Antioch College Alumni Board Seeks to Chart the Course for a Stronger, More Connected Community

Report of the July 2026 Alumni Board meeting



MICHAELLA REY

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A rainy July day did not dampen the spirits of members on the Antioch College Alumni Board as they convened to welcome newly elected board members, elect member leadership, and discuss concerns with the College. Members attending in person were as follows: Coco Gagnet, Joan Straumanis, Jessie Herr, Larry Rubin, Denwood Parrish, Dylan Reiff, michael caselli, Abbey Cyester, and David Klasovsky. Members unable to attend in person but attended virtually: Jane Foreman, Alan Siege, and Darren Gilley.

Newly Elected Board Members and Member Leadership

This year, the board welcomed three newly elected members: michael caselli ’87, Abbey Cyester ’24, and David Klasovsky ’23. Even more exciting for the board all three of the new board members are located near or within driving distance of the College. Larry Rubin ’65, motioned for the current slate in leadership: Coco Gagnet ’18-President/Chair, Joan Straumanis ’57-Vice-President, Jessie Herr ’63-Secretary, and Larry Rubin-Treasurer. While Coco Gagnet was willing to stay on as President of the Alumni Board, she was unsure if she would be able to commit to the full-term length. Michaella Rey ’06 came forward and offered to assist the President and act as “President-in-Waiting”. Coco Gagnet will resume in the role of President until ready to step down, then after an official vote, the “President-in-Waiting” will assume leadership of the board. Additionally, it was also decided that the President of Alumni Board would not concurrently sit on the Board of Trustees, rather the roles would be

separated. An announcement will be made seeking candidates to join the Alumni Board as Alumni Representative Trustee. The Alumni Board hopes to have the new member elected to and onboarded to the Alumni Board by October, in time for the next BoT meeting.

Supporting Current Students/Recent Graduates

Board members discussed how best to support current students and recent graduates to provide mentorship, connecting students with alumni expertise, promoting Co-op jobs and career opportunities, and helping new graduates build professional and personal networks. These efforts reflect the board's belief that alumni involvement can make a lasting difference well before graduation and throughout a graduate's career. Present to discuss how to support students, recent graduates and the College, was the Executive Director of Advancement, Natalie Kubat, who has since been named as interim president with the retirement of President Jane Fernandes. The role of Alumni Relations Director previously held by Shannon McCarville was eliminated shortly before Alumni Reunion and absorbed by the Office of Advancement, with Natalie Kubat overseeing Alumni Relations. While many on the board were skeptical and concerned about the changes, the Board agreed to keep communication open between the two groups to assess the efficacy of the changes made.

Also discussed were new Alumni Chapters that will be formed for the Miami Valley (Ohio) and Portland! We are excited to connect with alumni and current students in these two areas!

Open Forum to the Community

This year the Alumni Board hosted alums, current students, and the community at large to attend a special Q&A to discuss concerns with the current state of the College. Vigorous debate among alums and board members occurred in which many were very critical in the leadership of President Jane Fernandes, current living conditions for students, the financial state of the College, and questions about the future of the College. Some of the important key takeaways from the forum:

· Urgency about financial condition and audits indicating the college's "going concern" status (external auditor language cited).

· Strong desire for a coordinated plan to stabilize finances, recruit/retain students, and strengthen admissions and enrollment (cal
operational plans).

· Desire to repair alumni–student relations
community (concerns that community gov

· Requests for transparency, accountability
planning, inclusion of alumni in planning,

The Alumni Board decided unanimously th
alumni and the community at-large is criti
and will occur at every Alumni Board meet
stay tuned for details closer to reunion!



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Get Involved

Every alumnus has something valuable to offer. Whether you attend an Alumni event, mentor a student, share your expertise, volunteer, or support an association initiative, your involvement helps strengthen the alumni community. Watch upcoming announcements on board elections and other opportunities to engage with the Alumni Board and consider how you would like to reconnect or contribute.

Michaella Rey, Class of 2006, is a member of the Alumni Board and the President-in-Waiting.

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A guest post by

Michaella Rey

Proud alumna of Antioch College (2006), UMass Boston (2012) and American University (2018). Currently, winning victories for humanity by day at a local domestic violence resource center and dog mom of 2 by night.

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