

**Big East Conference Alumni Professionals Organization  
(BECAPO)  
Annual Meeting  
March 11, 2005**

**Minutes for March 11, 2005**

The BECAPO committee met March 11, 2005 during the 2005 Big East Tournament. Syracuse University once again hosted the meeting at Lubin House. John Feudo, University of Connecticut Alumni Association, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**Welcome and Call to Order (Chair, John Feudo).** Recognition of breakfast sponsor INTRAV/Clipper and lunch sponsor Harris. John also recognized WorldTek Travel for their donation of two airline tickets to be used as prizes for today's meeting and Alumni Travel Benefits (Cendant Travel) for their donation of three vacation properties to be used as prizes for yesterday's Big East Extravaganza (two) and today's meeting (one).

John welcomed everyone, especially Donna O'Donnell from Louisville, one of the newest members of the Big East Conference and BECAPO. John thanked Jane Henn for her role in planning the meeting and Syracuse for hosting the group.

John mentioned the Big East Extravaganza on Thursday was a great event and had over 900 people in attendance. He declared it was the best Big East Extravaganza so far.

Self-introductions by all BECAPO attendees present were conducted.

**WorldTek Travel**

John invited WorldTek Travel to make a brief presentation to the group. James O'Connor spoke on behalf of WorldTek. He introduced Topper Deluciani from WorldTek to the group. WorldTek specializes in collegiate travel. Jim says, "It's what we do." This encompasses meeting planning, group travel, vacation charters – they are a full service travel management company. They offer fan, alumni, and donor packages and work with students, athletics, and businesses. They just received a contract with the State of Wisconsin – sports association partners. WorldTek can provide travel arrangements for regular season athletic travel, post-season athletic donor and fan travel, e.g., Bowl games, Final Four, and also Homecoming, Reunion, and Orientation. Jim says, "You get it **all** with a WorldTek partnership. He feels they are only as good as the last thing they did for the University.

**Alumni Travel Benefits**

Teresa Baumbach spoke about University Alumni Travel Vacations. One would require a six character ID # for access to the website – [www.alumnitravelbenefits.com](http://www.alumnitravelbenefits.com). Universities are only required to do two things – post the link on their websites and get the word out. Teresa could make flyers for us and be present at our events. They could customize the landing site on the web. This is a family-oriented program. They are vacation condo rentals for \$349.00 a week

and \$299.00 a week in April/May. Our alumni would also have access to a hot line with vacation guides.

Reports and revenue are generated on a quarterly basis. Teresa says there's nothing more important than spending time with family.

At this time, two round trip airline tickets and a one-week vacation were raffled off to those present.

### **Big East Alumni Tour**

Tina Casella presented Clipper Cruise Line's Exploring the Yachtsman's Caribbean trip, January 23-30, 2006 on the 102-passenger *Nantucket Clipper* to be promoted as the Big East Alumni Tour for 2006. She took a moment to explain to any newcomers in the group that BECAPO picks at least one trip annually to market as a Big East Alumni Tour. Each school is given the opportunity to offer it to their alumni, but it certainly is not required. The group voted and it was unanimously decided that BECAPO supports and endorses this trip as the 2006 Big East Alumni Tour. Each school's sales rep from Clipper will be in touch regarding the specifics of offering the tour.

### **The Importance of Alumni Relations in the Big Picture**

Lee Patouillet from the University of Pittsburgh introduced Al Novak, Vice Chancellor of Institutional Advancement. Al has a degree from St. Vincent College and that's also where he held his first job.

Al had a Power Point presentation, which will be electronically distributed to the group. Al talked about the importance of Alumni Relations in the big picture – how Alumni Relations at Pitt is making a difference. He sees alumni as an integral part of Institutional Advancement. The Alumni Association has a 10-point plan. Lee stressed how these 10 points are used to articulate a clear message. What are the measurables? How is this 10-point plan integrated into IA? Pitt has a strategic planning committee made up of former presidents, new and older board members, students, and trustees. They have met four times already with one or two more meetings to go. They got feedback from an audit of other constituents. John mentioned Connecticut always includes someone who has not been involved in the Alumni Association.

