

**Big East Conference Alumni Professionals Organization
(BECAPO)**

Winter Meeting

November 17, 2005

CASE Headquarters, Washington DC

Members in Attendance:

(Seton Hall) Kristen Koehler, Joette Rosato; (UConn) John Feudo; (Rutgers) Lisa English; (Syracuse) Don Doerr, Dug Gillis, Timothy Mahar; (Cincinnati) Dave Macejko, Phil Lanham; (USF) Lisa Lewis; (WVU) Steve Douglas, Tara Curtis; (Pitt) Elaine Meisner, Alyson Wallach, Julie Shepard; (Louisville) Jimmy Ford, Jonathan Israel; (Marquette) Meg Husband.

Overview

The winter BECAPO meeting met November 17, 2005 following a networking reception at the Hotel Washington on November 16. CASE hosted the business meeting at their national headquarters. Elaine Meisner, University of Pittsburgh and BECAPO Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Minutes from March 11, 2005 Annual BECAPO Meeting

These minutes were distributed and were approved with no changes after a motion by Don Doerr.

Welcome and Introductions

Elaine extended a special welcome to the representatives of the newest Big East Conference schools: Marquette, Cincinnati, USF, Louisville. Elaine also thanked everyone for contributing to such a successful networking reception the night before. An extra thank you was extended to Joette and Kristen for working the registration table so efficiently. All members in attendance introduced themselves and gave an overview of their alumni association.

Feedback from Networking Event

Approximately 150 people attended the 2-hour event on November 16, 2005 at the Hotel Washington. Cost per person was \$10. Last time this event was held, 300-400 people attended at no cost to them. Reactions were mixed about whether or not to charge attendees in the future, and whether or not to have a program. Most BECAPO members were in favor of a small charge that would suggest a commitment to the event, and would filter out alumni who might attend for reasons other than networking.

Corporate sponsorship was questioned for the future. Typically the event cost \$4000-\$4500. Questions were raised about each BECAPO school splitting the costs of the event vs. a corporate sponsor. Many felt that we didn't want to "go to the same wells" too often, especially when corporate monies were tight. No final decisions were recorded on future corporate sponsorship. This decision may need to include conversations about the value networking events like this bring to a sponsor.

A suggestion was made to give a general welcome at the beginning of the program, explain how the event was supposed to work, and give a brief introduction of each of the schools. Discussion ensued about the amount of detail to include on the nametags—no alum wants to be "pigeonholed" in one profession if they're seeking information in an area new to them.

All BECAPO members felt the event should be held annually.

Please send any outstanding registration fees to Tina at Syracuse. Syracuse holds an account for BECAPO. This year's networking reception fees will help to provide BECAPO with operating monies for the future.

Marketing ideas for future networking receptions:

- Hold future events in DC at a time when new graduates were coming to DC and would benefit from interaction with alumni currently residing here. This idea will be considered for the future.
- Include the Capitol Alumni Network (CAN) as an advertising option for future Big East Conference networking events. This group of DC-based alumni from many colleges and universities has a plethora of events and activities posted on their website. It was suggested that a CAN representative be invited to the next BECAPO meeting in DC to discuss opportunities for collaboration, and to give BECAPO a better understanding of how CAN works.
- Send a "BECAPO invitation" next year instead of invites from each college to underline the breadth of the guest list. Kristen said that many alumni were surprised that alums from other colleges were attending the reception.
- Advertise prominent alumni attending the event prior to the reception. Elaine noted the number of late RSVPs that arrived for the reception. Someone suggested using an "Evite" kind of system.

