

Spring 2020 Meeting Summary

The Colgate Alumni Council consists of 55 alumni nominated for their exemplary volunteer service to Colgate. Its members represent the approximately 34,000 alumni in the Colgate Alumni Corporation, and each member strives to be a "Colgate ambassador" by enhancing the experience of all Colgate alumni by becoming deeply familiar with the state of the college; promoting robust communications, interesting and useful programming and other modes of connection and engagement; and providing venues for alumni to discuss Colgate issues. Please read what the Council is working on, follow the links to additional information, and feel free to contact us: we're eager to hear your thoughts and suggestions.

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Due to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, the Alumni Council conducted its spring meeting virtually by phone and Zoom (online). On Friday, April 3, the Alumni Council convened for its third meeting of the 2019–2020 academic year. The Council's work is conducted through its committees and meetings of the entire Council. Below is a summary of the Council's work.

Presentation by President Brian W. Casey

Alumni Council President, Christian Johnson '02, welcomed Colgate President Brian W. Casey to provide an update on Colgate's response to the COVID-19 crisis. During a 45-minute presentation, President Casey offered information about student support during their transition from campus and curriculum changes for the remainder of the semester. He described the tremendous effort of Colgate faculty to adapt their coursework online while earning the training they needed on a variety of web-based platforms.

President Casey emphasized the importance of student, faculty, and staff safety. He discussed the protective measures taken to keep the community safe while migrating to/from campus.

The presentation also included updates on the university's endowment, capital project planning, and financial health. Under the supervision of J.S. Hope '97 (vice president and chief financial officer) and endowment managers, Colgate is positioned strongly to manage market fluctuation. The length of the pandemic will determine the true financial picture for Colgate in the coming months. The Board of Trustees and Casey's administration will be modeling different scenarios to prepare for any outcome. For now, investments in capital projects will focus on buildings with deferred maintenance and some priority construction in Olin Hall, Dana Hall, and Gatehouse.

President Casey signaled an Alumni Town Hall for Tuesday, April 8 when he is expected to share similar information with all alumni. Participants may watch live online or read a written summary posted on Colgate's website.

General Session

Following President Casey's remarks, Christian Johnson '02 officially called the meeting to order at 11:07 a.m. and moved to Executive Session (requesting all non-members to excuse themselves from the online meeting).

During Executive Session, the following action was taken:

1. A motion was made to appoint William “Chi” McClean ’63 to replace the late Alan Grant ’64 in the unexpired ERA I position; seconded and approved by all
2. A motion was made to hold the January 2021 meeting in Hamilton, NY; all approved
3. A motion was made to approve revisions to the corporation’s bylaws which were sent in advance to all members; seconded and approved by all
4. A motion was made to approve the chair and new members of the Nominations Committee for 2020-21; names were Lauri Hadobas ’77 (chair), Joanna Ames ’98, Cara Lawler ’05, Kim Taylor ’80, and Carlton Walker ’10

Ms. Susie Becker Gould ’03 made a call for nominations for the Vice President position in 2021 and one Alumni Trustee position.

Mr. Chris Johnson ’02 made a call for volunteer membership on the ad-hoc committee for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. He also discussed recognition of the 2020 alumni award winners since Reunion is canceled. Mr. Johnson also opened a discussion on how the Alumni Council could support the Class of 2020.

Committee Reports

Campus Connections Committee:

Stephen Rock ’85 (chair) reported that, in addition to the Campus Connections Committee's ongoing interest in Colgate's plans to manage through the coronavirus pandemic, the Committee has an ongoing interest in the following areas:

- The evolution of the Residential Commons system, and how it relates to the Broad Street rehabilitation / renovation program.
- The ability of students to self-select their housing communities, e.g., upper class women’s hockey living together.
- The university’s plans relating to Greek letter organizations, particularly the student desire for a multi-cultural sorority, as well as the university’s plans relating to underground organizations.
- The Athletic Division's strategies and plans.
- Involvement with students to hear their perspectives directly.

Career Initiatives Committee:

Edward Witz ’89 (chair) reported that the committee met telephonically on Wednesday, April 1. The committee noted that “junior and senior students at Colgate have had their worlds turned upside down even more than most of the rest of us. Many seniors and even some juniors had everything figured out. Many had a job or internship likely to turn into a job - and are no longer sure they have a job. Others who don’t yet have a job have spent a lot of time devising a post-graduation game plan which may be totally up in the air now. Furthermore, they can’t just walk over to Benton Hall and get help figuring things out.”