Al mentioned the president of the Alumni Association is not in Pittsburgh so that provides a completely different view of the world. It's important to be proving value along the way. The Vice Chancellor comes to meetings of the executive board and the general alumni board. He mixes up his messages so he doesn't just talk about fundraising. Advancement is more art than science.

In summary, Al says to engage academic and administrative groups in strategic planning; maintain open communication with lay constituents; and be willing to create change. Pitt found out Athletics didn't see value in the pre-game tents. Pitt plays a more formal role in the nomination of trustees. The Chancellor speaks to the alumni board periodically. The Chancellor would say the top three priorities are: recruiting, government relations, and fundraising. Pitt used to draw 30% of its student population from the State of Pennsylvania, now it's 12%.

The program audit says the Alumni Association should come up with ideas and hand them off – the Chancellor thinks it is great. It's important to look for ways to partner. Lee is part of the IA senior staff and is a partner at the capital campaign talks. CASE says senior folks should talk with presidents and senior people. Senior groups should be together. At Pitt, they have added a fundraiser to the Alumni Association. The credit card revenues aren't where the projections were so need to bridge that gap.

Gary Olsen from Villanova says we need to carefully choose what we report back to higher ups. He discovered that legacies or family members are responsible for giving \$50 million – that opens the trustees' eyes – this generates big revenue during Homecoming and Reunion. The Chancellor loves the big parties. Villanova's agenda is a broad agenda.

### **Alumni Career Fairs – New Opportunities**

Elaine Meisner talked about the Big East Career Fair held earlier this week in New York City. Mike Cahill from Syracuse University's Center for Career Services spoke to the group. Mike explained this started in previous years as an E-Fair through the career component of [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com). For the E-Fair this year, there were 10 schools that said they would like to participate. There were 128 employers, 470 jobs, and 848 applicants between students and alumni. There were 25,000 hits on the web site. They will repeat the E-Fair again – there are employers signing up now for it. They raised \$9,000 to split among the 10 schools.

The Big East Career Fair was held at the Sheraton at 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 54<sup>th</sup> Street. There were 600 attendees between students and alumni – 70% of those who attended were alumni. Jane sent the message about it to the group in New York City and some employers attended because of that email message. The Big East may have some partnering and sponsorship opportunities.

Elaine mentioned our offices should connect with employers who are alumni and connect with our career officers on our campuses. Next year's Big East tournament will be held March 8-11, 2006. We may be able to help market the Career Fair and get alumni to be employer reps. We could consider joining with them to host a reception and/or have a table at the Fair. When the Career Services group has its next conference call, Mike will express the interest of this organization to partner with them. Elaine also mentioned maybe a rep from our group would like to be available for the conference calls as well.

Mike mentioned Georgetown did not participate in the Career Fair this week.

### **On-Line Communities**

A discussion ensued regarding on-line communities. Pitt is going through a re-bid process. The field is changing dramatically. The challenge is to stay ahead of the curve or at least know the curve is coming. Some of the companies are Contera, PCI, and IAC. In Circle is not an on-line community.

## **Alumni Associations Involvement in Fundraising**

Rutgers went from volunteers to paid student callers. Some volunteers are upset that they can't do it anymore, but they are being redirected to work on raising money for their own club scholarships. Rutgers requires \$25,000 to fund a scholarship.

West Virginia has an Executive Director for Development now to raise money for the new alumni center.

Villanova holds golf outings to raise money for scholarships – they raise \$1,000 to \$15,000 a year.

Upscale and high-end events are now being held.

## **Corporate Sponsorship Guidelines for Alumni Clubs/Groups**

A question was raised as to how many people have written policies for sponsorships for clubs? How do you give the sponsors credit at the local level? We need to watch larger sponsors of the association.

Connecticut is creating a corporate relations manager position that is commission based. They will be looking at dollars vs. benefits. One central person will be responsible for that to be sure the sponsors are getting something in return. They would not issue a tax receipt. We need to be careful. Connecticut said Athletics and Foundations have bought into it as another way to help the University. They have agreed they will not ask for sponsorship money from affinity partners. This person will not be involved in fundraising. This person will be soliciting corporate sponsorships for something in return.

