

# GENESEO

**SUNY Geneseo Alumni Association Meeting**  
**Doty Hall, Tower Room (Room 300)**  
**Friday 26 April 2019**  
**Minutes**

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**Attendance:**

Cassie Allen '14	Chair of Committee on Annual Giving
Donna Breskin '80	Regional Chapter Member
Stephanie Brown '04	Affinity Chapter Member
Brock Buffum '02	Regional Chapter Member
Doug Dickman '89	Alumni-at-Large Member
John Etu '12	Secretary
Abby Fordyce '19	Co-Chair of Committee on Young Alumni & Students
Kris Heeres '06	Faculty/Staff Member
Michele Miller Krause '89	Chair of the Committee on Recognition
Marissa Lewis '10	Alumni-at-Large Member
Heather Hoffman Maldonado '95	Vice President
David Miller '90	Regional Chapter Member
Denise Reed Lamoreaux '84	President
Mike Saffran '85	Faculty/Staff Member
Valarie Scott '82	Chair of Committee on Regional Chapters ( <i>joining remotely</i> )
Clint Sugnet '09	Chair of Committee on Affinity Chapters
Rahamatu Wright '02	Committee on Innovation

**Campus Administration Attendance:**

Denise A. Battles, President  
Kim Harvey, Interim Vice President for Enrollment Management  
Justin Johnston, Officer in Charge for College Advancement  
Stacey Robertson, Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Corey Wilkinson, Student Association President

**College Advancement Attendance:**

Erica Allen, Assistant Director of Annual Giving  
Suzanne Boor, Interim Secretary of Alumni Relations  
Molly Costello '15, Director of Annual Giving  
Tracy Gagnier '93, Assistant Director of Alumni Relations  
Rose Anderson Linfoot, Interim Director of Alumni Relations (*joining remotely*)  
Michelle Worden '92, Associate Director of Alumni Relations

**8:30 a.m.**

**Arrival & Continental Breakfast**  
*Doty Hall Room 300 Tower Room*

**8:50 a.m.**                                    **Welcome Remarks & Introduction of President Denise A. Battles**  
*Denise Reed Lamoreaux '84*

**8:55 a.m.**                                    **Report from the President**  
*President Denise A. Battles*

President Battles presented a report highlighting the following topics:

- Personnel transitions and recruitment
- Critical Maintenance Planning
- SUNY Board of Trustees Meeting
- Accolades

Discussion followed with questions from the board members.

A timeline for renovations in the critical maintenance plan and funding was discussed.

Rahama Wright shared her excitement at being at her first SGAA meeting.

Brock Buffum asked about the constitution and bylaw review; specifically, in regards to ex-officio and voting rights. President Battles shared her thoughts and would like the committee to do due diligence in benchmarking best practices.

Denise Reed Lamoreaux thanked President Battles for attending the meeting. Prior to departing for the College Council meeting, President Battles thanked the SGAA Board for their time and work on behalf of their alma mater.

Before the meeting moved into remarks from Provost Robertson, Denise welcomed Rahama to her first meeting and the Board gave her a warm round of applause. Rahama thanked everyone and shared that she grew up in the Syracuse area and graduated from SUNY Geneseo in 2002 with a degree in international relations and political science. She joined the Peace Corps and served in West Africa. In 2005, Rahama moved to D.C. and started a company called Shea Yeleen International Inc., which is a social enterprise that works with women from West Africa and the United States in the production and sale of shea butter products.

**9:30 a.m.**                                    **Overview of Academic Affairs**  
*Stacey Robertson*  
*Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs*

Provost Robertson reported on the topic of student retention.

Discussion followed with questions from board members.

Donna Breskin asked about results to date. Discussion followed. The College's recently developed Geneseo Points of Support (GPS) program is designed to train faculty, staff, and peers as volunteers to provide urgent support to students.

Abby Fordyce spoke from her student perspective and believes that the academic support services office is improving.

Marissa Lewis asked about the overlap between academic support and career services. Provost Robertson credits Vice President Bob Bonfiglio with moving the office to a more holistic approach. Students meet with them to design their educational career embracing their values, passions, talents and skills while recognizing the need for a meaningful career.