The Career Planning staff is all working remotely while trying to help students through this most uncertain time. They have been sending out weekly emails to students and trying to stay in touch as much as possible.

“Obviously, students and Career Planning could really use alumni help. Many of us have been through crises before (albeit not on this scale) and can help with our advice and perspective. An example could be that start-ups could be strong following this crisis given the copious and cheap financing made available by several central banks globally - therefore students may want to keep start-ups front and center in their

job searches. Also, volunteer work directly or indirectly helping to solve Corona related problems will be great ways to fill holes which may otherwise be created in resumes as the economy recovers. If alumni have good volunteer ideas they will be welcome. Advice on how internships may be done remotely will be welcome. Can alumni offer any [Day in the Life](#) type experiences over the summer which could at least partially take the place of an internship?"

Witz reported that since many paid internships may be cancelled, the unpaid internship fund will be even more important for many students. Colgate has raised \$180K so far against a \$300K goal for the fund. Witz encouraged the Alumni Council to consider allocating some of their Colgate gifts to this fund.

Academic Life Committee:

Karl Clauss '90 (chair) reported that the committee met telephonically on Tuesday, March 31. Clauss began the meeting with a recap of items addressed during the January meeting. Following a brief update on the campus management of the COVID-19 crisis, Jillian Cole '10 led a conversation on how the Alumni Office is transitioning its programming to online engagement strategies in response to COVID-19. Ideas were presented touching on a variety of online content ranging from live webinars, to faculty lectures, to alumni presentations, and virtual Town Halls. Jillian Cole and Kate Seager '09 then shared very positive registration stats related to the rollout of the Colgate Link. Over 2,100 alumni signed up in the first four days exceeding expectations by a significant margin. The group discussed how this new platform could be used to host a variety of content to enhance alumni engagement / intellectual engagement. The Committee will pursue a meeting with Provost and Dean of the Faculty, Tracey Hucks, in the coming weeks to get a better sense of how the faculty is navigating the transition to online instruction.

Alumni Engagement Committee:

Shevorne Martin '08 (chair) reported on the following intentions of the committee:

- Philanthropic initiatives & communication to alumni: "It is the perfect time for Colgate to say I am here for you!"; sending a message that Colgate still supports its alumni; during this time there may be a career changes, loss of jobs, or need to network.
- Importance of building connectivity online during this crisis
- [The Colgate Link](#) is Colgate's official online community driving powerful professional and social connections within the Colgate community. It has the following features, which we are offering to alumni and students in one place, for the first time:
 - Alumni Directory
 - Discussion Board
 - Groups (regional, professional networks, Presidents' Club, affinity & identity groups, student-athletes)
 - In-system messaging (delivered to email inbox)
 - Alumni Job Board
 - Event Promotion and Registration
- Reunion: the committee discussed ways that alumni registrants could forego their refund to support Colgate during this crisis
- Continue Education Opportunities: offering continuous learning/education opportunities for alumni; utilizing alumni experts for webinars or courses

Awards Committee:

Jon Tiktinsky '82 (chair) provided the following update from the committee, following the cancellation of Reunion 2020 and annual awards ceremony:

- The committee believes a note of recognition should go out to all of this year's alumni award winners.
- Since reunion next year will encompass two sets of reunion classes we can appropriately acknowledge this year's recipients as well as next year's at reunion 2021. The one caveat being the ceremony itself must be altered so that it doesn't extend in time beyond that of a typical year.
- The awards committee will work with the nominations committee to enhance our data for evaluating candidates. A subcommittee between the two groups will be evaluated as an option.

Communications Committee:

Jessica Cianciara '01 (chair) provided the following report from the Communications Committee. The Colgate Alumni ([@ColgateAlumni](#)) twitter account is routinely updated with impressive information and news about alumni. Council members are encouraged to follow that account and share information to alumniCouncil@colgate.edu with more news.

During the COVID-19 crisis, the committee will consider ways to communicate with alumni about new engagement opportunities, ways to support students, and Colgate news.

Nominations Committee:

Richard Burke '92 (chair) provided the following update from the committee. First, he appreciated the affirmative vote on the four new members of the nominations committee (Joanna Ames '98, Carlton Walker '10, Cara Lawler '05, and Kim Taylor '80). Burke also committed to working with the awards committee on improving alumni profiles and share valuable data and engagement metrics. The Nominations Committee will also be informed by the work of the ad hoc committee on diversity, equity, and inclusion which may develop guiding principles for Alumni Council membership.

Lauri Hadobas '77 will assume the chair position in 2020 and is currently reviewing vice-chair options before July 1.