

Colgate University Alumni Council January 2021 Meeting Summary

The Colgate Alumni Council consists of 55 alumni elected for their exemplary volunteer service to Colgate. Its members represent the approximately 36,000 living alumni in the Colgate Alumni Corporation, and each member strives to be a "Colgate ambassador": enhancing the experience of all Colgate alumni by becoming 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.

On January 15, 2021, the Alumni Council met virtually via Zoom for its second meeting of the 2020–2021 fiscal 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. Please read what the Council is working on, follow the links to additional information, and feel free to contact us: we are eager to hear your thoughts and suggestions.

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Meeting with President Brian W. Casey

The Alumni Council was pleased to welcome President Brian W. Casey to share in a conversation about Colgate. Dr. Casey provided the following remarks which were followed by Q&A and discussion:

1. Despite the difficult conditions with COVID-19, President Casey was pleased to report on the success of the university through the fall semester. A thorough plan was developed and executed to preserve the safety of students, faculty and staff, and the local community.
2. Students are currently using at-home test kits to secure their safe return to campus in late January. As of this writing, 1,478 of the 2,028 test kits were returned with only 17 students with a positive COVID test. 776 of 985 tests from faculty and staff have only yielded 3 positive results (none who serve students directly). Colgate was accepted to serve as a distributor of the COVID vaccine by New York State and those plans are forthcoming.
3. For the spring term, 15% of the campus community will be randomly tested each week (up from 6% in the fall). 330 studied remotely in the fall with 215 of those deciding to return in the spring. In addition to students who are not studying abroad, Colgate is at its housing capacity. 56% of courses will be taught in person in the spring after a mandatory quarantine period.
4. Colgate Admissions has surpassed record numbers. ED1 and ED2 numbers are both up 70% from last year and there are (now) over 17,000 applications to attend Colgate – over twice the previous record of 8,700. Some factors that contribute to the rapid increase include 1) SAT/ACT scores are optional to report, 2) Colgate's new partnership with [Questbridge](#) (attracting over 1,000 applicants from under-represented populations), 3) targeted marketing/outreach to new districts, and 4) very positive national press coverage on Colgate's response to the pandemic.

5. The Colgate Fund has reached a record high for fundraising by the end of the calendar year (\$5.39M) due in part to the success of the Colgate Together Challenge. Colgate's endowment now stands at a record high of \$1.1B.
6. As for the future, President Casey outlined several important steps to keep Colgate growing stronger ("relentlessly seeking to improve and be the best"). Dr. Casey described plans for the renovation of Dana Arts Center and the middle campus for music, theater, and film. He reported on the renovation of Olin Hall for the natural sciences and Spear House for a possible location for economic and policy studies.
7. For residential life, President Casey discussed the impact of removing or renovating spaces like Gatehouse and 113 Broad Street (over 300 student beds). He also gathered feedback about a Broad Street Neighborhood that would offer new community spaces for upper-class students and provide renovations for units that are behind on deferred maintenance.

The Alumni Council engaged in a productive conversation with President Casey about how alumni can support / thank students who endured a very challenging semester. Casey thanked the Alumni Council and Presidents' Club Membership Council for their gifts to support international students who resided on campus during the winter break.

Meeting with Dr. Nicki Moore, Vice President and Director of Athletics

The Alumni Council was also pleased to meet with Dr. Nicki Moore, Vice President and Director of Athletics. Nicki thanked the Alumni Council for their development of the Alumni Council Athletic Liaison Program with each varsity program. She also outlined her goals during her first two years at Colgate while providing updates on COVID-19 and a return to competition.

General Session

Chris Johnson '02, Alumni Council President, opened the meeting with a welcome to William "Chi" MacClean '63 who is joining his first meeting as an ERA I representative. The Council then moved into Executive Session to conduct several votes. The full Council unanimously approved the following officer positions beginning July 1, 2021: Susie Becker Gould '03 (President), Lauri Hadobas '77 (Vice President), Andrew Roffe '68 (second term as Legal Counsel), Chad Cooley '00 (second term as Treasurer, and Timothy Mansfield (Executive Secretary). Another vote was called to approve the Alumni Trustee nominee for 2021, Chris Johnson '02, which was unanimously approved.

Robert Johnson '94, Alumni Trustee, provided the report from the Board of Trustees. He stated that the Board is working to support Colgate during its transition to the spring term during the pandemic. The Board will meet on January 29-30, 2021 to discuss critical needs and other important agenda items included in the Third Century Plan initiatives. He also cited work Colgate's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts and Colgate's other institutes (Thought Into Action, Lampert Institute, and the Center for Freedom and Western Civilization).

Karl Clauss '90, Vice President of Advancement, gave the Alumni Council a report on the success of Advancement which included \$5.39M support for the Colgate Fund (\$770K over previous record). Clauss also gave an update on planning for Colgate's next capital campaign.