Doug Dickman commented on the difference in support services from when he attended Geneseo. When he was on campus, activities kept the students involved. Today's students appear to be more involved in digital activities and online connections. Doug sees this as playing a major role in their isolation and questioned if Residence Life or another department is able to develop programs to keep today's students anchored to campus.

Dave Miller asked if there were any analytics and if it is possible for an SGAA member to reach out on an individual basis to check in and offer assistance. Discussion followed.

SGAA President Denise Reed Lamoreaux said alumni board members wrote notes to accepted students this spring encouraging them to attend. She said a process could be put in place to continue points of contact and engagement. Provost Robertson looks forward to working with the SGAA board in this regard.

Doug suggested if each student was assigned an SGAA member to whom they could reach out at any time, that it could help retention. Both SGAA President Denise Reed Lamoreaux and Provost Robertson agreed and will pursue the idea.

Brock Buffum asked how Geneseo compares with other SUNY schools and peer institutions and if this is an industry-wide problem. The Provost noted that Geneseo has an 86% retention rate, which is higher than most other institutions. Our goal is to attain a 90% retention rate. The retention problem is being experienced at every comprehensive college, and many are envious of our success.

Stephanie Brown inquired whether or not the data on students who leave identify them as freshmen, sophomores or juniors. The Provost responded that freshmen were the highest percentage, followed by sophomores. Once students become juniors they are likely to finish.

SGAA President Denise Reed Lamoreaux expressed appreciation to Provost Robertson for her time and presentation.

**10:10 a.m.**

**SGAA Board Business**

*Denise Reed Lamoreaux '84*

SGAA President Denise Reed Lamoreaux motioned to approve the minutes from the October 5, 2018 Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Cassie Allen. SGAA President Denise Reed Lamoreaux then made a motion, seconded by Donna Breskin, to accept the minutes from the March 22, 2019 conference call meeting.

**10:15 a.m.**                                 **Break**

**10:30 a.m.**                                 **Nominations**  
*Brock Buffum '02*

Brock Buffum reported that currently there are seven Board members whose terms are expiring in 2019. All seven have agreed to stay on for the purpose of continuity. Going forward terms will need to be staggered. Brock made a motion that the following Board members be approved for re-election for a second term beginning July 1, 2019, and expiring on June 30, 2022:

- Cassie Allen '14
- Donna Breskin '80
- Kris Heeres '06
- Michele Krause '89
- Marissa Lewis '10
- Thomas McCarthy '17
- Mike Saffran '85

Denise Reed Lamoreaux seconded the motion. The Nominations Committee will continue to work with the Advancement/Alumni staff to identify additional talented alumni for nomination to the SGAA Board. Please advise members of the Nominations Committee (Brock Buffum, Doug Dickman, Clare Cusack or Rose Anderson Linfoot) if you are interested in nominating someone.

Brock Buffum commented that Erica Bishop '07 resigned her Board position effective April 9, 2019. Erica shared with Rose Anderson Linfoot and Denise Reed Lamoreaux that she can no longer devote the time and resources to serve. The committee decided not to fill that position at this time.

SGAA President Denise Reed Lamoreaux reported that Erica had been thanked for the time she had served on the Board.

With no further discussion, appreciation was expressed to all members who agreed to renew their terms.

**10:45 a.m.**                                 **Committee Reports**

Clint Sugnet '09 reported on Affinity Chapters:

Greek Life and athletic groups are moving forward with assistance from Tracy Gagnier. Further opportunities for involvement are being identified. One of the most successful new developments that has taken place in the last year is the upcoming inaugural Geneseo First Response 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. This database has been primarily expanded through Facebook promotion.

There are several groups, such as club activities, which do not have members coded in the College database.

During the upcoming 2019 Reunion in June, the following affinities will gather:

- Onondaga Hall Inaugural
- Arethusa 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- Phi Lambda 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- Prometheus Gathering of Classes 1956 - 1980
- Sig Ep Reunion
- TKE 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

For the upcoming Homecoming & Family Weekend 2019, the first alumni and family Shabbat Service will be held. There will also be a 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 2004 men's soccer team and an alumni presidents' panel for Homecoming & Family Weekend. In addition, Thomas McCarthy '17 is planning to have alumni participate in the 2020 Lavender Graduation Ceremony next May.

