



Alumni Association of Queen's University at Kingston  
Minutes for the Annual General Meeting of  
Alumni Assembly  
Saturday, October 3, 2020

In Attendance (\* indicates voting member):

- \*Rico Garcia, QUAA President (Chair)
  - \*Kathy Owen, QUAA Director, Alumni Awards
  - \*Aliya Hollingsworth, Toronto Branch President
  - \*Allan McGavin, QUAA Director, Global Branch Network
  - \*Allison Williams, QUAA Director, Alumni Giving
  - \*Alvin Hew, Singapore Branch President
  - \*Angela Wright, London UK Branch President
  - \*Benji Bercovitch, Varsity Council Representative
  - \*Bruce Miller, Reunion Coordinator  
Cheryl Johnston, contact Toronto Branch
  - \*Colin McLeod, QUAA EVP, Operations
  - \*Edmond Chan, Hong Kong Branch Co-President
  - \*Elaine Wu, University Councillor
  - \*Elena Christopoulos, Southern California Branch President
  - \*Elke Beecken, Germany Branch President
  - \*Fred Siemonsen, Reunion Coordinator
  - \*George Jackson, Alumni Booster Club Representative
  - \*Graeme Matichuk, QUAA Director, Digital Media
  - \*Heather Black, University Councillor
  - \*Heather Murdock, Vancouver Branch President
  - \*Jacklyn Lewis, QUAA Director, Special Projects
  - \*Jared den Otter, AMS President
  - \*Jasmit Kaur, QUAA Director, Young Alumni  
Jeremy Mosher, former QUAA President
  - \*Julia Reid, QUAA Director, Alumni Marketing & Communications
  - \*Julie Rentsch, Portland Branch President
  - \*Justine Aman, SGPS President  
Karen Bertrand, VP, Advancement  
Kristine Ramsbottom, NY Branch President
  - \*Lauren Winkler, Queen's Indigenous Alumni Chapter
  - \*Lea Trotman, Queen's Black Alumni Chapter
  - \*Leigh Kalin, AVP, Alumni Relations & Annual Giving
  - \*Lisa Hood, QUAA EVP, Volunteer Recruitment & Recognition
  - \*Lochana Ponnambalam, Reunion Coordinator  
May Rouhani, Toronto Branch  
Prashant Mathur, Toronto Branch  
Ruth Jones, Toronto Branch
  - \*Sam Hiemstra, Rector
  - \*Sue Bates, Giving Society Representative  
Susan Lythgoe, Denver Branch  
Susanne Gage, Toronto Branch
  - \*Tuba Chishti, QUAA Director, AVS
  - \*Yinka Adegbusi, QUAA Director, Alumni  
Constituency Groups  
Natalie Minnema, Alumni Relations staff (recorder)  
Maddy Rose Palmer, Alumni Relations staff
- Regrets:
- \*Aaryan Chaudhury, QSAA President
  - \*Anna Premyslova, Calgary Branch President
  - \*Genevieve Page, Montreal Branch President
  - \*Kimberley Molina, Ottawa Branch President
  - \*Principal Patrick Deane
  - \*Richard Wall, Kingston Branch President

**1. Opening Session**

**a. Welcome from QUAA President, Rico Garcia**

**b. Approval of the 2020 AGM Agenda**

Rico asked for a motion that the 2020 Annual General Meeting agenda be approved as submitted. Kathy Owen moved, and Heather Black seconded, that the agenda be submitted into official record.

**Carried**

**c. Approval of the 2019 Minutes from the AGM of Alumni Assembly - Appendix A**

Rico asked for a motion that the 2019 Annual General Meeting minutes be approved as submitted. Moved by Edmond Chan, seconded by Allan McGavin, that the minutes from the 2019 Annual General Meeting be submitted into official record.

