



## Colgate University Alumni Council

Alumni Council Annual Report  
June 30, 2019



Christian Johnson '02 (Vice President), Patricia Apelian '76 (Treasurer),  
Melissa Coley '79 (President), Copeland Bertsche '63 (Legal Counsel)

## OFFICERS' REPORTS

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Melissa Coley '79

I am pleased to report that the state of the Alumni Council is strong going into its third century.

As we work to achieve our mission, which is to promote enduring alumni engagement and service that supports and advances Colgate University and its global community, we set out a number of specific goals as the academic year began. I am pleased to report that we have achieved what we set out to do.

Our first goal: ***Implement the New Strategic Plan***

A new Strategic Plan was adopted last spring by the council, following a year of intensive work to develop the plan. The focus of the Strategic Plan is on active engagement with alums, students, faculty and the administration.

One of the hallmarks of the plan was reducing the number of programmatic committees on the council from eight to five and establishing direct partnerships with administrators on the hill for each of these committees. Here is a quick recap of each committee's accomplishments for the year; further in this document are detailed reports from each committee chair, along with reports from our two *ad hoc* committees.

The Academic Life Committee, partnering with Provost Tracey Hucks and Division Directors Ernie Nolen (Natural Science & Math), Adam Burnett (Social Sciences) and David McCabe (Arts & Humanities), identified gaps where alumni can better support faculty – both on and off campus – and intersections with other council committees to make alumni more aware of the many faculty programs available both on and off campus.

The Alumni Engagement Committee, partnering with VP of Advancement Paul Mischler, identified ways in which the nine Alumni Council Regional Directors can team up with the advancement staff assigned to their regions across the U.S., to more effectively engage with alums in their geographic area, for example with District Clubs and professional network events.

The Campus Connections Committee, partnering with Dean of the College Paul McLoughlin, Dean of Admission Gary Ross, and Director of Athletics Nicki Moore, acted as a resource to the administration. As the university enters its third century, many of the administrators who lead the campus are new to Colgate. Our conversations provided history, context and culture on several topics that alumni are well-suited to provide. Conversely, the committee seeks to understand the current environment on campus in order to convey to the alumni body as a whole. Of particular note were conversations on counseling services and wellness programs, the Residential Learning Commons, and on housing on the hill and on Broad Street which requires significant investment over many years. We learned that this is a complex process with many moving parts.

The Career Initiatives Committee, partnering with Associate VP Mike Sciola and his team, continued its quest to broaden the interaction between Colgate students and one of their most valuable career assets, the Colgate alumni network.

Resulting from a brainstorming session at the fall meeting, a major bank hosted a breakfast on campus at which they offered to answer any questions students may have about anything making them nervous about the job search process. It resonated extremely well with students.

The Committee identified \$300,000 worth of funding for the Summer Internship program which allows students with financial need to accept unpaid internships over the summer.

The committee is also working with Steve Wright, Assistant Dean for National Fellowships and Scholarships, to promote how alumni can help and benefit from the fellowships and scholarships available to Colgate alumni.

The Communications Committee, partnering with VP of Communications Laura Jack, is in the midst of overhauling the social media presence of our alumni body including a one-year social media pilot program to engage younger alumni. The committee is developing a content calendar. In addition, the team provides a steady supply of alumni columns to the *Maroon-News*.

Our second goal: ***Listen to Input from stakeholders.***

Here are a few examples of how our listening resulted in positive change:

First, listening to alumni. Following tremendous feedback from alums on Colgate's torchlight traditions, the Alumni Council, as the voice of the alumni, put forth a set of recommendations to President Casey regarding the use of the new brass torches; all recommendations have been enacted. The Council also secured the bulk of the funding to pay for the fabrication of the new torches.

Second, listening to students. Following discussions with the editors and reporters of the *Maroon-News* last year about how they felt adrift when it came to reporting, a newswriting class for *Maroon-News* staffers has been instituted, led by the university's Media Relations Director. The emphasis is on teaching our budding journalists responsible reporting -- making sure that both sides of the story are given a voice. The *Maroon-News* now regularly publishes corrections and clarifications and has become far more careful in how it handles sensitive issues.

Third, listening to current and former Alumni Council members. Much commentary and lively discussion was held as we worked to revise the Alumni Council's bylaws throughout the academic year. The previous bylaws were amended 23 times since their restatement 34 years ago. The new bylaws were approved by the membership at the April meeting, and are now fully in compliance with New York State non-profit law and are aligned with the 2018 Strategic Plan.