Recommended follow-up for future receptions:

- Distribute guest list to attendees post-event
- Photocopy business cards of participants for post-event distribution

Liberty Mutual Presentation (by Darrell Recter)

Darrell thanked BECAPO members for inviting him to our meeting, then reviewed some of the colleges and universities with whom Liberty Mutual currently works. He said that affinity-related marketing is the biggest portion of their business (i.e. alumni associations), and that Liberty Mutual is the number one provider of certain types of insurance to alumni in the United States. Alumni offer an "ideal profile" for insurance companies: they receive discounts for holding a college degree, and for being part of an affinity organization. Liberty Mutual writes policies in all 50 states which makes coverage much easier for alumni who move. Darrell noted that Liberty Mutual does a lot of on-site work with their clients including face-to-face discussions on insurance options, educational sessions (i.e. insurance 101, identity theft), and community service projects. They pride themselves on their customer-orientation. Liberty Mutual is a privately-owned company that focuses on one product. A number of comments were shared about the positive relationships different BECAPO schools enjoy with Liberty Mutual.

New Business

- Use of BECAPO website and listserv—Elaine asked the group how BECAPO wanted to use the listserv, who should be using it, and who should maintain it.

- How to use the listserv: Calendar of events and meetings, University contact people including specific areas of responsibility, Best practices with contact names for more information.
- Who should use: professional staff. Do not open to volunteers at this point.
- Who should maintain: UConn is currently maintaining the site. If future maintenance is minimal, CASE may be able to maintain.

- Connection with Big East Conference/Young Alumni Programming—John Feudo provided the background for this agenda topic. John got an email from Big East Senior Associate Commissioner John Marinatto inquiring about a “Young Alumni Challenge” in the Big East. This challenge pits young alumni from each of the Big East schools against one another in their participation in donations to annual funds. This is not a dollar-for-dollar challenge. Thus far, the challenge has not gone anywhere. The Big East wants to know if BECAPO would like to be involved in this challenge throughout the year, with a big culminating event at the Big East tournament in March (i.e. the Extravaganza). Apparently, discussions about a challenge like this were started years ago with former colleagues at Georgetown, but never went anywhere. John noted that the ACC is doing a challenge similar to the proposed Big East challenge. Discussion from BECAPO noted that participation in a challenge like this may improve communications and understanding of roles between the Big East Conference and BECAPO—something BECAPO has been working on for years. Elaine offered to work with Steve Douglas and Mark Nordenberg, Pitt Chancellor and former chair of the Big East presidents group, to open some doors with the conference officials, and see where this idea and others may go. Elaine will keep BECAPO informed of any progress.
- Big East Career Fair (March 10, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m., Club Bar and Grill, Garden Terrace) Alyson Wallach, Networking Coordinator for the University of Pittsburgh’s Career Services office, gave an overview of the anticipated Career Fair being held in New York in conjunction with the tournament.
 - The Fair was first held in 2005. It started out as a virtual fair between the Big East Career Services offices, then turned “real.” Many employers were represented in 2005. The Big East Career Services professionals would like to partner with BECAPO this year in the promotion of the Fair.
 - The Big East Conference has responded overwhelmingly to this Career Fair. If it is successful again this year, the Conference will reserve a larger space for the Fair in 2007.
 - Room is available for 80 employers this year—the larger potential space in the Garden can hold 110-120 employers.
 - The website for this event is up (www.eventmanagement.com/bigeast2006/) Online registration is available for alumni, students and employers. The event is free to job-seekers; a flat registration rate of \$700 is being charged to the employers. Additional benefits are available to employers at an additional fee. Promotional ideas for alumni associations are listed on the site. Alyson asked all schools to facilitate communication meetings with their respective athletic departments to promote the event.