**Carried**

**2. QUAA President's Report - Appendix B**

Rico reviewed the slides from the President's Report, noting that this year's report covers 18 months of activity due to delay of AGM during COVID-19. Rico highlighted the following themes and topics that have been most prevalent for the QUAA Board and the University:

- Cancellation of AVS due to COVID-19.
- Finding other ways to connect and engage alumni – including the Assembly Orientation that happened a couple of weeks ago
- Thinking of a “better normal” instead of “new normal”
- Highlighted the work of alumni – initiatives to connect with alumni experiencing isolation, trivia and social events, creating a sense of community
- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Indigeneity:
  - Difficult issues we are tackling and dealing with – challenges of BIPOC community at Queen's, referenced Dr. Anita Jack Davis' article in the Alumni Review
  - Action being taking by the university and the Alumni Association
  - Patrick Dean's commitments – addressing systemic racism
  - Outside of the Board (starting change within) but moving out, how can we impact QUAA as a whole
  - These conversations are happening among Board of Trustees and University Council as well
  - Highlighted QUAA Board D&I Commitments
- Board continuing to strive for increased transparency and awareness – a nomination process that is more public, used for the last slate of vacancies

**3. QUAA Financial Reports – Appendix C**

Colin McLeod reviewed the QUAA Financial Reports that were prepared for the 2018-2019 fiscal (May 1, 2018–April 30, 2019) as well as 2019-2020 fiscal. The report summarizes the annual activity in the

following three endowed (interest bearing) funds: The Iris Marsh Alumni Expansion Fund; The F. MacRae Speaker's Fund; and The Alumni Excellence in Teaching Award Fund. The yearly activity in the QUAA Projects Fund account is also documented.

The Iris Marsh Alumni Expansion Fund is an endowed fund which provides funding for QUAA Grants.

Grants issued in 2019:

- \$2,000.00 Queen's Model Parliament

Funding to help reduce the cost of conference fees for delegates.

(January 23, 2019)

- \$1,250.00 Vogue Charity Fashion Show

Funding will subsidize VCFS Alumni Series, and an internal design program. (February 28, March 2, 2019)

- \$750.00 Queen's Young Engineering Alumni (QYEA)

Funding to subsidize the cost for recent graduates, to support paid marketing for the event, and to cover the cost of giveaway prizes for the Welcome Back event

Grants issued in 2020:

- \$2,000.00 CFRC – 2019 QUAA Grant
- \$2,000.00 Queen's Engineering Society

Colin shared that these grants contribute to activities on and off campus that are connected to alumni relations.

The endowed F. MacRae Speaker's Fund was established in 1981, the purpose of which is "To assist with the Alumni Speakers Programme—specifically with the expenses of bringing an alumna as speaker, she to be officially known as the Florence MacRae Speaker."

Colin noted that the F. MacRae Speaker's Fund has a low closing balance and low disbursement availability. It has not been utilized in a number of years, due to low funds and the current status of the fund as the Board plans to be more strategic with it going forward.

The Alumni Excellence in Teaching Award Fund provides \$5,000 for the monetary portion of the Teaching Award. Colin acknowledged that this is a well-known award, recognized at the annual gala. Colin outlined that nominations are received, and a recommendation is approved by the QUAA Board. In 2019, Steven Lamontagne, from the Department of

Psychology, was presented with the award at the QUAA Gala Awards. In 2020, the recipient was Holly Ogden, from the Faculty of Education.

Colin discussed the QUAA Project Fund:

It is an unendowed fund that would need to reach \$50,000 to be endowed. Funds continue to be deposited through donations, and eventual endowment is part of the Board's strategic discussions. In 2020, a disbursement was made to support the CFRC Weekly Trivia Initiative, during the pandemic to support a virtual trivia. Provided an opportunity for alumni connection. Discussions going forward include how to be more strategic with underutilized funds, such as the QUAA Project Fund and the F. MacRae Speaker's Fund. How to attract donations and increase. Responsibility of Funds portfolio has been moved from VP Operations to Giving Portfolio (overseen by Allison Williams), due to strong linkages with donor giving and stewardship. The hope is to bring more attention and increased donations to these funds and improve their viability.

