



Colgate University  
Alumni Council

Alumni Council Annual Report  
2019 – 2020



Christian Johnson '02,  
*President*



Susie Becker Gould '03,  
*Vice President*



Chad Cooley '00,  
*Treasurer*



Andrew Roffe '68  
*Legal Counsel*

## **OVERVIEW**

The Alumni Council enjoyed a very productive year marked by strong collaboration with Colgate's senior administration and Board of Trustees, a unique off-site meeting in New York City, and a pivot to online engagement through the pandemic.

Highlights of the year included:

### **Meetings with President Casey**

The Alumni Council met with President Brian W. Casey several times throughout the year – on campus, in New York City, and online. President Casey opened the year with a visioning exercise that imagined Colgate in ten years. He underscored the value of a successful capital campaign to realize the first stages of the [Third Century Plan](#). Colgate's ambitions are high and he urged the Alumni Council to be ambassadors of that ambition to fellow alumni. President Casey also referenced a workbook that will help guide the Board and his administration on the Third Century Plan. He assured the Alumni Council and the community at-large that they will report on progress periodically.

Once the pandemic struck, Alumni Council President, Christian Johnson '02, asked Colgate President Brian W. Casey to provide an update on Colgate's response to the Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 crisis. During his 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 Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, J.S. Hope '97, 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.

### **Embracing the Third Century Plan**

Hanna Rodriguez-Farrar, Chief of Staff and Secretary to the Board of Trustees, met with the Alumni Council to discuss the Third Century Plan. She led an interactive discussion on how to interpret the plan, embrace its four fundamental goals, and communicate it with others. Ms. Rodriguez-Farrar prompted the Alumni Council with these questions and collected votes on various parts of the Third Century Plan.

1. What two aspects about The Third-Century Plan that speaks most profoundly to your Colgate experience?
2. What two aspects of The Third-Century Plan that will most profoundly impact the reach and reputation of Colgate?
3. What aspects of The Third-Century Plan where the Council can be most helpful to Colgate?

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

This year, the full membership of the Alumni Council participated in a discussion on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Mr. Timothy Mansfield, Executive Secretary, provided a brief overview of [Colgate's](#)

[comprehensive plan](#) for DE&I. Following his remarks, Ms. Lauri Hadobas '77, vice chair of the Nominations Committee, gave a report on the recent meeting of the “*Alumni Board Cooperative*”, a cohort of alumni volunteers from sixteen peer institutions. Ms. Hadobas reported how different institutions were managing diversity on their boards and several best practices. Following her remarks,

Mr. Christopher Nulty '09, vice chair of the Communications Committee, facilitated a conversation among the full Council which ultimately led to a recommendation to the Executive Committee to create a new standing committee to address these important issues. Mr. Carlton Walker '10, will be asked to serve as chair of the new standing committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

### **Special Partners**

During the fall meeting on campus, Chris Johnson '02, President, welcomed students from various organizations and invited them to enjoy lunch with the Alumni Council in the Hall of Presidents. Ms. Veronica McFall '89, assistant director of alumni relations, also provided an overview of the [Mosaic Initiative](#).

In cooperation with Ms. Jennifer Stone (assistant vice president of advancement), several alumni leaders in the Presidents' Club Membership Council joined the Alumni Council in New York City in January. Mr. Thomas MacCowatt '85 (chair) and Ms. Amy Jurkowitz '85 (vice chair) introduced themselves and other PCMC volunteers to the Alumni Council. They sought feedback and support on two initiatives for 2019-20: *Table for 13* and outreach to “power” companies with large cohorts of Colgate alumni.

Mr. Christian Johnson '02 also introduced Ms. Tara Bubble, Dean of Admission at Colgate to the full Alumni Council membership. Ms. Bubble provided an overview of the college admissions industry and some of the current crises that dominated the national news in 2019. She described how other institutions faced these challenges and what they learned. Colgate University maintains high ethical standards and complies with all federal and NCAA regulations in admissions. However, Colgate is not immune to applicants who seek to “game the system” and misrepresent their qualifications. The Alumni Council appreciated learning about the modern college admission industry and how Colgate is positioned strongly in the marketplace.

### **Alumni Survey**

Tim Mansfield, associate vice president of advancement and alumni relations, gave a presentation on the [recent alumni survey](#) that was conducted in July 2019. The primary goal of the survey was to gather data from the alumni community to better understand how alumni currently engage and want to engage with Colgate. The survey investigated attitudes towards Colgate, resonance of priorities and core messages, communication and engagement preferences, donor motivations, and propensity for philanthropy. Mr. Mansfield provided information about the respondents, the questions asked, and findings of the survey. Alumni Council members asked questions about ways they can address opportunities and how the university is adapting to any new information about alumni engagement.