Our third and fourth goal: ***Engage in the university's bicentennial and celebrate the Alumni Council centennial***

What an amazing Bicentennial Reunion weekend it was with 4,000 alums enjoying everything about Colgate, engaging with faculty and reminiscing with classmates. During reunion weekend, we celebrated the council's centennial at a luncheon attended by 175 current and former Alumni Council members representing 40% of all living current and former council members.

And, our final goal: ***Support President Casey's vision for the Third Century***

Following unanimous endorsement by the Board of Trustees and the faculty, the Alumni Council also unanimously voted to endorse President Casey's Plan for the Third Century. President Casey's address to alumni at the Chapel during Reunion formally presented the plan to all alums and was warmly and enthusiastically received.

## **LEGAL COUNSEL REPORT**

Copeland Bertsche '63

There are few strictly legal issues that come before the Alumni Corporation, informally known as the Alumni Council. Rather, a primary, and very important, responsibility of Legal Counsel is to assure that appropriate governance procedures are in place and to provide the leadership team with guidance in that regard. The principal document reflecting those procedures is our bylaws, which, in turn, reflect the manner in which the Council, as a body, has agreed to govern itself. It became increasingly clear over the last few years that our operational procedures had diverged from those contemplated by the bylaws. The time had come for a comprehensive review. As a result, this year we saw the culmination of a two-year project to develop an updated long range strategic plan for the Council, under the principal leadership of Stephen Rock '85, and a complete revision and restatement of our bylaws to reflect that plan and to conform to changes dictated by the New York Not For Profit Corporation Law, under the very able leadership of Andrew Roffe '68, my successor as Legal Counsel.

As I retire from the Council after nine years, let me express my great appreciation for the honor of having served with such a dedicated group of Colgate alums and for the new friendships I have made. During that tenure, quietly working in partnership with the administration, I have witnessed the considerable influence we have had on Colgate's policies and procedures; they really do listen. I was also privileged to come to know more intimately many of the truly excellent administrators and staff at Colgate. Their excellence and personal dedication to Colgate is unequalled. We are truly fortunate. President Casey has substantially raised the bar in his expectations of the role and responsibilities of the Council. We welcome the challenge. I am confident the Council will meet, and exceed, those expectations.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Patricia Apelian '76

The Alumni Corporation represents more than 34,000 living members of Colgate University's alumni body. Although chartered in 1919 as a New York State non-profit corporation that is separate and distinct entity from the University, we rely on the University for resources, including:

- Our primary source of funding;
- Administrative support through Colgate's Alumni Relations staff, including Tim Mansfield, Associate Vice President of Institutional Advancement and Alumni Relations and

- Financial and tax assistance through Colgate’s Finance and Administration staff, including Thomas O’Neill, Associate Vice President & Controller

Many thanks the University staff for the assistance they have given to us this year.

Our fiscal year runs from July 1st to June 30th, to coincide with the University’s fiscal year. In May 2019, at the same time that the University filed its respective tax return, the Alumni Corporation filed its IRS “Form 990 – Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax” for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2018.

Our current fiscal year will not end until June 30, 2019, so the following financial information is preliminary. Reported annual expenditures of approximately \$69,000 consist of three primary components:

- Expenditures incurred for the Alumni Corporation’s Board of Directors meetings held three weekends a year on campus in Hamilton, NY. The cost of meeting space and meals for over 50 people that constitute what is commonly referred to as the Alumni Council totaled approximately \$23,000 this year.
- Approximately \$15,000 including office and insurance expense, professional fees, the framed awards given out on Reunion Weekend, and some Alumni Council-related travel for Tim Mansfield, our Executive Secretary.
- For IRS reporting purposes, approximately \$32,000 is allocated in wages and fringe benefits of the University staff that provide support.
- As a service for various classes, the Alumni Corporation holds funds in trust in both mutual fund and money market accounts. Class funds presently total approximately \$240,000, with a significant portion related to those classes anticipating their upcoming 60th and 50th Reunions. Prior to June 30th, this number should be significantly reduced, as several classes have generously agreed to fund the cost to manufacture the 3,000 brass torches that were used by alumni at the Reunion Torchlight parade and will be used at future reunions.

I want to formally welcome Chad Cooley, ‘00 as the incoming Treasurer; I know he will do an outstanding job!