Allison Williams mentioned that the QUAA Grant Application Form will soon become available. Members of the alumni community are invited to apply. Grants fund up to 2000 to support initiatives promoting student-alumni and alumni-alumni connections. Applications due October 31st. Allison encouraged Branches and members of community to apply.

Rico moved to adopt the Financial Report. Alvin Hew moved the adoption of the 2020 Financial Report. Graeme was the seconder.

**Carried**

#### **4. Thanking Past Volunteers and Staff**

Allison extended heartfelt thanks to:

Jeremy Mosher – past QUAA President. Lisa commended him for his leadership

David Babin – not present, but Lisa commented on the incredible legacy left by David

Arlette, Directory of Graduate Alumni – she did wonderful work while also being heavily involved with her Branch

Adam Shetler, Directory of Global Branch Network – not present, but Lisa commented on his large portfolio and the wonderful work he did

Nikki Remillard – a force to be reckoned with. Thanked for her many years of service to the QUAA. Has guided them through many ups and downs, doing the work behind-the-scenes to make the Board look great.

**5. Introduction of the 2020 - 2021 QUAA Board of Directors**

**Normally the new board would be welcomed at the AGM, but that happened electronically this year. Lisa invited Board Members to show their faces on the call.**

Rico Garcia, Artsci '13, President QUAA, Chair Board of Directors

Leigh Kalin, Artsci '92, Ex-Officio, Associate VP (Alumni Relations & Annual Giving)

Colin McLeod, Artsci '10, Executive VP Operations

Lisa Hood, Artsci '04, Executive VP Volunteer Recruitment and Recognition

Yinka Adegbusi, Artsci '13, Director, Alumni Constituency Groups

Tuba Chishti, Artsci '15, Director, Alumni Volunteer Summit

Jasmit Kaur, Artsci '17, Director, Young Alumni

Jackie Lewis, Artsci '11, Director, Special Projects

Graeme Matichuk, Artsci '16, Director, Digital Media

Allan McGavin, Com '08, Law '12, Director, Global Branch Network

Kathy Owen, Artsci '67, Director, QUAA Awards

Julia Reid, Artsci '08, Director, Marketing & Communications

Allison Williams, Artsci '09, Director, Alumni Giving

Irene Wood, Artsci '79, Director, Reunion Coordinator

Rico asked to ratify the members of the board. Moved by Elaine Wu and seconded by Edmond Chan.

**Carried**

*Appendix D: 2020 – 2021 QUAA Board of Directors*

*Appendix E: QUAA Board of Directors – Position Overviews and Organizational Chart*

**6. Vice-Principal's Report – University Priorities**

**VP Karen Bertrand expressed that she had a few topics she would like to discuss in an open forum, allowing members to ask questions.**

**1) The Universities Response to COVID-19:**

Karen noted that the Queen's community has two assets to help guide us through the pandemic – our response is led by dr. David walker (alumnus, FHS), who chaired the Premiere's panel on provincial response to SARS in 2008. Regular leadership meetings with various groups and stakeholders have been taking place daily, including with public health professionals. VP Bertrand highlighted normalizing management of university – instant

management system, how to deal with cases on campus, decisions to go remote, all being centrally managed

Karen acknowledged that alumni have helped university work through circumstances the pandemic has created – Queen’s Community Connects – reaching out to alumni over 70 at the start of pandemic. She also mentioned the over 2,000 calls made by alumni to students in Arts and Science to check in and provide support. Karen acknowledged the contribution of these efforts to the maintenance of student enrollment numbers.

**Question: What is the strategic direction in light of COVID-19 as a fixture in today’s world? Specific acknowledgement of student fees.**

Karen provided reassurance that Queen’s is committed to ensuring the quality of education is not changed due to mechanism of delivery. There are no reductions envisioned in cost for students, as the costs to produce virtual education is comparable to that of in-person learning. With regards to student fees, student leadership is currently discussing where it is possible to cut additional costs – answers are coming from various groups.

