, stadium seating, concrete walkways, fencing, cleanup, bathrooms, & eventually cameras & lights. City is redoing the bandshell & all this is revitalizing Brandon Park.

#### **Committee Reports**

#### **Communications & Career Services**

- Common Hours – discuss the election, & Dr. Caroline Payne to speak
- Tie in AAEB with any Warrior updates/ Common Hours
- “The State of the College” or administration panel on where we are as an institution at Homecoming
- Alumni Spotlights – send our way
- Marketing materials - postcards/ leave behinds, social media – looking into pricing
- Career Advising – the staff is currently down & looking for candidates
- 13 students here for the WISE internship; get them involved with us, & network
- Engagement opportunities throughout the year like Lyco Senior Week



## **Alumni Engagement**

- Reaching the “Giving Goal” with popups for 80s & 90s over Memorial Day Weekend; giveaways - hats & socks
- Senior Week have board members return & get our names out there
- Discussed the senior class gift – everyone wants a hammock garden!
- Events mentioned previously including the Phillies coming up

## **Recruitment & Recognition**

- ✓ Discussed recognition/ get something for just nominating an award nominee
- ✓ Losing 8 people & nominating 13 new members as follows:

Sarah Banatoski 2014

Seth Burch 1989

Meghan Jacobi 2007

Randy King 1997

John Kneisly 2004

John Maina 2012

Heather Myers 1999

Nancy (Rudolph) Myers 1986

Lizzie (Lyons) Ritter 2018

Jason Stamm 1995

Melissa Stiles 2007

Phil Levesque motioned to accept new members with DC Keys accepting & Reb Donohue seconded. New members approved.

VP nominee

- Mike Ruddy

Phil Levesque looking to finalize recommendation from committee. Motion from Reb Donohue; second from Paul Ferrante. VP nomination passed.

## **Recognition of Outgoing Members & Passing the Gavel**

Outgoing members:

Bobby Cook

Nancy Hoerner

Chuck McCall

Bob Schildt

Chris Spadoni

Patrick Welteroth

## **Adjournment**

Holly Andrews motioned to adjourn meeting. Patrick Welteroth motioned & Tara Shaffer seconded, & the meeting was officially adjourned at 10:54.

Erica D. Vargo  
Secretary

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Date of approval

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