While not strictly part of a financial report, as I conclude my term as Treasurer I would like to extend a special thank you to a number of individuals who I have had the pleasure and honor to work with:

- To Melissa Coley for her leadership as we adopted our updated Strategic Plan and implemented an enhanced committee structure for the Alumni Council; to Andrew Roffe and Co Bertsche for championing and delivering the restatement of our Bylaws; and to my fellow officers Chris Johnson and Tim Mansfield for their wisdom and guidance as we developed the Policies & Procedures operational guidelines.

I am confident that the refresh in our mission, organizational platform and governance will effectively guide us in strengthening our alumni network, supporting current students, and advancing the University’s traditions as we embark on our second centennial.

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## **COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS**

### **ACADEMIC LIFE COMMITTEE**

Betsy Levine-Brown '00

During the 2018-2019 academic year, the Academic Life committee made strides in bridging contacts and partnering with Colgate faculty, academic leaders and alumni affairs representatives. We took a needs assessment on faculty's current partnerships with alumni, held meetings with division directors to disseminate the academic life committee's mission to their divisions, connected alumni affairs offices with faculty directors to promote partnership and brainstormed ways to connect with other Alumni Council committees (e.g., Campus Connections, Communications and Alumni Engagement) to intersect in committee efforts. In the upcoming year, we hope to find further intersection with Alumni Council committees to continue the academic life initiative set forth.

### **ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Shevorne Martin '08

The Alumni Engagement Committee focused on identifying, improving, and creating opportunities for alumni to engage and re-engage with the university, the offices of Advancement and Alumni Affairs and fellow alums. We established three goals for the 2018-2019 academic year:

1. Enhance engagement including:
  - a. Strategic ways to engage former Alumni Council members
  - b. Leveraging existing programs/initiatives and potential opportunities such as the upcoming 2020 New York City Alumni Council Winter Meeting
2. Proactively work with Advancement and Alumni Relations
  - a. Connect and create an open line of communication among ourselves, Paul Mischler, the Advancement team and Tim Mansfield
  - b. The University's Bicentennial All-Class Reunion
  - c. 2019 Alumni Survey
3. Effectively communicate and collaborate with Alumni Council committees including communications, academic affairs, and career initiatives among others.

Each committee meeting was a step closer to achieving our goals. Our fall meeting focused on recognizing district clubs for their leadership and service. We welcomed Doug Chiarello '98, then interim Vice President for Advancement & Advancement Staff, as well Regional Advancement Directors to open up lines of communication and connect directly. This helped us understand roles, goals, and identify more opportunities to engage alumni.

During the winter meeting we sat with the new Vice President of Advancement, Paul Mischler, and discussed the status of a capital campaign, alumni survey and the All-Class Reunion. We gathered information on processes, timelines, and objectives allowed our committee to engage in in-depth conversations about strategy and actionable steps towards engaging alumni.

With the energy around the All-Class Reunion and alumni survey, the spring meeting was geared toward highlighting opportunities for former alumni council members and alumni to become more involved in Colgate. This included an introduction to the new Colgate volunteer fundraising platform, as well as creating programming/outreach around the 2020 New York City Alumni Council Winter Meeting, and an Alumni opportunity list that can be shared with former Alumni Council members.

Our committee is excited to continue collaborative engagement efforts moving into the 2019-2020 academic year.

Thank you to all of our committee members and Tim Mansfield for your thoughtful and impactful contributions.

## **AWARDS COMMITTEE**

Greg Dahlberg '98

The Alumni Council Awards Committee is tasked with identifying alumni and University employees who have demonstrated outstanding commitment, contributions and service to Colgate. The Colgate community is fortunate to have many dedicated alumni/ae and the committee considered over a thousand nominees, from which the committee proposed recipients for the following awards:

- Wm. Brian Little '64 Award for Distinguished Service to Colgate - The highest honor bestowed upon a Colgate graduate by the Alumni Council, this award recognizes Colgate alumni/ae who have rendered distinguished service to the University and who have previously earned the Maroon Citation.
- Maroon Citation – Awarded in grateful recognition of a record of exemplary service and invaluable personal contributions to Colgate University.
- Ann Yao '80 Memorial Young Alumni Award – Recognizes members of the fifth reunion class who have demonstrated remarkable and meritorious service to Colgate since graduation.
- Colgate Alumni Corporate Humanitarian Award - Honors Colgate alumni/ae who have devoted themselves to improving the lives of individuals and communities through their compassion, initiative, commitment, and exemplifies all that Colgate seeks to inspire in its students by way of devotion to community.
- Entrepreneur of the Year - Recognizes the achievements and qualities of an alumnus/alumna who best exemplifies the ideals of entrepreneurship.

