

**Big East Conference Alumni Professionals Organization
(BECAPO)
Annual Meeting
March 12, 2004**

Minutes for March 12, 2004

The BECAPO committee met March 12, 2004 during the 2004 Big East Tournament. Syracuse University once again hosted the meeting at Lubin House. Donna Arbide, University of Miami Alumni Association, called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

- I. **Welcome and Call to Order (Chair, Donna Arbide).** Recognition of breakfast sponsors Thomas P. Gohagan & Company and Washington Mutual.
 - A. Dionne Chrissovergis gave an overview of her company, Washington Mutual. They are involved in bank and home loans. Home loans are a new affinity program they are offering. The four components of what they can offer to the universities are commissions, sponsorship opportunities, advertising dollars, and donations.
 - B. Self-introductions by all BECAPO attendees present were conducted.
- II. Consent Agenda items were approved by the group unanimously, which included minutes of the March 14, 2003 meeting and approval of the nominees established by the Nominations Committee (nominees were Elaine Meisner of the University of Pittsburgh as Vice-Chair and Stephen Douglas, West Virginia University as Treasurer). John Feudo, University of Connecticut, who served as Vice-Chair for 2003-2004, becomes Chair of the organization for 2004-2005.

2004-2005 BECAPO Officers

John Feudo, University of Connecticut – Chair
Elaine Meisner, University of Pittsburgh – Vice-Chair
Stephen Douglas, West Virginia University – Treasurer

III. **Reports**

A. **Treasurer's Report (Stephen Douglas)**

Joe Burt is no longer with Seton Hall so was unable to be present at this meeting. Steve reported there is no money in the budget this year from sponsors. However, the group did receive sponsorship money to pay for meals for this meeting. We had also decided as a group not to ask for sponsorship money for the Big East Extravaganza since not all of the BECAPO schools participate in the event.

B. **Travel (Tina Casella, Syracuse University)**

Tina presented a proposal from Clipper Cruise Line (Intrav) for a Big East Pacific Northwest trip for the fall of 2005. Some members of the group asked if it was possible to hold the trip in June or July so as not to interfere with possible Homecoming Weekends. The group approved the trip as the Big East trip for 2005 and asked Tina to look into an earlier date. **Tina subsequently discovered that this particular itinerary is only offered in the fall and that information was communicated via the BECAPO Listserv.**

IV. **Networking Event in New York City (Keri DeMayo, Rutgers University)**

Keri reported that the networking event, which was being planned for New York City, did not occur due to lack of resources and manpower. Rutgers, St. John's, Seton Hall, Connecticut, and Syracuse had volunteered to plan the event for BECAPO. Donna reminded the group that the Washington, DC event attracted approximately 350 people and there was a lot of energy at the event and very positive feelings amongst the attendees. However, it took a lot of staff time to plan and execute. There was a staff member dedicated to the project. BECAPO would need a point person for something like this.

Keri proposed a group called VIBES – Volunteers in the Big East. Everyone thinks it's a great idea. Keri says if it works in New York, then we can take it to other places. All of the Big East schools would participate.

Villanova does a Big East boat cruise. There are Big East events in Boston and Chicago, too.

V. **Transition in the Big East**

John led a discussion on whether or not BECAPO wants to continue to exist. There are three schools leaving and five coming in. Do we want an organization? If so, is it this or something else? We need to look at finances. Last year we didn't cover the cost of the Big East Extravaganza. What is the Mission Statement for BECAPO? What happened to the web site? It had been housed at Georgetown at one point.

The organization has been in existence since March of 1992. Lee Patouillet, University of Pittsburgh, gave a historical perspective of BECAPO.

We don't want us to be communities of practice. We don't want to charge each school dues. We don't want a formal structure. We already pay dues to CASE and other organizations. We don't want this group funded by us. We need to make the events self-sufficient. We want an informality of structure. There should be no limit on who can come. This should be a clearinghouse of ideas.

Gary Olsen, Villanova University, says the expectations of growing our budgets are in tact.

We can do some benchmarking. We should become a programming body – that’s a better use of each other. Networking within the group is most valuable. Those schools not participating probably don’t view how we can help them.

Since we don’t ask for sponsorships for the Big East Fan Extravaganza, should we have each school contribute \$100 each towards the event? Or should we charge a little more to the sponsors of our meeting? We need to be careful of our corporate sponsors and only make one ask. A suggestion was made to resurrect the web site and have a link from the web site to a sponsorship recognition page. Maybe we could have a half a dozen sponsors and list which events they helped us with.

Some staff announcements: Keri DeMayo was promoted into Bob Marguccio’s position. Paul Clifford is leaving UConn for East Carolina University as an Associate Vice Chancellor.

