

Fall 2020 Meeting Summary

The Colgate Alumni Council consists of 55 alumni nominated for their exemplary volunteer service to Colgate. Its members represent the approximately 35,000 alumni in the Colgate Alumni Corporation, and each member strives to be a "Colgate ambassador": enhancing the experience of all Colgate alumni by helping to make all alumni become 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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On October 16, 2020, the Alumni Council met online for its first meeting of the 2020–2021 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.

Meeting with President Casey

The Alumni Council were pleased to welcome President Brian W. Casey to their fall meeting. After introductions, President Casey provided an overview of the university's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As of October 16, there were only two active cases on campus (with one expected to test negative on the weekend). The university has entered Gate 3 in [reopening stages](#) with hopes of entering Gate 4 by October 31. Colgate's [daily dashboard](#) has been hailed as detailed, comprehensive, and transparent by [higher education experts](#), earning its highest rating.

President Casey cited the work underway on campus for the spring semester. He forecast a return to quarantine in January when students return to campus from various states under travel restrictions. He also discussed ongoing partnership with Patriot League Presidents to discuss a possible return to athletic competition. Despite ending fiscal year 2020 in a surplus, President Casey confirmed that over \$4M has been secured for COVID-19 safety. Faculty and students are currently enjoying 55% of classes in person, and students report being very pleased to be on campus despite the obvious challenges.

Colgate will return to capital campaign preparations and a feasibility study, adhering to the Third Century Plan to 1) attract the best talent, 2) strengthen the academic program, 3) enhancing the student experience, and 4) securing resources for the campus and community. Leadership Briefings are currently underway with Colgate's more generous supporters to increase our endowment to remove student debt, support financial aid, and secure endowed scholarships for faculty.

President Casey discussed the success of the Residential Commons with Burke and Pinchin Halls. He signaled the same needs on Broad Street for junior and senior year students, with seventeen properties being reviewed for improvements. He also cited a new housing development on Lebanon Street in Hamilton for faculty, staff, and other community partners. President Casey reported on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion growth at Colgate - particularly with the Partnership for Racial Progress and the Alumni of Color organization. Colgate will hire a new Chief Diversity Officer in the coming months and recently accepted a \$250,000 gift from an alumnus to support student of color programming.

Questions/comments from the Alumni Council included:

1. Using Colgate's success with COVID-19 as a distinctive strength for Admissions
2. Managing student stress/anxiety in the winter months
3. Needing 20-25 new faculty endowed positions to compete with peer schools
4. Capital projects suggested for Gatehouse, 113 Broad Street, the townhouses, and some other college houses; President Casey suggested the Alumni Council might help gauge affection for some properties on Broad Street

Academic Life Committee

The Academic Life committee is working on three initiatives this year. The first program is an alumni partnership with the Residential Commons. Alumni would partner with the Residential Commons directors to help support the commons, including commons programming, supporting students, and fostering student-alumni connections. The second initiative is to develop relationships between faculty and alumni to provide alumni support to faculty in the classroom. Alumni would support the classroom experience by sharing their expertise or experience with a relevant class. This could include guest lectures, alumni feedback on student projects, and participation in class discussions. The third initiative is a student research symposium for an alumni audience. This would foster student-alumni interactions and help engage alumni with academics at Colgate. This would provide students with opportunities for feedback from alumni in their fields and potential networking opportunities. This may be an opportunity for students to practice a senior research/thesis/performance presentation before their final presentation. The committee also identified that there may be less opportunity for students to present at conferences because of the pandemic and this would provide an opportunity for those students.

Alumni Engagement Committee

The Alumni Engagement Committee met on Monday, October 5th to discuss how to recognize their district clubs for their work in 2019-2020. All committee members were sent the results of the survey from the clubs. We have decided to recognize only a few clubs this year as there were limited events as a result of the pandemic:

The Carlton O Miller '14 Memorial Cup for Outstanding District Clubs:

- Colgate Club of Rochester, NY
- Colgate Club of New York City

The Harold S Merrell '42 Memorial Award for Most Improved club:

- Colgate Club of Cincinnati, OH

Special Recognition Awards honor outstanding individual club programs or projects:

- Colgate Club of Westchester County, NY

The committee also discussed the alumni engagement index and individual engagement scores and how they are now being measured given that there are no in person club events. They discussed the Colgate Link and upcoming virtual events and look forward to helping to continue to support these.

Awards Committee

The Awards Committee is beginning their review of candidates for the 2021 alumni awards, including the Ann Yao '80 Young Alumni Award, Entrepreneur of the Year, Humanitarian Award, Maroon Citations, and the Wm. Brian Little '64 Award for Distinguished Service. The committee is dividing their work into various sub-groups to examine all the nominees thoroughly. All award winners will be appropriately recognized in 2021 despite the uncertain conditions for Reunion Weekend in June.