The 2019 awards recipients were recognized at a ceremony during bicentennial all-class reunion weekend.

## **CAMPUS CONNECTIONS COMMITTEE**

Stephen Rock '85

During the '18 - '19 school year, the Campus Connections Committee made great strides in establishing itself and establishing relationships with its administrative partners: the Dean of the College, the Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, and the Director of Athletics, as well as starting a relationship with representatives from the Student Government Association (SGA). The Campus Connections Committee took to heart the Council's mission of being the authentic voice of alumni by seeking to first to understand the current environment on the campus. Of particular note were conversations on a number of topics.

Today's student is a far different individual than the students of years gone by, and not just at Colgate but nationally as well. The national trend is for students to engage more readily with counseling services and wellness programs and this trend is present on the Colgate campus as well. The university has responded in turn by expanding how it meets the needs of these students.

The university launched the Residential Learning Commons program a few years ago with the intent of bringing together the student's residential, academic and social lives in a complementary manner. Over the last 18 months, the university has had the opportunity to learn from that experience and strategically invest and accelerate the program to best benefit the student and the university.

Concurrent with any conversation about Residential Learning Commons, it is necessary to understand the university's residential infrastructure and understand that Colgate's housing on the hill and on Broad Street requires significant investment over many years to meet the needs of the university and the student. We learned that this is a complex process with many moving parts.

We believe we also fulfilled another aim of the Alumni Council by being a resource to the administration. As the university enters its third century, many of the administrators who lead the campus are new to Colgate. Our conversations with them hopefully provided some degree of history, context and culture on several topics that alumni are well-suited to provide.

## **CAREER INITIATIVES COMMITTEE**

Edward Witz '89

During fiscal year 2018-9, the Career Initiatives Committee continued its quest to broaden the interaction between Colgate students and one of their most valuable career assets, the Colgate alumni network.

At the Fall meeting, we brainstormed with Mike Sciola, Teresa Olson and Chelsea Lehman about ways alumni can go beyond just interviewing on campus and have a less formal interaction with students in which students feel free to ask alumni for help and guidance with the things that are really on their minds. This resulted in at least my firm hosting a breakfast on campus at which we just offered to

answer any questions students may have about anything making them nervous about the job search process. It resonated extremely well with students.

In addition to Sophomore Connections at the January meeting, we made a plea to the AC members and any alumni friends/contacts to help fund the Summer Funding program which allows students with financial need to accept unpaid internships over the summer. As of the January meeting, we had only raised \$44K of the \$400K budgeted for the program. As of this writing, we are at approximately \$300K.

At the Spring meeting we heard from Steve Wright, Assistant Dean for National Fellowships and Scholarships about how alumni can help and benefit from the fellowships and scholarships available to Colgate alumni. We also met with a couple of enterprising Colgate students who initiated an Excel training program for fellow students who want to polish Excel skills they may need for their summer internships and full-time jobs after graduation. One of the enterprising students (Andres Gonzales), will now be interning at Barclays Investment Banking for the summer after his junior year.

## **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

Jessica Prata-Cianciara '01

The Communications Committee had three goals this year: work with the *Maroon-News* editors to publish a monthly Alumni Council column, overhaul the Alumni Council social media presence to reach more of the alumni body, and brainstorm ways to more effectively collect feedback and thoughts from the broader alumni community to bring back to the Council. We are proud to have made progress in all three areas.

First, we published a total of six articles written by members of the Alumni Council in the *Maroon-News*. In addition to celebrating the unique history and experience that flavors each alumni's love for Colgate, this dedicated column ensures that current students become aware of who the Alumni Council is, one of the many ways they can learn about the rich alumni network that makes Colgate so unique.

Second, the Alumni Council Twitter handle will be renamed, and LinkedIn profile will be created. In the Fall, a Colgate student intern sitting in the Alumni Relations office will help the Committee develop a content calendar that bolsters the already strong social media presence managed by the Colgate Communications Office and be responsible to ensure the feed is regularly updated. The internship position will offer the student real world experience in social media management and brand building, a great career building opportunity. The new platforms will feature content that celebrates alumni accomplishments, instill pride in the school, and access alumni on platforms that they regularly use in their daily lives.

Third, the Communications Committee has held multiple brainstorming sessions on how we can better serve the rest of our Alumni Council committees to obtain information they seek to do their work. This is an ongoing conversation that will carry into next year.