The group decided to invite the new schools to join our organization and see what happens. It was suggested that the Executive Directors get in touch with their colleagues in the new schools and the schools who don’t participate in our meetings and events. The question was asked do we agree that there is a value in having an organization? The feeling by the group is yes and that we should go ahead and invite the new schools to join us. John said he would send a letter, which should be followed up with personal contact by one of us. Lee said he would contact Cincinnati; John will contact South Florida and Marquette; Steve will contact Louisville; and Gary will contact DePaul.

We will also see if we can house the BECAPO web site on the CASE web site. They are already hosting our Listserv.

We decided our group should offer a balance of professional development and programming. We should offer one networking event a year. This year may be a pre-transition to what we want to become. That may change, just maybe not this year. We don’t have to be “one size fits all.” As far as sponsorship and finances, we should be realistic about sponsorship and secure that. Maybe we could give sponsors access to the Listserv as a way of introducing them. Each school needs to make a commitment to take phone calls from the sponsors. We need to have our presidents and CEOs know who we are, that we exist in addition to the athletic conference. We should try to get on their radar screens. We need two or three people from this group to think through sponsorships. We need people to think through who we are and how to gain visibility with our athletic directors and CEOs and presidents.

Keri, Elaine Meisner, Kristen Koehler, Seton Hall University, Elaine Cardone, Syracuse University, and Eric Quisenberry, Villanova University volunteered to work on VIBE. Tina and Tracy Krulik, Georgetown University volunteered to work on sponsorships. Gary and Lee will work on the background of the organization. John will draft a letter to send to the five new schools. We will also come up with a plan of how to contact schools who have not been participating in our organization.

VI. Gary Olsen/Donna Arbide – Revenue Generating Processes and Products

Gary led a discussion on revenue generating processes. We are going to have to continue to look for outside sources of income. Sponsorships are an untapped or modestly tapped market. We should look at joint sponsorships with our athletic departments. We need to establish parameters – how far will we go with it? There could be legal issues. We should look for programs we can offer on a national basis. We have to spend some money to make some money.

Each school should assess its inventory – what can we offer to a potential corporate sponsor – events, electronic media, print media. Electronic media is most attractive. We need to be aware of anti-spam laws. Most of us undervalue/undersell what we can offer. There can be cash agreements and trade agreements. From a corporation’s perspective, trade agreements don’t show up in cash statements. We should be looking for ways to use in-kind gifts. Look at our administrative requirements. Villanova is going to hire a full-time person to work on sponsorship opportunities and he/she will be responsible for record keeping, hospitality – invitations to events, tickets to games, and contractual issues. Villanova is looking to create long-term partnerships. We need to understand what our obligation is as a partner.

Gary reported that Villanova links alumni relations to student recruitment. They take “friend raising” out of the equation. On the application for admissions they ask, “who influenced your decision,” and a lot of times the answer is alumni. Gary calculates the alumni office has raised a lot more money than his development office has created.

Jodi Kaplan, University of Connecticut, announced that the Council for Alumni and Marketing Membership Professionals (CAMMP) will be meeting in Connecticut, 7/28-30/04.

Donna showed the group a flash presentation. She then opened up the discussion to see who the various universities presently work with.

Nelnet or E-grad has already made their guarantee in a half a year. Some political issues have kept people from doing it.

Signature Wines.

The question was raised whether or not people do RFPs. Elaine answered that Pitt does unless there is a distinct leader in the industry.

A question was raised as to who owns a program. There are issues with communication to the alumni body. There are realistically a small percentage of people who complain. Everyone agreed they don’t give vendors email addresses. More and more companies are putting marketing dollars in their contracts. CAMMP gets a lot of new vendors to come to their conference. A lot of new products and services have come out of the CAMMP conference. It was requested that the list of vendors be sent to the Listserv.

Some restaurants accept alumni membership cards for savings, but there isn’t actually a relationship with those restaurants.

It was brought up that we have to be concerned about our image. We don't want to "sell our souls" for the revenue. We are "judged by the company we keep."

VII. Thorny Issues: Email Policies and Privacy Policies

A discussion ensued on the five-day Listserv that some of the alumni offices use. Someone from Rutgers offered to send the guidelines to our Listserv after several of us questioned what it is. Elaine mentioned that Pitt uses Harris as well.

Everyone links to the schools and colleges from their on-line newsletters. Pitt has someone in their central alumni office who works with the schools and colleges.

Someone mentioned other alumni products: Jostens and Acciris.

John thanked Donna Arbide and Tom Tillar, Virginia Tech for their years of service and dedication to this group. John presented Donna with a gift and will mail something to Tom.

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m. BECAPO participants departed for a luncheon in the second floor meeting room of Lubin House, sponsored by Harris Publishing. Members of Harris Publishing joined our group for lunch.

Minutes submitted by Tina Casella, Syracuse, 2/25/05.