Tal-ee Roberts '01 has agreed to serve as Vice Chair. Our other new members are Brooke Beck '94 and Kate Levine-Freedman '05. The committee is continuing the subcommittee structure they initiated last year as a means of efficiently evaluating candidates in the initial stage. Ian Murphy '10 will head the Wm. Brian Little '64 Award for Distinguished Service subcommittee, Greg Dahlberg '98 is heading the Maroon Citation subcommittee and Becky Bye '02 will once again head the Ann Yao '80 Young Alumni Award subcommittee.

Candidate bios went out to subcommittees on schedule this past week.

The committee will once again also invite several knowledgeable Colgate staff to their final evaluation meeting in January. Finally, we are looking for new ways for committee members to vote anonymously. Finally, the committee is discussing how to best recognize award recipients in the "Covid world."

Campus Connections Committee

The Campus Connections Committee met in late August to support the new Dean of Students ([Dr. Dorsey Spencer](#)) and his request to help Colgate students during quarantine. Shortly after, the committee sponsored thirteen "Table for 13" online discussion groups with Colgate students with topics ranging from career development, to the 2020 election, and to the best places on campus and the village. On September, 10, the committee met with Vice President and Director of Athletics Nicki Moore to preview the new athletic branding which launched publicly on October 15. The committee also discussed the new Alumni Council Athletic Liaison program which pairs varsity teams with alumni advisors. In the coming months, the committee is interested in learning more about the progress of the Residential Commons and capital projects for the Broad Street Village.

Career Initiatives Committee

The Career Initiatives Committee met on September 22 with Teresa Olsen, AVP and Director of Career Services, and Carolyn Strobel, TIA Director. The committee took a page from the Awards and Nominations Committees' clear charters and reviewed and adopted a *Committee Member Agreement*, which outlines the commitments all members are expected to fulfill on the committee this year.

Ms. Olsen walked the committee through the priority alumni/student engagement programs, which include: Industry roundtables, Career Exploration Week Info Interviews, Career Modules, and Summer internship funding application review & contributions. We then had Ms. Strobel provide us with updates to Thought into Action (TIA). She and the TIA advisory board are working to connect current TIA programming into the Third Century Plan's middle campus vision - ex: expanding the program to reach more students, alumni & entrepreneurs; integrating TIA into the academic and social sides of university. DE&I is also a big focus of TIA this year, since they recognize the challenges inherent to diverse audiences when it comes to funding, access to mentors, etc. Of the incoming 100-level students: 50% women, 48% students of color, 14% international students, and 11% first-generation college students. A benefit of going virtual with mentors this year is that Carolyn was able to engage with a broader set of

alumni and parents - 41% women, 17% persons of color in the mentor group. Lastly, we discussed the successful Career Ambassador Program with Athletics, which reaches 95% of all student athletes. Ms. Olsen proposed that Career Services is now looking to create a complementary program to this initiative to launch with the ALANA Cultural Center for students of color. As this unfolds, this may be a place for some partnership and input from the Alumni Council.

Communications Committee

Over the last year, the committee has partnered closely with Vice President Laura Jack (Communications) and her team to overhaul the alumni Twitter presence. The committee was trying to combat two issues:

- Historically, Twitter account operated by the Alumni Council → very focused on the Council, not on the broader alumni base;
- Very little engagement from followers, lack of consistent content;

In order to achieve its goals of increasing engagement and driving better content, the committee took the following steps:

- Overhauled the look and feel of the Twitter account, including changing the name to be @ColgateAlumni;
- Turned the management of the Twitter account over to Colgate's Office of Communications in order to leverage their content and social media prowess.

Here is an overview of the results to date, all measured year-over-year:

- Increased the number of published posts by 483%
- Increased the number of impressions from 10,668 to 84,582, an increase of some 693%;
- And, increased the number of followers on Twitter more than 218%.

Colgate alumni are encouraged to follow the @ColgateAlumni today.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee is excited to have [a working foundation](#) on why the committee exists and how they intend to codify diversity and inclusion within the Alumni Council. With ongoing conversations as a committee, they intend to solidify training and metrics for which they can utilize, with a focus and emphasis on how they can utilize those metrics within the Nominations and Awards committees. More information will be available by the Winter Meeting.

DEI website: <https://www.colgate.edu/about/third-century-plan/plan-diversity-equity-and-inclusion>

Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee met throughout the summer in groups to review hundreds of alumni profiles in order to establish the recommended slate of new Alumni Council members. In a final meeting of the Committee on October 1, the Committee finalized primary candidates and two alternates for each of the seven ERA vacancies except for two which had incumbents who could start their own

term. The committee also identified primary and alternate candidates for the two At-Large positions. After reviewing with the Alumni Council in its meeting, the Council President and Vice President will contact those nominated to confirm their interest in serving on the Council. The final slate of nominees will be printed in the winter issue of the Colgate Magazine.