

EnviroAlums SC Meeting Minutes – March 28, 2020

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (PDT)

Present: Paul Safyan (OC '68), Susan Bernat (OC '97), Stephen Lezak (OC '15), John Petersen (OC '87), Walt Galloway (OC '69), Abe Kruger (OC '04), Kristin Braziunas (OC '08), Walt Galloway (OC '69), Krista Egger (OC '04), Claire BW Miller (OC '07), Taiyo Scanlon-Kimura (OC '15), Andrew deCoriolis (OC '07), Lauren Holmes, EnviroAlums Intern (OC '21)

Absent: New members: Aviva Glaser (OC '04), Molly Samuel (OC '04)

Introductions of New SC Members

* **Claire BW Miller** (OC '07), with major in ENV; currently Lead Community Organizer at Toxic Action Center.

Krista Egger (OC '04), with major in Art History; currently Senior Director, National Initiatives, Enterprise Community Partners.

Lauren Holmes is a 3rd-year student, with double major in ENVS and Geology; interested in urban planning, currently serving as EnviroAlums Intern.

* On April 7, 2020, Claire BW Miller informed the SC of their wish to resign from the SC, because they do not feel dedicated to what they see as our Committee's mission. Resignation was regrettably accepted by Chair.

Other SC Members also introduced themselves and "checked in" about their well-being during the current corona virus pandemic

EnviroAlums Internship

John Petersen: Discussion of current circumstances (OC online learning mandated by the novel coronavirus/SARS-CoV-2 global pandemic): long-distance/virtual learning. John conducted virtual tour of AJLC with "Environment and Society 101" students. Lauren has been hired this spring. She jumped right in and will help SC connect with students—helping students understand how involvement with EnviroAlums can benefit them. Oberlin continues to teem with energy in regard to environmental issues.

Stephen: appreciates actions that keep the OC administration agitated!

EnviroAlums Summer Fellowships

Kristin: 2 or more fellows supported each summer; complete 200 hours of work; \$3500 stipend available; extended deadline by a couple of weeks; can submit application by this Friday; will begin reviewing applications in roughly a week's time.

Abe: Good mix of interests, working experiences; can go to website to see bios of previous fellows.

Taiyo: Just returned from abroad. Takes experiential learning very seriously.

Claire: Question: what criteria used to evaluate candidates?

Kristin: Candidates are evaluated based on how well they meet the fellowship priorities (enhance student's professional development, support host organization, benefit Oberlin, statement of financial need), which align with the background text and specific questions asked in the application.

John: In light of pandemic let's be more flexible about number of fellows; not worried about overspending; the fellowship is even more valuable now.

Kristin: Happy to fund more fellowships; need to prioritize applications.

Paul: Our endowment may have taken a hit, due to volatile stock market.

EnviroAlums Charter & By-laws

Walt: There was initial resistance to a revision of the document. We need organization and something for people to do when they join the SC.

Claire: Surprised that anti-racism and anti-oppression and climate justice is not mentioned in the document.

Paul: It's a working document, less about philosophy. Welcomes Claire to help develop the document.

Walt: Document mentions equity and social justice; welcomes Claire to help develop document further.

Abe: Edits were provided by Susan. How do we move forward?

Paul: Moves to vote up and down as the draft stands, with the expectation that SC will further refine document. Vote was taken, and draft was accepted, in principle, with agreement for editorial changes to be made to document by Paul and Susan.

Susan: Suggests brief discussion of 2 points in document. Susan, Walt, Krista, Taiyo, Claire, Paul to form immediate ad hoc committee to discuss these points.

Claire: Sending out a doodle poll to everyone re: ad hoc committee meeting date/time for discussion of Charter & By-laws document. (Ad hoc committee discussion subsequently undertaken on April 4, 2020.)

EnviroAlums SC Membership Terms

Paul: Conducted poll about interest to remain on SC (terms of service/number of years), with the results posted on Zoom screen. Heard from everyone, except Andy Barnett (who has subsequently, and reluctantly, decided to leave the SC, due to time constraints). New members are automatically slated for three years; other terms were selected by existing members. This selection fortunately provides us a workable rotation of current members continuing.

Results: Paul = 2 yrs.; Susan = 3 yrs.; Kristin = 1 yr.; Andrew = 1 yr.; Krista = 3 yrs.; Walt = 2 yrs.; Aviva = 3 yrs.; Abe = 3 yrs.; Stephen = 1 yr.; John = 2 yrs.; Claire = 3 yrs.; Molly = 3 yrs.; Taiyo = 1 yr.; Aviva = 3 yrs.

EnviroAlums' Origin, Current Terms of SC Members, Proposed Sub-committees

Walt: Provides background of EnviroAlums, beginning with Carl McDaniel's role; as first Chair of the SC, he did everything himself Re: organization, finances, communications. When he stepped down (late 2014), Andrew was elected Chair and led SC until late 2019. The SC floundered a bit in ensuing months. Susan stepped in to hold SC together, until Paul was elected Chair (January 2020). During the interim period, several SC members held discussions; subsequently, SC developed sub-committees: Membership; Communications; Fellowships. Lauren is "working intern" (working all year long). We hope to retain her next year as well by mutual agreement. Susan remains Vice Chair for one more year.

Abe: Described Membership Subcommittee's work: Membership Sub-committee: grow environmental membership: engage members; work with communications subcommittee on outreach. Recruiting two students, as provided in the by-laws is top priority at this time.

Steering Committee Sub-committee volunteers

Membership Sub-committee: John + Abe interested to join.

Fellowship Sub-committee: Krista + Stephen interested to join.

Paul: Re: **Communications Subcommittee:** working through Lauren and other campus groups, communicate to membership at large, receive information from them; explore other means/media of communication to benefit greater Oberlin community. Susan is interested to join.

EnviroAlums Financial Snapshot

Paul: Endowment created under auspices of founding member/Chair Carl McDaniel. As of June 30, 2019: **Endowment Balance** = (roughly) **\$140K** (market value). **Operating Expenses account balance = \$26,600 (FY June 2019 – June 2020)**. **Allocations:** 1) Summer Fellowships: \$7,500; 2) EnviroAlums Internship: FY 2020-2021: average of \$10/hour x 5 hrs./wk. Additional Fellows and new projects are to be considered for expenditure of funds that fit our mission/purpose.

Taiyo: Re: **Operating Funds:** question: Operating Expense Fund: do we spend this? What amount is accessible? If we spend more on fellowships this year, will it affect amount available next year?

Paul: Operating Funds are what we have to spend as a result of a percentage of earnings on the endowment. The percentage is determined by a committee of the Oberlin College Board of Trustees.

John: Re: Contributions for EnviroAlums: do such funds go to Operating Expense (Fund) or Endowment (Fund)? Would we enhance ability to raise money, if we used the funds to support more fellowships?

Paul: As collected, funds are deposited to Endowment, until distribution time at end of each fiscal year.

John: Suggests that we investigate this; compares to funding/spending process for ENVS.

Walt: Carl set up Endowment. SC raised over \$50K. Then we added another \$75K. All contributions go into Endowment. Thinks we can set up separate fund for individual contributions for specific purposes.

John: We need flexibility of 2 separate funds.

Walt: We can use all of Operating Expense Fund in a given year, but we should be careful about that in the current unpredictable environment.

Next SC meeting is scheduled for October 24, 2020.

Draft of meeting minutes submitted by Susan Bernat on April 8, 2020.