### **Special Thanks**

The Alumni Council was pleased to participate in several unique events in FY20 and all members are deeply thankful. During the fall meeting in Hamilton, Stephen Rock '85 and his family hosted the Alumni Council to their residence to enjoy a catered dinner and reception. The winter meeting in New York City was a special occasion for members. Susie Becker Gould '03 hosted the Alumni Council committee meetings at her office in PWC while Andrew Roffe '68 and his wife Anna hosted the Alumni Council for dinner at the Columbus Citizen's Foundation. President Casey and Board Chairman Mike Herling '79 were also in attendance. The winter meeting highlight was a large alumni event at 787 on

Seventh Avenue with President Casey and Goldie Blumenstyk '79 (*Chronicle of Higher Education*) to discuss Colgate and higher education.

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## **COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS**

### **ACADEMIC LIFE COMMITTEE**

*Karl Clauss '90*

Academic Life began the year with a review of Intellectual Engagement Goals for the Alumni Relations Office led by Ms. Jillian Cole '10. This was informative in understanding what events are already on the calendar for FY20 such as the remaining Bicentennial Book Tour events. It also led to a productive conversation about metrics for success and opportunities for exploring other vehicles for expanding the intellectual reach of the college among Colgate alumni/parents.

The committee then spent time discussing the existing program for alumni travel abroad which for FY20 consists of the Men's Hockey team's trip to Ireland and Professor Mary Ann Calo's trip to Italy. We then discussed the opportunity to explore contracting with a travel coordinator to offer more faculty led trips.

During the winter meeting, the committee received an update from Colgate staff about events from Fall 2019. They discussed Colgate's new podcast, [13](#), and shared ideas for promotion and future alumni guests. The group was also updated about the new [travel programs](#) for alumni being researched by Alumni Relations. The committee learned more about the great experiences from those on previous trips, and discussed ideas for future trips.

For the spring meeting, Karl Clauss '90 reported that the committee met telephonically on Tuesday, March 31. 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.

### **ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

*Shevorne Martin '08*

The Alumni Engagement committee began the year with a very productive meeting on campus. They were joined by Ms. Kathryn Saeger '09 and Ms. Kelly Best from the Alumni Relations office. The Alumni Relations team shared their FY20 goals and objectives, and we specifically aligned on ways the committee could best support the office, District Club leaders and engage alumni volunteers. The committee also used this meeting time to select the District Club Award winners.

At the winter meeting, Ms. Shevorne Martin '08 (chair) led her committee on a discussion on volunteer engagement. They discussed how volunteers are recruited, trained, held accountable, and recognized for

their work. Ms. Martin also collected ideas and feedback on an “Alumni Leadership Weekend” (October 17-18) when volunteers hope to be brought to campus for training, recognition, and common messaging from Colgate.

The committee also discussed engaging former Alumni Council members. Mr. Robert Raiber '68 (former member) and Mr. Thomas Levine '70 (former member) offered to help advise the Alumni Engagement Committee on their efforts.

During the spring online meeting, Ms. Martin reported on the following intentions of the committee:

- Philanthropic initiatives and 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.
- 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*

When the year began, the committee was reaching out to more sources to ensure candidates are better identified and evaluated for each award. Outreaches began for the Entrepreneur of the Year Award, the Humanitarian Award and the Maroon Citation subcategory focused on Colgate employees.

During Executive Session at the winter meeting, Mr. Jon Tiktinsky '82 (chair) announced the names of the annual alumni awards. His committee spent countless hours reviewing data and profiles to select very worthy recipients for the Ann Yao '80 Young Alumni Award, Humanitarian Award, Entrepreneur of the Year Award, Maroon Citations, and Wm. Brian Little '64 Award for Distinguished Service.