It was reported that future plans are to increase affinities through volunteer engagement and identifying new affinity programs.

Brock Buffum asked if it is possible to obtain information from someone other than the individual or must it be a self-identification process only. Tracy Gagnier replied that it does not have to be self-identification. Volunteers compile lists from various sources on campus. Discussion followed regarding a process which would allow the sharing of information to alumni and campus volunteers.

Dave Miller asked about the difference between an affinity group and a chapter. Tracy replied that affinity is a generic definition for whatever ties alumni to the College and a chapter is the more formal identification of volunteers sharing a geographic region.

Clint Sugnet stated that the committee drafted a handbook which outlines a streamlined process for the creation of an official chapter versus an affinity group.

Dave Miller asked what the value is to the Alumni Association to form an official chapter. Tracy Gagnier explained a chapter has the benefit of the resources of the Alumni Relations Office. This includes sending newsletters, assisting with marketing and planning events, advertising, financial resources, give-away gifts and connecting students with alumni. Stephanie Brown added that her AGO sorority celebrated an anniversary several years ago, and the Alumni Relations Office allowed the group to register through their website and collected the registration fees. Chapters need help to coordinate and manage the group, and some level of formality is needed to get College assistance.

John Etu asked if the College Facebook page asks alumni to self-identify. Clint said that the focus is on larger groups and those already identified as an affinity group. John also wanted to know if Geneseo collected information from graduating seniors. Tracy explained the Senior Salute event, which is three days of information gathering as students pick up their caps and gowns. The Alumni

Relations Office requests non-student emails, as the student email accounts are deactivated after graduation. Students are also encouraged to go online to keep their mailing addresses updated and list their top two affinities to Geneseo.

Doug Dickman asked if the College offered vanity addresses to alumni. It was stated we do not at this time.

Cassie Allen '14 reported on Annual Giving:

Justin Johnston, serving as Officer in Charge of Advancement, will present the fiscal year 2019 numbers later in today's meeting.

It was stated that guidelines for constituent information sharing are being developed. These guidelines will assist with peer-to-peer fundraising and alumni engagement. It is anticipated that these will be shared with the board prior to the fall 2019 board meeting.

Board members were reminded that the fiscal year ends June 30<sup>th</sup> and their annual gift would be appreciated to reach their board goal of 100 percent participation. Please take a moment to share on social media to encourage your family and friends to make a gift to the College.

Doug Dickman '89 reported on Bylaw Review:

Prior to our fall Board Meeting, the Bylaw Review team received a charge from President Battles requesting modifications to the SGAA bylaws. It was noted that this document, which had been drafted with the assistance of a consultant, was too cumbersome and outdated. It needed to be streamlined, specifically removing the Assembly language. It was then reviewed by robbie routenberg in the Office of Diversity and Equity and suggestions on gender neutrality wording were included in the proposed amendments. Doug asked for any additional questions or comments.

Denise shared that she and robbie routenberg met to consider adding a Diversity Committee. robbie is very pleased that SGAA would consider alumni focus on diversity, inclusion and belonging. Denise then read to the Board the statement that Denise and robbie came up with to describe this ad hoc committee and a plan for an annual event sponsored jointly with the SGAA and the Office of Diversity and Equity. robbie and Denise will meet next week to discuss further details of what the event might look like, perhaps engaging student clubs and organizations on campus in a Diversity Expo. Anyone who might be interested in being involved to frame what the event might look like, please let Denise know.

Donna asked about extending an invitation to accepted students who are not on campus yet. Denise agreed that would be a good idea to consider for encouraging students to attend. Val Scott is very interested to be included.

Doug went on to discuss another ad hoc committee; the strategic planning committee. This committee is a work in progress, perhaps coming and going as necessary.

With no other discussion, the vote is being tabled as the bylaws and constitution are going back to the College and the vote will take place during a conference call early summer.

Rahama asked about the President's involvement and if the SGAA Board serves at the pleasure of the President. Brock questioned the role of the SGAA board and its relationship with the College. Rose responded that the SGAA is interdependent with the College in its purpose, organization and operation and serves to support the mission, vision and values of the College.