**Question: Is there a plan to address the closure of chemistry and other scientific labs differently in the future if faced with a similar circumstance as we were in the Spring with COVID-19?**

Karen acknowledged that, although labs were allowed to remain open, Queen’s did shut theirs down in accordance with Public Health guidance, as did many other universities around the country. At Queen’s, research labs were some of the first to reopen. We reopened labs as early as June, possibly as early as May. Leadership has decided that if they need to retract the reopening of the university in the future, they are committing to keeping the labs open.

**Question: In light of how isolating current times can be, what sort of mental health resources are available to students and staff?**

Karen acknowledged that leadership is cognizant of considering mental health in the pandemic response. For students, last year a partnership between Student Affairs and student leadership launched virtual mental health treatments that were available 24/7. We have been able to keep that initiative running and increase the resources available to students, regardless of time and location. Lots of resources available for staff and faculty as well, with particular attention paid to groups being impacted by isolation, such as families with young and school-aged children, as well as people who live alone.

## 2) Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Indigeneity

Karen commented that these are not new issues for society or Queen’s – a number of things over a number of years have been done, but there is a still much work to be done. Principal Deane has been clear that we need to address the issues on campus. As it is not only the right thing to do, but we can’t make

the impact we would like to as a university if we aren't supporting all members of the community. Karen shared an example from the past week – the university leadership declaration against systemic racism – They have met for several hours about bringing those commitments to life- what are we going to do now?

Board of trustees met in the past week as well, for several hours over a couple of days, challenges on campus, how to move forward as a university community

The question Karen has posed within Advancement: What can the alumni community do to help mitigate against the culture of white privilege that Queen's has been known for? What can we proactively do to help make change and make sure every member of the community is truly welcome?

**Question: Is the University looking at how Orientation week is promoting a culture of diversity and inclusion, and beyond that, how is course content doing this as well?**

Karen stated that a lot of changes made over past few years, but there is still a long way to go in terms of additional changes to make. Student Affairs is working on with student leaders, working closely with Jared (den Otter) and the AMS, leaders within faculties, to ensure matters of EDII are included in Orientation.

Curriculum for students and training for staff and faculties are all being considered with regards to how they can be more accessible and inclusive for all community members. There is a lot of discussion around the BIPOC community and anti-racism, but we need to ensure that members belonging to other groups facing barriers to inclusion are also engaged.

**Question: As a BIPOC community member, many of these conversations have seemed cyclical over the past few years. What is different about this time, where these conversations will be operationalized and put into practice?**

Karen answered that her hope is that there are far more people, including people who are not part of marginalized groups, are now realizing the need for change and advocating for it. There isn't more power within these privileged groups, but there is greater overall unification.

- 3) **The Principal's Conversation** – engaging with the community for the past two years to garner feedback on what is and isn't working and where we want to go. The report on the conversation is due any day now. It is expected to be finalized and shared with the community within the next couple of weeks. After which, it will be developed not a more formal Strategic Plan.

Karen posed the question: how do we as alumni, when we think about the future of alumni engagement, protect the things that allow us to be an Institution and community that supports EDII?

**Other Business:**

Rico invited attendees to share any specific announcements that attendees would like to make.

Aliya Hollingsworth, Toronto Branch President spoke about Operation 2020 calling initiative and invited volunteers to join in making calls to new graduates

- Toronto Branch challenging everyone to participate

**7. Adjourn**

**Rico asked for a motion to adjourn the 2020 Annual General Meeting. Tuba Chishti moved the motion to adjourn, Julia Reid seconded this motion.**

**Carried**

**Round-table discussion on Diversity & Inclusion to follow.**

**Appendices (for distribution prior to Annual General Meeting)**

- A. 2019 Minutes from the AGM of Alumni Assembly
- B. QUAA President's Report
- C. QUAA Financial Report
- D. 2020-2021 QUAA Board of Directors
- E. QUAA Board of Directors – Position Overviews and Organizational Chart