In cooperation with a consulting firm, Colgate held 14 leadership briefings with lead donors to examine their interest to support aspects of the Third-Century Plan. A “donor insight survey” was also sent to another pool of donors to examine our feasibility to reach certain goals. Clauss thanked the Alumni Council for their leadership in raising funds to support international students and the Class of 2020. He also recognized the effort to host 13 “Table for 13” events for students in the fall during their quarantine.

Academic Life Committee

The Academic Life committee met with Provost and Dean of the Faculty Dr. Tracey Hucks ’87, Vice President of Advancement Karl Clauss ’90, Associate Vice President for Advancement and Alumni Relations Tim Mansfield, and Senior Associate Director of Alumni Relations Jillian Cole ’10 to receive updates from campus.

Dean Hucks provided a report on the fall 2020 semester, challenges and lessons learned from the fall semester, and the plans for the spring 2021 semester. In the fall semester, 55% of faculty (328) taught in person and 54% (310) will teach in person in the spring. In the fall 48% of classes (657) were held in person and 51% of classes (652) will in person in the spring. There will be more students on campus for the spring semester, with 2572 on campus in the fall and 2772 on campus in the spring. This reflects a decrease in the number of students choosing to be fully remote (402 in the fall and 212 in the spring). To overcome some of the challenges of the fall semester, the spring semester calendar has been modified to allow for two break days, in-person office hours will be allowed, and there will be greater restrictions associated with simulcast courses. Students had an option to change their grades to Pass/Fail in the Spring 2020 semester, but normal grading returned for the Fall 2020 semester and will continue for Spring 2021. The commitment to community health pledge and universal quarantine return for the spring semester. Modular classrooms have been set up for additional teaching space to replace the tents used in the fall semester. Dean Hucks emphasized how important alumni support of the Colgate Fund has been to allow Colgate to make the changes necessary to have in-person instruction.

Karl Clauss reported on his meetings with Division heads and efforts to engage donors in support of the academic mission of Colgate. Jillian Cole reported on the virtual alumni events that have occurred, including the ongoing celebration of the 50th anniversary of co-education at Colgate. The committee also discussed the formation of an academic liaison program in partnership with the Residential Commons or academic departments. This idea will be explored further in the coming months.

Alumni Engagement Committee

Emily Raiber Radovic ’02, chair, reported that the committee met on Monday, January 11th and discussed the following:

Virtual Events - Alumni Engagement Index is 36.6%, 5.5% higher than this point last year. 1,524 alumni attended on online event this year and 392 alumni attended their first event in 3+ years. Ms. Raiber shared her thanks to all in the alumni office who have been involved in making these events happen. “They have really been incredible!”

Colgate Link - Jillian Cole '10 talked to the committee about the [Colgate Link](#). Ms. Cole asked the committee what the Alumni Council can do to support the growth of the platform (current number of users is 4,017). "It's a great way to engage alumni and we hope to encourage others to use."

Presidents' Club Membership Council - The committee also got an update from Jennifer Stone, Assistant Vice President of Advancement, on the PCMC current projects. "Since there is so much great overlap between the PCMC and the Alumni Council it's nice to be able to brainstorm new ways that we can work together."

Awards Committee

Jon Tiktinsky '82, chair, reported that the committee met on Monday, January 11 vote on award selections for 2021.

This year the committee selected 13 Maroon Citations to alumni, three employee Maroon Citations, two Ann Yao '80 young alumni awards, Entrepreneur of the Year, and Humanitarian Awards. In addition, the committee requested and were granted permission to award four Wm. Brian Little '64 Awards for Distinguished Service. Mr. Tiktinsky offered thanks to all the subcommittee heads and all the other members of the Awards Committee. He offered special thanks to Kate Saeger '09 for all her efforts on the committee's behalf. The spring meeting will likely focus further on how to acknowledge the recipients given the reunion will once again be postponed. The winners will be included on the Colgate website and in the *Colgate Magazine* this summer:

Humanitarian Award: Eric C. Gokcen '84

Ann Yao '80 Young Alumni Award:

Lauren Casella '16

Sean A. Maguire '16

Entrepreneur of the Year: Nicholas J. Kokonas '90

Maroon Citations:

Walter ("Jerry") J. Rhodes '56

Thomas F. Kirkpatrick '61 Susan
Horwitz '76

Frederick ("Tiger") C. Dunlap '81

Debra A. Duarte '81

Becky B. Hurley '81 Bruce

S. Ferguson '91

Lisa K. Millman '96

Sandra M. Wright
'96

Elizabeth F. Levine-Brown

'01 William J. Sweeney '01

Christopher J. Wolyniak '01

Robert P. Fenity '06

Staff Maroon Citations:

Dan Gough, Associate Vice President, Campus Safety, Environmental Health, and Emergency Management

JS Hope '97, Senior VP Finance & Administration, Chief Investment Officer

Jennifer Stone, Assistant Vice President of Advancement, Director of Professional Networks

Wm. Brian Little '64 Award for Distinguished Service:

H. Leroy Cody '71

Gretchen H. Burke '81

Christine J. Chao '86

Daniel B. Hurwitz '86

Career Initiatives Committee

Debra Locastro '05, chair, reported that Career Exploration Week in October was a success - 171 students attended the week's panels featuring 34 alumni. 100% of all 500 students who requested an alumni/parent informational interview were matched with 385 volunteers.

