

## SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY/COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE TASK FORCE MEETING AUGUST 20-22, 2010

The Community and Community Governance Task Force had a very productive retreat in mid-August 2010. We got to know each other, and talk about how to proceed with our charge, which is to examine community and community governance at the College, to offer suggestions on what should be in place when students arrive in Fall 2011 and to continue through the 2011-2012 year to provide guidance and support.

TF members present at the meeting were Levi B. (Cowperthwaite) Good '08, CM in '06-'07, Jewel Graham (Emerita, faculty member since mid-60s), Tendaji Ganges '71 (Board Pro Tempore member, Presidential search committee member, Alumni Board member), Wally Sikes (Came to Antioch in 1949, former Dean of Students, co-op faculty member), Al Denman (emeritus faculty, came to Antioch in 1965), Karen Mulhauser '65, (Alumni Board member, former College Alumni President and University Trustee), John Knox '68 (Former ACM in 1965) and Jennifer Berman '84 (CM in 1985, former Alumni Board member) .

Absent were Steve Schwerner '60 (Former Dean of Students from 1976-early 90s). He agreed to be a long-distance advisor only, and we are grateful for his help in that capacity, Shadia Alvarez '96, CM in '96 (a co-worker had her baby prematurely and she had to fill in for her), Chelsea Martens '06, Antioch College CM in 2005, Nonstop CM in 2006 (illness kept her at home in Oakland), and Edie Seashore '49. In 1949, Edie was the first non-wartime female CM in Antioch's history.

We were also joined at different times by Interim President Matthew Derr, Morgan Fellow Chair Beverly Rodgers, Associate Director for Alumni Relations Steve Duffy, Major Gifts Officer Eric Miller'81, and former Antioch and Nonstop student and organizer, Jeanne Kay. All meetings were open, and a few others chose to attend.

This was the first time that we have been able to spend a whole weekend together, and appreciated the time to get to know each other, share ideas, and get the ball rolling.

The conversations fell into four main categories:

- defining the role of the Task Force itself,
- Core Antiochian values,
- Community and
- Governance.

Please note: *Nothing at all is set in stone, or even sand. These are the ideas that we shared, and we offer them to you in the spirit of openness, trusting that you will read them in this light.*

### **Task Force:**

The Task Force is essentially charged with preserving the soul of the College. We all deeply value and were profoundly affected by our experiences with community and community governance at the College, and take seriously the charge to ensure its healthy survival when it reopens in 2011.

We need to examine what worked well in community and community governance as well as examine the challenges to our community, and try for the best possible fit for an Antioch of 25

students (anticipating growth in the following years). Wally Sikes reminds us that the best learning is un-programmed, and we want to strike a balance between enough structure to provide order and a sense of our history with enough freedom and space to let this process evolve naturally.

Through historical research, questionnaires, anecdotes, meetings with alumni chapters, consultation with experts in academia and community and a soon-to-be interactive web presence, we will collect information to both create a governance structure when students arrive in 2011, and archives, suggestions and recommendations for a 2011-2012/ongoing CG structure that the new community can help create as part of the curriculum.

The Task Force will be available to help the fledgling community establish all of the 'cils and policies and structures that would be germane to the College when it reopens, as well as examine questions and issues pertaining to community.

We understand that the closure of the College by the University created wounds that have not yet healed in our larger community. While over the years, Antioch has been closed a total of six times, we have never had a total stoppage like this before-- a closure that was so complete and destructive. We need to understand the process that closed our doors, and ensure that nothing like this will ever happen again.

### **Core Values:**

The following themes came up repeatedly throughout our meetings, and it's probably safe to say few Antiochians would disagree with the following values as being core to who we are.

- Social Responsibility ("Be ashamed to die...")
- Honor Code: Whether it was called the "honor system" or the "honor code", or whether we had it articulated during our time on campus or it was just "in the air," everyone knew it and implicitly agreed to its principles.
- Student/faculty relationship: Another quality so unique to Antioch. The informality, closeness, collegial, non-hierarchical nature of the relationship is not found on other campuses.
- Community Standards: In addition to the overarching "freedom must be matched by responsibility" pledge of the Honor Code, we care deeply about non-discrimination (RDPP), feeling safe in our Antioch home and in intimate relationships (SOPP).
- Community meetings have reached a high level of sophistication, and are an important vehicle for community-building.
- Being truly multicultural. To quote the late Assistant Dean of Students Elaine Comegys, "Is everybody welcome here?"

