

Minutes of SPECIAL EnviroAlums Steering Committee Meeting

January 4, 2020

**NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING: MARCH 28, 2020 AT 9:00 AM PST VIA
CONFERENCE PHONE**

Action items below are in BOLD.

- 1) Attendees: Susan Bernat, Paul Safyan, John Peterson, Walt Galloway, Abe Kruger, Kristin Braziunas, Taiyo Scanlon-Kimura
Susan mentioned having heard from Meredith Dowling who was traveling and who called in after the meeting had concluded. She also heard from Andy Barnett, Andrew deCoriolis and Stephan Lezak, who would not be able to attend.
Other members did not respond.
- 2) Susan nominated Paul Safyan for Chair. Paul has agreed to accept this position for slightly more than one year, ending March 2021. (See item #3 below)
The vote was unanimous among those present.
Paul will convene the next scheduled meeting on March 28, 2020.
- 3) **Walt will be distributing a revision of the charter and by-laws, currently on the website.** <https://www.oberlin.edu/alumni-association/groups/enviro>
This document has not been revised since 2001. Susan and Walt will make the recommended revisions available before the March meeting and seek adoption at that time. Other Steering Committee members are encouraged to raise questions and to make suggestions prior to, or during the March meeting.

Among the key revisions will be specifications for term limits, number of steering committee members, officers, and committee structure.

John suggested that, along with these revisions, all current members

should be polled by email about their continuing interest in serving beyond the March 2020 meeting. This will help us determine if we need to increase Steering Committee membership beyond the 4 new members added at today's meeting (See item #4 below).

- 4) Abe presented and nominated Aviva Glaser (Class of 2004), Claire B.W. Miller (Class of 2007), Krista Egger (Class of 2004), and Molly Samuels (Class of 2004) to the Steering Committee.

All nominations were approved unanimously and enthusiastically

These new nominees will serve for three years, beginning March 28, 2020.

Paul and Abe will send them a welcoming letter and additional information.

- 5) EnviroAlums Intern

John spoke to the value of this position for our organization. He and Taiyo both endorsed hiring someone who was already working with one of the on campus environmental groups. This on campus perspective is important for our group's presence and involvement. Walt noted that the current by-laws, and his recommendation, state that we should have two students as members of the Steering Committee. This intern position would likely be one of those members. Currently, we have no students serving on the Steering Committee.

The hiring process will begin shortly, in hopes of having someone on board for the full second semester. A draft job description for the position is available and John will finalize it.

Paul and Andrew deCoriolis will be talking with the alumni office to "shore up" procedures for getting this person paid their \$12 per hour in a timely fashion.

- 6) Summer Fellowships

Kristin volunteered to take a leadership role with this annual project.

She recognized the review process developed by Hanni Muerdter as a sound one. She hopes to begin publicity for the Fellowship early in February. Abe and Taiyo agreed to serve as application reviewers on this subcommittee. **Abe also suggested that we add a requirement to the**

Fellowship process to get a report of the benefit that the Fellows provided to the host agencies. We would use this report for marketing and publicity.

Other members are welcome to join this committee, especially Paul and Hanni, who have worked on this previously.

We agreed to allocate \$7000 annually to support 2 or 3 candidates this year, depending on their amount requested in the proposals.

7) Environmental Career Day

John and Walt described the continuing success of this annual event, especially the on-campus leadership. **Walt and Taiyo will form a subcommittee to be a liaison between EnviroAlums and the student organizers.** Taiyo had developed relationships with some of the student organizers while at the Career Development Center in 2018 and during his involvement with the Bon Appetit Food Service in 2019. In addition to the students, Taiyo worked with Rumi and Rosalind (no longer AA at ENVS) and has worked in the past with the current chair of ENVS, Karl Offen.

8) Fiftieth Earth Day Celebration on campus

EnviroAlums has previously allocated \$500 for an honorarium for a featured speaker, Carolyn Finney, who has written about the lack of participation by people of color in the politics of the environmental movement.

The student organizers will now request an additional \$1500 from us to help underwrite the event's speakers and materials.

John moved that we authorize this expense, and distribute the funds as soon as possible after a brief proposal, outlining potential use, is received. The motion passed.

Paul will authorize the disbursement as soon as the proposal is received, trusting John's endorsement of the quality of the student group's planning process.

9) Other funding issues

John pointed out the rapidly depleted funds in Environmental Studies Gift Account, which has been used for speaker honoraria in the past.

A brief discussion ensued about financial well-being of EnviroAlums.

Paul will be exploring this matter during his chairmanship and provide recommendations regarding fundraising and expenditure procedures. In addition, he and Andrew deCoriolis will be in touch with Danielle Vath, Kim Kosonovich and others in the Oberlin Development and Alumni Office to better understand the procedures for the use of our endowment and its annual disbursements.

10) Other business:

a. Returning briefly to the by-law's discussion, Walt said he would be reminding the Steering Committee of the distinction between members of EnviroAlums and members of the Steering Committee.

He also gave a "heads up" on a suggestion he will make regarding allowing the inclusion of non-Oberlin alums, such as Oberlin faculty, to serve on the Steering Committee when their skills and interests would make this beneficial

b. We are, quite frankly, in a reorganization and revitalization process for the EnviroAlums organization. Paul and Abe mentioned a draft proposal authored by 4 Steering Committee members that included the formation of a nominating/membership subcommittee and a communications subcommittee. More detail on the expectations for these subcommittees will be presented at the March meeting, and those committees will be looking for members, especially our new members, to join and to have input.

Abe will sketch out some ideas about membership expectations and Paul will lead the discussion of the draft proposal for general organization at the March meeting.

The meeting adjourned after about 85 minutes.