In reviewing the proposed amendments with President Battles, she asked that the best practices of all alumni associations be considered. It is Rose's intention that during the conference call in early summer that we solidify this and the guidelines for information sharing. Doug stressed that the intention for the group was not to diverge from the College, but for the good of our alumni. A good document can be changed as needed. Rahama does feel that the President should be involved for alignment with the College. Doug mentioned that if the President and the vice-president are considered full Board members, then they should be present at Board meetings going forward.

Stephanie asked if there is a strategic plan for the SGAA and is it necessary? A strategic plan would be the piece that tied us to the alignment of the College, and the President and the vice-president would need to be at the meetings for that discussion. Doug suggested that Rose take the suggestion to the President that the Vice President of College Advancement be a full Board member with attendance at every meeting. There followed a discussion about the attendance of the President and Vice President of College Advancement, their status of ex-officio, and executive sessions when needed.

Brock ended the discussion with a "hats off" to Doug for all his work on this committee.

Michele Krause '89 reported on Recognition:

*Board members received the following proposed slate of nominations for SGAA Awards:*

Professional Achievement Award – John C. Lombardo '74  
Outstanding Young Alum Award – Chad Salitan '09  
Distinguished Service Award – Frank Vafier  
Honorary Lifetime Membership – Marilyn Moore

With the exception of the Distinguished Service Award, which will be given during the President's Gala on October 18, 2019, all awards will be given this summer at Reunion 2019.

Donna shared with the Board that Mary Luckern '53 had recently passed away and asked for a moment of reflection in her memory. She was a long-time member of the former Geneseo Alumni Association board, College Council and generous supporter of the College. Mary gave Donna her "Geneseo Moment" and that began Donna's long-time alumni connection to Geneseo.

Brock asked for clarification as to "Young Alumni." It was clarified that it is up to 10 years from graduation.

There were no further questions.

Valarie Scott '82 reported on Regional Chapters:

Val apologized for not being physically at the meeting. She reported on the 5<sup>th</sup> annual GREAT Knight stating there were 25 events in 2019 with 550 registered attendees. Several of the SGAA Board members either organized or attended one of these events. Appreciation was expressed to all board members who participated. It was further noted that a survey was emailed to everyone with photographs.

Upcoming events were mentioned, including June 23<sup>rd</sup> in Troy, N.Y., the Tri-City Valley Cats; June 28<sup>th</sup> in Rochester, N.Y., the Rochester Red Wings; August 7<sup>th</sup> in Saratoga, N.Y., SUNY Day at the Races; and September 26<sup>th</sup> in Washington, D.C., an event hosted by SGAA Board member Rahama Wright. Val reminded everyone to check the alumni website frequently for upcoming events.

Abby Fordyce '19 reported on Young Alumni and Students:

Abby reported about the current project being developed called, "Welcome to the City." There will be three simultaneous events going on in Rochester, NYC and D.C. to greet and welcome recent alumni to a new city and introduce them to alumni in their area. The date for this event is August 27<sup>th</sup> and these events will be hosted by alumni living in those areas.

The committee has also been sponsoring some Facebook posts on the Alumni page in an effort to engage young alumni. Each month there is a new post and a prize is offered for tagging friends in the post or encouraging friends to engage with the College.

Abby is also the representative for the Undergraduate Alumni Association (UAA). As Abby is graduating in a few weeks, this is her final SGAA meeting. A new representative will be attending meetings in the future. It was noted that UAA membership and attendance at the meetings has significantly increased in the last four years.

Molly shared that Erica Allen has been hired as the new assistant for annual giving and she will be taking over the role of the staff liaison to the Committee on Young Alumni and Students.

John remarked on what a great idea the "Welcome to the City" events will be, and he hopes that Albany will be included as an added destination in the future. There was Board discussion about the excitement of this event.

Denise presented a Geneseo blanket to Abby in appreciation for her service on the SGAA Board and wished her the best of luck with her upcoming graduation and future endeavors. The Board gave Abby a warm round of applause. Abby thanked everyone and shared her plans of going to Rwanda through the Peace Corps.