### **Community:**

- The community piece of Antioch's culture and education is so important that Interim President Matthew Derr would like Antioch to have a Director of Community as part of the new President's

cabinet. The parameters of that position are still under development, but the more we looked at the position, the more we saw that the Director's tendrils are in every other facet of Antioch's flow chart: CG, classroom, extra-curricular activities, faculty, staff, administrators, the Glen, co-op (here and away), alumni relations, budget, physical plant, town/gown relations, etc.

- Again, much talk about the importance of community meetings as a mechanism of community, and a way of modeling good behavior, even in charged situations.
- Beverly Rodgers, Morgan Fellow Chair, expressed concern that the new student body will be extremely diverse and we will need to find ways to help very different people feel comfortable in such a diverse and intimate crowd. What are the best practices? Food? Sensitivity? Privacy issues?
- All students are supposed to work 10 hours/week while at Antioch. This can be a great boon to students' understanding of the breadth of their community.
- We must understand the new generation of students and their parents. More than before, parents and kids seem to have the same perception of the world. "Helicopter parents" are a concern; students need their autonomy.
- Creating a sense of community to co-oping students will help people cope. Alumni will need to be brought in, and create mechanisms for students to easily tune in to campus life via the internet and social networking sites.
- How can we help foster the kinds of competencies and skills that students need to learn to become the kind of people that the world needs?
- What are the boundaries of community? Are there concentric circles? What are the parameters?
- The community needs to establish trust and move away from blame.
- There was much talk about the historic legacy to which we will try to connect. How to "imprint" students with Antiochian values with no older students on campus? We'll need to rely on alumni, younger and older, to fill the void created by a solely first-year population of students. The other times that Antioch has been closed, there have always been returning upper class students. This is a first.
- A related recognition is that community and community governance has to be flexible as it has over the decades to adapt to external and internal conditions.
- Alumni will need to play a strong role in the larger concentric circle of community.

### **Regarding Governance:**

- Let's let the paths determine where the sidewalks go. We don't want to impose all of the structure before we see what is really necessary, yet we know some CG structures will need to be in place. As Tendaji says, "Build the kitchens, don't make the meals."

- What are the principles of shared governance? What are the roles everyone has?
- Folks want democracy whenever possible
- What are the safeguards in place so that the sins of the U won't be repeated?
- True community and true self-governance is going to take time
- Honor Code is a beautiful statement and a good place to start.
- CG/Community is not a set of structures, it's a value system. Get students immediately integrated through orientation and communications/materials in advance.
- Wally Sikes gave us a brief history of shared governance at the College. CG evolved constantly. The main message: the structures were not as important as community attitude.
- ComCil needs to be respected as a real governing board.
- Make sure that authority and responsibility line up.

#### **Matthew Derr's comments:**

Unlike the curriculum piece, the TF is not hemmed in by any restraints imposed from without. This is the most creative opportunity we have. NCA doesn't care about community, which gives us total freedom to shape this core element of Antioch. There has been a fundamental change in curriculum every 6 years. How AC defines community changes over time.

Invest in thinking about what we want to bequeath and create. The charge was intentionally vague; this TF represents a change that is very healthy. First step fwd. is restoring community governance at the College. Something healthy that honors tradition comes out of this.

#### **Calendar:**

##### **September 2010**

Send BPT Materials ASAP on community  
 Send all materials to BPT for presidential candidates  
 Have surveys online

##### **October 2010**

October 3, Sunday 5 EST. conference call What to present at chapter meetings? What JB and AD (WS, JG, others?) present at BPT/AB Mtgs?

Philosophical overview

Research about communities later

BPT/AB Meeting Oct. 14-15

Plan next in-person meeting  
Research other communities  
Philosophical Overview

### **November and December 2010**

Examine other school communities and governance systems.  
Chapter meetings

### **Jan./Feb 2011**

CCGTF Retreat?  
Chapter Meeting in YS. Meet w/ co-op and academic

### **March 2011**

AB mtg. first week in March

### **April 2011**

10<sup>th</sup> Conference on mindfulness, restorative justice. Admitted students here

### **August 2011**

Have in place:  
Shared decision-making roles of faculty, students, staff and administrators.  
Some governance structure  
Orientation w/governance  
Grievance procedures  
Community building exercises

Algonquin—type experience for Fall 2011 community. Maybe Ohio River trip and/or fold in Glen personnel and space?

This is a summary of the Task Force's thinking at the August 2010 meeting. The Task Force is in listening mode, and we want others' ideas and stories about how community and governance affected their lives at Antioch and beyond.

Please contact the Task Force at [cgtaskforce@antiochcollege.org](mailto:cgtaskforce@antiochcollege.org)

Attached is a reflection of how community and community governance affected Karen Mulhauser's trajectory. Please feel free to send us your story of how community and/or community governance affected your life. All stories will be collected and read and become available to Antioch College community members online, and compiled as a resource at the College.