## **NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

Richard Burke '92

The primary goal for the 2018-2019 Nominations Committee was to identify new members to represent and serve the full Colgate Alumni body as members of the Alumni Council (AC). The committee also prioritized its effort to review, revise, and improve the process employed by the committee to identify new AC members. In addition, the committee's other priority actions for the year included filling vacancies for AC members who departed the AC with unexpired terms, identifying current AC members to serve on the Nominations Committee as replacements for the pool of "retiring" 2019 Nominations Committee members, and reviewing the new AC bylaws and related policies and procedures to ensure consistency and compatibility with the processes employed by the Nominations Committee.

The committee was represented this year by twenty-five members of the Alumni Council with representatives from each of the ERAs and the RVP positions. During the summer of 2018, small teams of committee members met on multiple occasions to review the profiles of hundreds of candidates under consideration to join the AC. These summer meetings yielded a smaller pool of 3-5 candidates for each of the vacant ERA and RVP positions. Prior to the September AC meeting, information regarding each of the ERA/RVP candidate pools was shared with Nominations Committee members. During the September meeting, after detailed and lengthy discussions, the committee selected primary and alternate candidates for each of the vacancies, who were later approved by the full Alumni Council.

In the Spring AC meeting, the Nominations Committee welcomed eight new members to meet with current & departing committee members in order to discuss their roles & responsibilities on the Nominations committee. One of the new committee members, Lauri Curtis Hadobas '77, agreed to serve as the Vice Chair. In addition, the committee discussed process improvements to include a review and update of the current data base by June 30th; coordinated outreach to affinity groups for recommendations of potential Alumni Council candidates; and expectations for member participation in this summer's small group ERA candidate review.

### **BYLAW COMMITTEE (*ad hoc*)**

Andrew Roffe '68 and Copeland Bertsche '63, co-chairs

In light of the Alumni Council's decision to develop and implement an updated strategic plan, and consistent with our commitment to best practices, our Committee took upon the task of reviewing and revising our Bylaws to insure compliance with the NY Not for Profit Corporation Law and making our operational procedures consistent with our newly adopted strategic plan. To that end, our Committee worked for the better part of the last two years to offer amendments which were unanimously adopted by the Alumni Council at our Spring Meeting in April.

At the same time, we worked with, and under the leadership of Pat Apelian, to develop a Policy & Procedures Manual to serve as a helping hand to all of our Members as a working guideline and supplement to our Bylaws. This manual attempts to convert our legalese into a reader friendly document. In the event of any inconsistency between it and the Bylaws, or any question of interpretation, the Bylaws shall govern. Special thanks to Co Bertsche, Pat, the Executive Committee and all of you for your patience, active involvement and wisdom.

## **CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE (*ad hoc*)**

Patricia Spindel '79 and Chad Cooley '00

The committee was formed to plan and help execute the 100th Anniversary of the Alumni Council, coinciding with Colgate's Bicentennial celebration in 2019. The committee convened at each of the Alumni Council meetings on campus, as well as on conference calls between the meetings to organize the event. Tim Mansfield was instrumental in the committee's strategy and efforts.

After planning and discussion, the following major decisions were put forth by the committee:

- **Format of Centennial Event:** the committee discussed options for holding the Centennial Celebration during the Bicentennial Reunion Weekend, and with the help of the team responsible for organizing the larger weekend, concluded Friday lunch would be the best opportunity to attract the broadest audience within the framework of the weekend's busy schedule.
- **Selection of Keynote Speaker Duncan Niederauer '81:** the committee reviewed a list of former Alumni Council members and committee members submitted suggestions for the role of Keynote Speaker; after committee deliberations and vetting a number of potential options, the committee chose to offer the role to Duncan Niederauer '81 who accepted graciously.
- **Selection of RuthAnn Loveless to provide opening remarks:** after discussing potential options for opening remarks, the committee chose to offer opening remarks to Mayor (and former Executive Secretary) RuthAnn Loveless who accepted graciously. Mayor Loveless was offered the role given her long-standing involvement with Colgate, her prior role as AC Executive Secretary, and her current role as Mayor of Hamilton.
- **Party favors:** after debating options for potential "takeaways", the committee decided to give attendees of the event a copy of Jim Smith's history of Colgate book. Thanks to Tim Mansfield for staying on top of this and even securing complimentary copies!
- **Follow on event:** the committee discussed the possibility of having a larger Centennial event in NYC in the fall to connect with a larger group of former AC members and possibly engage a larger group of alumni including recent grads; given the relocation of the Winter AC meeting to NYC (Jan 2020), it has most recently been discussed that such an event could coincide with an AC meeting. Planning continues.