A number of alumni participated in ~10 Industry Roundtables to help the Career Services staff stay current in various industries so they can best conduct career advising, design programmatic initiatives, and create internship/job pathways for students excited to join specific fields.

[SophoMORE Connections](#) was entirely virtual this year and the main "program" consisted of 8 mini-modules: alumni-led cohorts of students working through 3 sessions on a singular topic. There were 250 students registered and various Alumni Council members helped to make the virtual program feel proximate with personal stories & professional advice.

The [Summer Internship Funding](#) applications opened earlier this month and we are still aggressively holding to the \$350K goal for Summer Funding but have a long way to go. Please consider contributing to this worthwhile initiative by [clicking here](#) and entering "Summer Funding" in the comment box. Alumni Council members were invited to reach out to Debra Locastro if they are interested in reviewing up to 30 Summer Funding applications in mid-March. Career Services has also scheduled an MLK Week Listening Session on February 1st for students as part of the campus' MLK celebration. They are aiming to listen and understand what students of color need from an identity-based perspective to thrive in the process of exploring and pursuing career ideas. Locastro offered thanks to Carlton Walker '10 for volunteering on behalf of the Alumni Council to help facilitate this important dialogue between students and Career Services.

Other updates include some traction on the Power Company initiative, designed to harness the energy of alumni at employers with a significant alumni presence to work to meet a Colgate fundraising goal and engagement with Career Services. Lastly, the Graduate School Access Fund selected 25 students (of 42 applicants) to receive grant offers. This new initiative has allowed Colgate to financially support low-income students and students of color in their preparation, application, and matriculation to graduate and professional schools.

Campus Connections Committee

Bruce Ferguson '91, chair, reported on the following topics during the Alumni Council meeting: Konosioni Name Change – the Campus Connections Committee was made aware that Konosioni has decided to change their name. The following two links provide some background on what has led to this decision.

- <https://thecolgamaronnews.com/25423/news/konosioni-honor-society-undergoing-name-change/>
- <https://thecolgamaronnews.com/26706/news/senior-honor-society-decides-on-interim-name/>

The Campus Connections Committee plans to meet with the group this month, January, to discuss the status of the process and to hopefully involve some alumni of Konosioni in the process.

Alumni Council Athletics Liaison Program - This new program was launched this fall and liaisons are getting introducing themselves to their respective teams. Kate Saeger '09 is the staff liaison with Athletics and will provide an update on the new program at the April Meeting. Quarantine Programming – The committee has reached out to Dr. Dorsey Spencer, Dean of Students and Paul McLaughlin, Vice President and Dean of the College and offered spring semester quarantine activities with students and the Alumni Council. These might be a variation on the Tables for 13 that were offered for the fall semester.

Communications Committee

Christopher Nulty '09, chair, reported that there is continued progress on alumni social media accounts; compared to the previous three months, from Oct 20, 2020 to Jan 15, 2021 we saw:

- Net audience growth of 328%
- # of posts increased 42.4%
- Impressions grew 208%
- Engagement with posts grew 375%

This spring, the committee will be working on plan on how to lift up the 2021 alumni awards recipients.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

Carlton Walker '10, chair, reported that the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee's engagement is going to increase as they move toward the Spring meeting. Opportunities for engaged learning, training, and student engagement are going to be high on the list of conversation topics. With Black History month upon us, Mr. Walker encouraged the entire alumni Council to give back where they can and seek out opportunities to understand and realize the importance of this month, as it is the first Black History Month after a particularly tough but transformative summer 2020.

During the Alumni Council meeting, Chris Johnson '02 (President) reported on the NEAR (North East Alumni Relations) Alumni Board meeting that took place on January 13. Colgate representatives included Tim Mansfield, Lauri Hadobas '77, Chris Johnson '02, Andrew Roffe '68, Veronica McFall '89, and Carlton Walker '10. "The conversation was enlightening as the collective group dove in deeply regarding the concerns and continued struggle that is reaching alumni of color and those individuals with a less than stellar experience at their institution".

The takeaway from the meeting includes:

1. Our issues are not unique to Colgate's Alumni Council or alumni community.

2. Peer institutions are seeing incremental change. Specifically referenced is the makeup of the institution's boards, their specific interaction with Alumni Relations, the creation of DE&I reporting and metrics, and communication as a whole.

Mr. Walker looks forward to diving into a longer meeting about these takeaways and how they might manifest themselves better within the Colgate community.

Nominations Committee

Lauri Hadobas '77, chair, reported that the Nominations Committee met throughout the summer and early fall and reviewed hundreds of alumni profiles in order to recommend a slate of new Alumni Council members for the 2021 class. The work of this committee was approved by the Alumni Council and will be shared with alumni via the Colgate Magazine and this website. As in years past, the proposed class of alumni is extremely strong and will represent Colgate alumni very well.