The 2020 winners include:

- *Ann Yao '80 Young Alumni Award* - John Lee '15
- *Entrepreneur of the Year* - David Fialkow '81
- *Humanitarian Award* - Jack Kupferman '77
- *Non-Alumni Maroon Citation* - Grace Huff - Planned Giving, Gert Neubauer - Campus Safety and Heather Palmer - Finance Operations Manager
- *Maroon Citation* - Robert Youker '55, William Baker '70, Raymond Hartung '70, Robert Gold '80, Kimberly Taylor '80, Carmine DiSibio '85, Joseph McGrath '85, Stephen Rock '85, Jaclyn Broad '90, Max Haspel '95, Chad Cooley '00, Debra LoCastro '05, Clarissa Shah '10
- *Wm. Brian Little '64 Award for Distinguished Service* - James Himoff '65, Russell Wilkinson '70, Margaret Flanagan '80, Stephen Errico '85

At the spring online meeting, Mr. Tiktinsky '82 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.

## **CAMPUS CONNECTIONS COMMITTEE**

*Stephen Rock '85*

During the fall meeting, the Campus Connections Committee met with the presidents and vice-presidents of the Student Government Association in the presence of Mr. Paul McLoughlin, Vice President and Dean of the College. The SGA representatives discussed the background of how the four people from the two candidate slates came to share the top two officer positions, and a few of the areas that they are working on this year. Those areas include regular communication with the Board of Trustees, addressing the issue of food insecurity - particularly among certain groups of upperclassmen, and the perceived need for more social options - with a preference for more Greek options - particularly for women and African-American / multicultural communities.

The Campus Connections Committee also joined the Career Initiatives Committee to learn more about the reorganization of Career Services under the Dean of the College and some new initiatives within Career Services.

At the winter meeting in NYC, Mr. Stephen Rock '85 (chair) introduced Mr. Michael Sciola (associate vice president for career initiatives), Ms. Carolyn Strobel (director of Thought Into Action), and Mr. Wills Hapworth '07 (TIA) during a joint meeting with the Career Initiatives Committee. Guests provided an overview of [Thought Into Action](#) progress and plans.

In the spring, Mr. Rock '85 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 Athletic Division's strategies and plans.
- Involvement with students to hear their perspectives directly.

## **CAREER INITIATIVES COMMITTEE**

*Edward Witz '89*

At the fall meeting, Mr. Michael Sciola (Associate Vice President of Advancement & Career Initiatives) and Ms. Teresa Olson (Director of Career Services) updated the committee on the progress made in raising funds for the unpaid summer internship program. As a reminder, this program helps students who otherwise can't afford to accept a low (or unpaid) summer internship position.

The internship fundraising goal was a very aggressive \$525,000 in order to maintain the same level of students funded as in the past few years. Ms. Jennifer Stone (Institutional Advancement) co-presented that portion of the meeting and is working with her Advancement colleagues to execute a successful campaign to reach this year's goal.

Ms. Olsen then briefed the committee on "First Destinations" for the Class of 2018 (impressively high and growing placement rate continues to grow), she also updated the committee on employer relations and gave a look at the fall/spring Career Services program highlights.

After the winter meeting, 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 worked remotely while trying to help students through this most uncertain time. They had been sending out weekly emails to students and trying to stay in touch as much as possible.

Mr. 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. Mr. Witz encouraged the Alumni Council to consider allocating some of their Colgate gifts to this fund.

## **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

*Jessica Prata-Cianciara '01*

When the year began, the priorities for the committee were to

1. Align on the rebranding of the Colgate Alumni twitter handle and broader social media presence ([@colgatealumni](#))
2. Built out strategy and functional day to day work for executing new social media presence
3. Creating and lock a content calendar through EOY
4. Work closely with the Alumni Engagement committee

By the winter season, Mr. Christopher Nulty '09 (vice chair) led his committee on a review of the new Colgate alumni Twitter account ([@colgatealumni](#)) showing analytics on usage and stories. Mr. Nulty also encouraged his committee to examine the Alumni Council website for any recommendations or edits.

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

## **NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

*Richard Burke '92*

The Nominations Committee reviewed/discussed the 300+ candidates identified for membership on the Alumni Council. After detailed discussions in the summer and fall, the Committee nominated primary candidates and two alternates for each of the seven ERA vacancies. The committee also nominated

primary and alternate candidates for the two At-Large positions and primary candidates for the two Regional Director positions (Midwest and Mid-Atlantic).

At the winter meeting, Mr. Richard Burke '92 (chair) and his committee participated in an important discussion on the process for member nominations. Some recommendations include personal outreach to different affinity groups, asking self-nominees to provide a biography, researching top alumni who are disengaged with Colgate, creating some guiding principles on membership criteria, and collecting deeper data on the current membership of the Council (race, occupation, volunteer service, philanthropy, etc.). Mr. 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 committee on diversity, equity, and inclusion which may develop guiding principles for Alumni Council membership.