**11:45 a.m.**

**Overview of Student Association**  
*Corey Wilkinson '19, President*



Corey shared the mission, vision and values of Student Association. The Student Association is a platform organization specifically purposed for the advancement and development of undergraduate student life. It aims to advocate for and engage all activity fee paying student to collaborate and to provide services, programs, and opportunities to enhance students' liberal arts education. Corey reviewed the organization structure indicating seven key areas: Alliance for Community Enrichment, Inter-Resident Council, Finance Committee, Student Senate, Academic Affairs Committee, Geneseo Campus Activities Board, and Public Relations Committee. Corey stated he was pleased to serve as the Student Association President and looked forward to serving the college in the future as a proud alumnus.

**12:15 p.m. SGAA Board/Student Networking Lunch**

**1:45 p.m. Overview of Enrollment Management**  
*Kim Harvey, Interim Vice President for Enrollment Management*

Kim provided a PowerPoint presentation with a full overview of the enrollment. All Board members received a copy of this PowerPoint and one can be requested from the Alumni Relations Office.

Doug commented on the recently launched Geneseo 360, an online program for accepted students to communicate with the College and each other. It was mentioned that there is also a portal to engage parents. A discussion revolved around this platform.

Dave questioned what the targeted scholarship is needed to keep Geneseo competitive with other schools. Kim replied that to raise our profile and encourage the best applicants, Geneseo needs to offer scholarships in the range of \$5,000-\$6,000. The College is tracking the aid packages of other public and private institutions.

Doug asked if the retention rate of transfer students is tracked, and Kim confirmed that it is.

**2:15 p.m. Overview of College Advancement**  
*Justin Johnston, Officer in Charge & AVP, College*

Justin shared a PowerPoint presentation on the following topics:

- Staffing updates
- Vacancies and pending searches
- FY19 giving
- Accolades
- Upcoming events
- Appreciation to SGAA Board

Dave asked about the timeline for hiring a new Director of Alumni Relations. Justin replied that it would probably be some time in 2020, but he can't confirm an exact date. Rose Anderson Linfoot has agreed to stay in the interim position to fill the gap.

There was a discussion about increasing participation rates, alumni giving, peer solicitation to friends/family, new donors versus retaining current donors, focusing resources, consistent donors, and student giving.

Donna suggested SGAA Board members reach out to student donors to thank them for making a gift and welcome them into the SUNY Geneseo Alumni Association.

Rose reported on the work the alumni team has done to define guidelines on information sharing. They are on track to present this to the board in early summer.

Brock asked if the President's Gala in 2019 would be the same format as last year's Gala. Justin responded that it will not due to the feedback received from alumni and guests.

A further discussion followed regarding naming rights and SUNY naming policies.

Kris Heeres commended the College Advancement team, and Justin in particular, for moving the division forward and keeping up with the good work during the leadership change. The Board gave Justin and the Advancement/Alumni Team a warm round of applause.

**2:45 p.m.**

**Break**

**3:00 p.m.**

**SGAA Goals:**

Dave Miller reported on goals, measures and accountability for the SGAA Board. After a discussion, the following goals were identified for the SGAA board:

- 50% attendance at the 6/7 Reunion Brunch
- 100% participation to make an annual gift
- Share and like at least one social media post monthly
- 50% participation in writing note cards to encourage admitted students to attend

The discussion then continued regarding metrics and standard operating procedures to clarify and identify goals. In addition, board members suggested that orientation packets be developed for new board members.

**3:30 p.m.**

**Information Sharing Tools/U-Knight Demo/Google Docs**

*Tracy Gagnier, Assistant Director of Alumni Relations*

Tracy shared a PowerPoint presentation on sharing information through Google drive, updating personal information on the alumni website and reviewing the alumni calendar for upcoming events. Stephanie reminded everyone that to open a Google drive you need to have a Gmail address. Tracy offered to assist anyone with a Google document to engage their affinity group. The Alumni Office is able to send a mass email on behalf of an academic department or an affinity group. Tracy reviewed the concept of an alumni online book club. Several members are interested.

Denise thanked the Board and the staff for their engagement and the continued support during the leadership transition. She looks forward to moving forward on the metrics of engagement and strategic planning.

**4:00 p.m.**

**Meeting Adjourned**