

Class Council Meeting, February 14, 2023

The Class Meeting was called to order at 3:00PM by President Jamil Sopher

Present and contributing to the Zoom meeting were President Jamil Sopher, Vice Presidents Liz Gordon, Steve Hand, and Louis Ferraro, Treasurer Sharon Williams, Secretary William Vanneman Jr. Correspondents Joan Hens Johnson, and Stephen Appell, Council Members Myron Jacobson (Reunion Chair), George Arangio, Barry Cutler, Michael Duffy, Penny Haitkin, Jeff Kass, Robert Kessler, Grace Morgenstein, Laureen Knutsen, Barbara Press Turner, Susan Weitz and subsequent newly elected Council Member Bruce Smoller MD

- 1) Bruce Smoller MD was unanimously elected to the Class of 1965 Council, replacing Patricia Williams, Esq. who has resigned
- 2) Steve Hand presented the Webmasters report (attached). Emphasized the very low cost and help from support Keith Kubarek. The system works well, and he has recommended continuing present arrangement.
- 3) Sharon Williams presented the Treasurers report (attached). She emphasized the increasing Class balance in spite of cessation of dues, and the overall increase in numbers of Classmates involved in donations to Scholarship and Library Funds.
- 4) Liz Gordon and Penny Haitkin reported on the Class Giving Day (March 16) and the idea of using that day as contribution to the Class Scholarship Fund. There was discussion about the technical details of giving on line vs by check (advantage of giving from IRA by check). Coleen Drozd (Assistant Director of Leadership Giving) will review the details, and post by Chat, and e-mail the procedures. 83% of Class Council has given, all would like goal of 100%. The preliminary sense is that check would need to be received by March 16, phone call pledge could be specifically documented on March 16. They also noted that one of stipulations of the scholarship is preference for family member related to a Class of 1965 graduate, (presently a grand-daughter of Class of 1965 graduate)
- 5) Jamil Sopher introduced Jeff Kass, chairman of the 60th Reunion Committee who further introduced Laureen Knutsen, Penny Skitol Haitkin and Bruce Smoller MD who presented outline of the present Gift idea. Efforts began in Spring, 2022.
 - a) Multiple ideas were initially reviewed for Class of 1965 Reunion Gift idea ranging from various physical ideas (conference room) vs ongoing specific needs of the University. The Class of 1965 Committee had initially focused on Mental Health, given the ongoing and increasing documentation of stress and mental health issues throughout this generation of young students
 - b) The Skorton Center has been identified as a focus by Cornell for establishing and improving mental health initiatives within the Cornell Community. Ms Penny Haitkin's extensive work identified Ms Julie Edwards, now in her first year as Director of the Skorton Health Center for Health Initiatives, was identified as contact, and subsequently Tom Gaube, and Colleen Drozd were identified as Cornell Administrators who could educate the Class Committee about ongoing Cornell efforts and how the Class of 1965 could support and

strengthen efforts at reducing the increasing mental health strains on the Cornell Committee. These individuals report to Ryan Lombardi, Vice President of Cornell Student Affairs. Mr Gaube and Ms Edwards worked extensively with Ms Haitkin and the Class Council developing ideas and mechanisms for development of the Mental Health Initiatives as a branded Class of 1965 initiative for Class Reunion gift for 2025.

- c) Since beginning explorations in this area, there have been multiple media reports of the ongoing and worsening problems. NY Times and other news reports, a Ken Burns documentary, AARP newsletters, publicity at Yale and Stanford, are among the few of many pieces of evidence supporting this increasing problem, For example, at Cornell ¼ of students report being unable to function for at least a week academically or at least a week/semester because of anxiety and depression.
- d) Causes of this stressful environment and consequence are both old and new, most of us remember times when we all had difficulty, but nowadays, the environment is complicated by social media, increased class diversity, increased numbers of single parent households, increased numbers of first generation college students, etc.
- e) Dr. Smoller reviewed various tactics to support our Cornell students, focusing on preventive interventions, to support and reach students "where they are." Building resilience, reducing isolation are major initial goals. Ms Julie Edwards had been responsible for a coaching program at the University of Chicago prior to accepting position at Skorton Health Center at Cornell, and one of Cornell's focus efforts is aimed in this direction
- f) This would be initiated as a pilot program with a planned initial budget of \$52,800 to recruit and train coaches, with up to 300 students involved to begin. There is possibility that other classes may join us in the effort.
- g) Penny Haitkin referred to Class Commmitte member, Chuck Andola as the initial inspiration for this project, kudos to Chuck for this direction
- h) The Class Council unanimously approved of this project moving forward, Liz Gordon proposed, Penny Haitkin seconded
- i) Multiple questions remain for the near future, involving branding as Class of 1965 effort, funding, the multiple gifts on Cornell's agenda over the next several years, publicity, need to get project started as soon as possible, etc. Jamil and Jeff have indicated willingness to continue efforts at moving this project forward, coordinating with Cornell on multiple levels as needed

Respectfully submitted,

William Vanneman Jr

Class Secretary 1965