- Information about the Career Fair will be posted on the jumbotron and will be in the tournament program.
 - Alyson said they'd like to get more students to attend the fair. At Pitt, a Big East Conference "package" is being assembled for students who need transportation and lodging for this fair and the tournament (no game tickets will be included in the package).
 - Participants are able to enter the Fair without a game ticket. There is a separate entrance to this site. No games are scheduled during the day on March 10; games do not begin until 5:30 pm.
 - Elaine encouraged all BECAPO members to promote the event, help with Fair set-up, and to develop partnerships with their respective Career Services offices regarding this affair. She also encouraged BECAPO members to work with their New York City chapters, perhaps have a networking/training session with their own alumni Tuesday night, and to heavily market the event to alumni and companies in NYC. Alyson said that they're finding employers located anywhere from Boston to Philadelphia.
 - Lisa English asked that employers be made aware of the make-up of the audience so they come prepared with not-just-entry-level positions. Last year, 70 percent of the job-seekers were alumni, not students.
- March Extravaganza at Madison Square Garden (Thursday, March 9, 2006; 10 am-9 pm; Garden Terrace Room—tent.)
 - Tina Casella will be asked to reserve/confirm the Garden Terrace Room for the Extravaganza.
 - Discussion started with potential corporate sponsors for the 2006 Extravaganza. Last year, MBNA donated \$10,000 which allowed 900 participants to pay \$10/each and eat all day. It is expected the MBNA will not be as generous this year. Exclusive sponsorship will be offered for \$10,000. Suggested sponsors for 2006 include:
 - * ESPN with possible set-up (John Feudo will pursue)
 - * Liberty Mutual (past sponsor) (Elaine Meisner will pursue)
 - * Washington Mutual (past sponsor)
 - * Harris (past sponsor)
 - * Pepsi (Linda English will pursue)
 - * MBNA/Bank of America (John Feudo will pursue)
 - * Sports Illustrated with possible set-up (Connections already exist with UConn and Marquette. No particular person offered to pursue.)
 - Group thought raising the price per person to \$20 was reasonable if necessary.
 - Each school was encouraged to bring their cheerleaders and bands to the Extravaganza (reminder, if these students come and stay to eat, the sponsoring school is responsible for the students' registration fees)
 - The role of the various athletic departments preceding/with the Extravaganza was questioned by the group. No final decisions were offered.

-- A request was made to post a sponsorship proposal on the BECAPO website for the sake of consistency when asks are being made.

Visit by John Lippincott, President of CASE

- John stopped by to welcome all members of BECAPO to the CASE headquarters, and to thank them for their service to our field. He said that CASE is very supportive of BECAPO and sees the group as a “collaborator” with CASE, not a “competitor.” CASE is the largest association of educational institutions in the world and relies heavily on its volunteer base. It currently has requests from four areas of the world to expand the organization into their regions (currently 90% of CASE members are in the U.S.). The focus at CASE is continuous improvement in serving its members. If anyone from BECAPO identifies opportunities for collaboration with CASE, please bring those ideas to John’s attention. John noted that “Glocalization” is a catch phrase he appreciates: working around the world with local groups who are focused on local needs. He’s a strong advocate of forming connections wherever possible for CASE to continue to be successful. Elaine thanked John for stopping by and for his hospitality.

Open Discussion

- Lisa English inquired about different approaches other schools may be using to market to graduate and professional degree holders vs. their undergraduate populations.
 - Elaine mentioned the Rehrer Group study being done at Pitt now which will provide a wealth of demographic data and strengthen Pitt’s marketing efforts.
 - Alyson said that the Pitt Career Network, our online career networking database, was helping to target different groups of alumni.
 - Phil and John F. mentioned electronic means of communication and capturing demographic info (i.e. “In Circle,” “Facebook”) No one is currently coordinating blogs.
- UConn’s looking for a nice, small, classy space to entertain some prospects. The Wine Room in the W Hotel at Union Square was recommended.
- Meg asked for a run-down of the Big East tournament activities so Marquette (as newcomers to the conference) knows what/how to plan for the week. Recommendations were given.

The next BECAPO meeting will be held March 10, 2006 in the morning. Please email any agenda recommendations to Elaine.

Don thanked Elaine for her contributions to BECAPO as its chair. He expressed that Elaine was taking BECAPO to the “next level” and that all participating schools would benefit from her actions.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Julie Shepard, University of Pittsburgh, 11/29/05