Brian McMorrow mentioned we should be celebrating our minor sports. However, the Big East conference doesn't allow music at those events. He would like to see this group write a resolution about it.

In a few minutes we will discuss our affiliation with the Big East.

It was suggested we write a letter to the director of catering at the Garden to tell them how wonderful it was yesterday and to have that also reflected in the minutes.

Someone asked if anyone else is doing alumni events for other constituents. Pitt says they are, but see it as part of their role. It was mentioned it is a budget/funding issue. Gary said they often have trouble saying no. It was mentioned we need to see how it relates to the mission and strategic plan.

A question was raised if anyone is offering Collegiate Sports on Demand and the answer was no.

## **The Power of Communication**

Gary shared a story about the power of communication. One person sent one email. A faculty member didn't think and the student made it an issue. Once an email is sent out, it's gone.

The second issue is entertainment. People look to it for news. This forces universities to look at missions vs. practical ways of the world.

### **Votes/Approvals**

The 2004 BECAPO meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

The 2005-2006 Slate of Officers was approved unanimously.

### **Big East Conference**

A discussion ensued about the new Big East Conference. We are thrilled that Donna joined us this year. What do we want as an organization? Our by-laws are  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a page long. Gary and Lee have been working on the history of the organization. We need to discuss where we are and what do we want to be now? We don't use the Big East Conference marks or logos. We have to use a disclaimer for our tour.

Should we have a BECAPO web site? John has spoken with CASE about hosting a web site for us and they agreed. CASE has [www.becapo.org](http://www.becapo.org) registered as a domain name for us. Gary and Lee handed out copies of the history and by-laws of the organization. The group agreed if we don't keep a web site fresh, people would stop going to it.

Who's our audience? We could put 16 links on there. Using our Listserv, everyone should provide his or her contact information and areas of expertise. The listing of chapters and clubs and contact names should always be kept up to date. We could list other Big East contacts. We should direct people to the BECAPO web site. It will have links to the member schools and a roster of BECAPO members. We could list the dates of our next annual meeting and have our sponsors on there. We could archive presentations, e.g., Al's presentation. Lee said one goal has been to keep this group manageable. We could have a separate page for finding other Big East clubs and then link to the clubs' web sites.

John volunteered to work with CASE on getting our web site up and running.

The Big East logo was used at the Career Fair. The Big East was behind their event since they are associated with finding jobs for students. However, 70% of the attendees were alumni.

West Virginia may have gotten "soft" permission. We could take an informal approach through one of our ADs. The Big East has a presidents group. Pitt's Chancellor is currently the chair of the group. Al is willing to work with Lee to work with the presidents. We have to be clear about what we want. Is it official affiliation? What if something happens on a trip or at an event? Is the Big East liable? Maybe two or three of us should meet with the appropriate people. Should this group ask the officers to come up with a plan? We decided to approach the presidents and we are encouraged to have dialogue with our ADs to make sure the ADs are involved from the start. It was suggested the officers talk to the presidents and the presidents talk to the ADs.

We should also see where we are going as an organization? Do we need to be that formal with by-laws? As we move forward, we could link from the Big East to our web site. We could

promote our events through the Conference. Our goal would be to have reps from the Conference attend the Extravaganza and Career Fair.

Also, what are the “costs” involved? Could we no longer secure our own sponsorships, e.g., the \$10,000 from MBNA for yesterday?

We want to be sure the minutes reflect we are thanking our sponsors. We thank MBNA for their support of yesterday’s event. That was \$10,000 in cash, which kept our costs down. In addition to that, they did the picture booth and set up the entire room and did banners for us. We need to send a note to them as well.

A question came up as to whether or not we should create a BECAPO checking account. It is felt that the treasurer is able to run the finances through his or her university account. For yesterday’s Extravaganza, the checks should be sent to West Virginia.

Just to recap, we need a breakdown of everyone’s responsibilities for the web site.

We should have an informal discussion with the new members of the Big East. Elaine will send a letter and invitation to the new schools inviting them to join this organization.

Elaine thanked John for his leadership this past year.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Tina Casella, 11/16/05.