



August 19, 2010

**A Letter to Antioch College Alumni and College Community Members
on the Task Force on Community and Community Governance:**

This spring, we were invited by Interim President Matthew A. Derr to form a College task force preparing for community development and community governance at Antioch College in the fall 2011. The Task Force was to be primarily made up of community managers because of their experience with both aspects of our charge. We broadened the scope to include folks who were essential to a discussion of community and community governance at the College.

Shadia Alvarez was community manager in the 90s and is highly regarded as a doer and listener, both important skills for Task Force members. She is developing a model of community governance for a new high school opening soon in New York, and was eager to be a part of this group for obvious reasons. She serves on the Presidential Search Task Force, and is the assistant principal at the Collegiate Institute for Math and Science in the Bronx.

Jennifer Berman served Antioch as community manager in 1984, was an Alumni Board member in the late 1980s, was on the co-op faculty for two years from 2004-2006. The other passion for Jennifer has been cartooning, which she started in earnest when a student at Antioch, mining the satirical treasures that were provided by Bill Birenbaum, Bill Ingler and Jim Wallace's leadership.

Al Denman has been at the College since 1965, as College pastor and professor of philosophy and religion. He has been a devoted supporter of the College for decades, created the Friday Forums on Public Issues for civil dialogue about controversial issues, and advocates patient weighing of different ideas while contributing ideas of his own. In the 90s, Al and others joined Katy Jako in a movement to separate the College from the University under the auspices of the Antioch Independence Fund. (At the last Reunion, Katy was finally recognized for her foresight when many people refused to believe that the University was the source of Antioch's problems.)

Tendaji Ganges is seemingly unable to say "no" to helping out the College. Jennifer first met him when she was on the Alumni Board in the 90s, and he has been a wise and talented, and generous participant ever since. He lives in Flint, Michigan, where he is the assistant to the chancellor/executive director of educational opportunity initiatives at the University of Michigan-Flint. Tendaji currently serves on the Alumni Board and the Board Pro Tempore. We felt guilty asking him to serve on our Task Force, but are so grateful he said "yes."

Levi B. Good (Cowperthwaite) graduated from Antioch College in 2008. She was a community manager in her final year at the College. She now lives in Oakland, California, where she passionately engages in the work of youth development. Among other things, she is a lead teacher in the Children, Youth and Families Ministry of the First Congregational Church of Oakland.

The revered and beloved **Jewel Graham** has been a tireless and brilliant contributor to the College since she started teaching law and social work here in the 1960s. Community is near and dear to her heart as a lifelong teacher, former Antioch Dean of Faculty, and president of both the national and international YWCA.

John Knox, in San Francisco, was at Antioch College in the late 60s. He was assistant community manager and worked very closely with J.D. Dawson on governance and community. He is the executive co-director of the Earth Island Institute, an influential organization that provides funding for all sorts of environmental groups ranging from rain forest protection to production of non-tree-based paper products.

Chelsea Martens '08 is an outreach counselor at the nonprofit At The Crossroads, a nighttime outreach and daytime counseling center for homeless youth in San Francisco. Chelsea was the community manager '07-'08 and the community manager at Nonstop '08-'09, giving her the distinction of being perhaps the only Antiochian to serve as community manager twice!

Karen Mulhauser has served the College in countless ways: trustee, alumni board member (currently and in the 90s), chapter head in DC, co-op community facilitator during Antioch's last years, financial backer-- there isn't a time that Karen hasn't been involved with the College in very generous ways. Beyond the college, she has been a trusted political consultant to Democratic candidates and was a pioneer in the pro-choice movement.

We couldn't imagine having this task force without having the alumnus, trustee and former dean of students **Steve Schwerner's** generous help and capacious, vivid memory of all things CG from 1976-2000s.

Edie Seashore is a legend in group function/facilitation. She has been affiliated with the National Training Labs in MD since the late 40s when she co-oped there. She was the first non-wartime female community manager in Antioch's history, and did a fantastic job facilitating the first community-wide discussion on community at Reunion last June.

Wally Sikes, like Steve, had dual roles at Antioch: Antioch College Co-op faculty member in the 1950s. Associate dean and dean of students in the 1960s (continuous member of Comcil); group process and organizational consultant for 30 years; adjunct faculty at a number of colleges and universities, including Antioch University, focusing on organizational behavior; professional member of National Training Laboratories (NTL Institute).

So, now that we've assembled this great team, what's next?

We got off to a good start during Alumni Reunion weekend in June when Edie facilitated a brainstorming session revolving around three questions:

- 1) What did you cherish about your experience with Antioch's community and/or community governance?
- 2) What were the challenges you encountered with community and community governance?
- 3) What do you still carry with you about community and community governance from when you were a student at the College?

Al, Karen and Jennifer gathered the data, and will add it to a growing pool of responses we get as we query more of the Antioch Community in the future. When we have more data, we'll put it online for the community to see.

We plan to visit as many alumni chapters as possible this fall and winter to gather your views on what comprises good community, lessons to be learned, and how to foster these qualities in the new Antioch. Of course, you're always welcome to drop us or any other Task Force member a note and we'll be sure to include it in our growing file.

We are also working with Gariot Louima, the Antioch College director of communications, who in turn is working with alumnus Peter King, Lissie Fein and Matt Baya to develop a space on the College's website where a survey, interactive forum and additional information will be available. The entire Antioch College website is being revamped as we speak, so please be patient.

In the meantime, our task force will be having a retreat August 20-22 (and it's being kicked off by one of Al's legendary Friday Forums on community!) to start really figuring out how we can best serve the new Antioch Community. We would like for the new Antioch to build their own community governance model, ideally borrowing heavily from the successful CG models from the past. Some form of governance needs to be in place when the new community arrives, but we would like to think of that as a temporary structure until the community creates its own permanent structure. We would like to provide the Antioch community with ideas for what should be included in the College in the form of gathered information, maybe classes or laboratories on the history of governance and community, and direct interaction with alumni and community members who have much to teach and offer our community.

The "pure" community piece is more ethereal: How do we encourage Antioch to become the kind of community that we'd like to see there? What needs to be in place there for true, respectful dialogue to happen? Where does the Honor Code fit in? Who decides on these values? What is fair, if anything, to impose upon this community? These are the kinds of exciting questions that we will be dealing with, and your ideas are most welcome.

We would like to have Alumni help in the form of your ideas on governance and a resource bank from which to draw for the next few years as the community creates its own governance: who among us can augment the curriculum with courses on history? Political science? Your experiences of community and community governance working and not working at the College? Lessons learned?

I hope this answers some of your questions. Please be patient with us as we figure out the best way to productively engage the alumni without wasting your time. We will write you another update after our Task Force retreat mid-August.

Very Sincerely Yours,

Jennifer Berman, Executive Secretary
Al Denman, Chair
Task Force on Community and Community Governance