

**NIU Alumni Association Meeting**  
**11 July 2019**  
**7-8 pm**

**218-339-6463 Passcode #4400**

**Attendees:**

Christal Archibald '14, President  
Matt Arbor '17, At Large - Membership Chair  
Amber Abramowski '17, At-Large - Volunteer Coordinator  
John "Hank" Bailey '14, San Antonio Network  
Jeff Kimmons '79, NIUF Board Liaison  
Tom Van Wagner '94 NIU Liaison

+++++

**SUMMARY:** *The Alumni Association President welcomed two new members to the Leadership team as POCs for regional networks: MSgt John Bailey '14 (San Antonio) and Maria Hayden '14, (NYC). Membership continues to grow, with 11 new members this month for a total of 555. Lively conversation ensued which centered on updating the fields within the Alumni Association web page; growth strategies in San Antonio, as well as ways to promptly acknowledge and recognize the alumni base as a means of positive reinforcement.*

+++++

**Meeting Notes:** President Christal Archibald '14 opened the meeting at 7pm by welcoming all participants on the line. The attendees personally welcomed MSgt John "Hank" Bailey, who participated on the call.

**Approval of Minutes:** The Board unanimously approved the minutes for the June 2019 meeting.

**II. REPORTS**

**Budget Report**— There was no formal budget report. Christal Archibald '14 reported she succeeded in working with NIU Foundation CFO Pat Miorin to get non-profit and tax-exempt status applied to the organizational account with smartpress.com, which freed up \$29.10 on the marketing card print order. This additional money enabled the marketing card print order to increase from 630 to 1,000 cards.

Christal inquired as to whether NIUF allocated monies in the FY2019 NIUAA budget for gifts for alumni event speakers. Jeff Kimmons refreshed everyone's memory, reminding the attendees that most speakers appreciate doing the events and don't need tchotchkes or token gifts as thanks for participating. He encouraged the alumni association to adhere to the NIUF-approved budget for \$2,200 (\$200 for marketing materials, and \$2000 to support 9 events (200-250 per event)). In this manner, the NIUAA can marshal its limited resources towards other items.

**Membership report** – Membership Chair Matt Arbor reported that there are now 555 alumni members, an increase of 11 since the June 2019 report. The new members include 9 alumni and two graduating students. Board members were happy the numbers continue to grow month-by-month and thanked Matt for stepping up to serve as membership chair.

There was some discussion of whether we can revise the registration page so that there is validation of information as people register? There was concern of data inconsistency in several of the fields such as class year, graduation dates and address information. Jeff Kimmons suggested capturing the referral source as a metric, in order to recognize membership rainmakers throughout the NIUAA networks. Further, freeform, unvalidated text boxes can be used to introduce SQL injection attacks which could execute malicious code within the website and corrupt or compromise the database. Matt Arbor brilliantly suggested leveraging alumni volunteers with coding experience to redesign the website, and then pass the inactive site to Gretchen Gunning, so that AFCEA IT professionals can bring the new website online.

Tom mentioned the NIUAA website is hosted by NIU Foundation, which provides us a place to register members; register and pay for events; collect donations, etc. Tom explained the previous Membership Chair (NIUAA VP Mike Edgerton) might already have looked at ways to clean up and modify the site, so it was recommended that we ask the membership committee to explore this further, working with Mike Edgerton, Gretchen Gunning and others to see what has been done, what is being done, and what other things can be done and to continue the discussion at a later meeting. Christal Archibald further suggested identifying information gaps, and then compiling and vetting a list of information requirements with the NIUAA Executive Board that should be included in any proposed NIUAA member registration website redesign.

In a related discussion, there was some thought of providing incentives or thanks to people who register, including possible a signed photo of Mike Hayden with a thank you to the new member on it.

**MSgt John “Hank” Bailey ‘14** – Characterized the San Antonio Network as “sitting on a treasure trove of unregistered alumni in San Antonio” and he shared with the board some of the ideas he has for getting the word out and establishing an alumni network in the area. MSgt Bailey also mentioned that it will take time to get initiatives underway, since he will be TDY and on leave for the next month. Board members offered their support and encouragement in advertising the newly forming network in the NIU Campus Notes, as well as requested his involvement in the impending 20x2020 membership campaign. All attendees thanked Hank for his initiative and energy.

**NYC & Augusta Networks** – NIUAA President Christal Archibald requested Tom Van Wagner advertise the standup of the NYC and Augusta networks within the NIU Campus Notes along with the San Antonio Network, as well as provide the contact information for the respective network leads

**LinkedIn report** – Linked In registrations are holding steady at 520.

**Send out notes Bcc to the [members@niuaa.org](mailto:members@niuaa.org) list serv recipients so that the NIUAA does not compromise the NIUAA alumni base.**

Matt Arbor committed to contacting Stefan Buckman, who on 1 July 2019 requested removal from the above-referenced list serv, as a result of a flurry of messages inadvertently sent to the entire alumni base.

**Volunteer Report** – We’re looking to assemble a cadre of folks who want to help out. Volunteer Coordinator Amber Abramowski reported little success in getting responses to the email she sent out to the previous batch of volunteers. The group speculated that the “dead of summer” lull which occurs during the June-August timeframe every year is likely the cause of the lack of alumni response. Tom suggested reevaluating the need for specific positions the board is looking for help with, such as Secretary and Treasurer, and offered to re-advertise the vacancies in the next few AA notes to the membership.

- Tom Van Wagner agreed to re-forward a few notional job descriptions to the board members in the hope of generating new volunteers.

### **III. BUSINESS:**

**A. Old Business: On-line Merchandise store.** Tom Van Wagner ‘94 reported NIUF now has the next action on the on-line store. Ray Cross ‘94 and Pat Miorin are looking over the contract with Follett’s, and everyone is still hopeful that the new store will be up and running in time for the arrival of the new school year in late August.

Matt Arbor suggested putting a display case of Follett’s material somewhere visible on main campus AND at satellite campuses including clothing, SWAG and diploma frames for students to view. He also strongly recommended—and the other board members agreed—the vendor needs to have NIU coins available on the site. Tom Van Wagner agreed to remind NIU VP of the alumni (Tim Latta) feedback on the new store.

Jeff Kimmons suggested, and others agreed, that once the store is up, we can send out special notes encouraging alumni to all buy a new “lapel pin” or Polo shirt or other item each year. That will allow people to show their pride AND contribute to the organization bottom line.

### **B. New Business –**

Christal Archibald will represent the NIU Alumni Association at the NIU graduation rehearsal to be held on 25 July 2019 and at the 26 July graduation.

Tom Van Wagner reported alumna Annette Redmond had agreed to be the keynote speaker at the 2019 NIU Homecoming Brunch at FT Myer on the first Sunday in November.

**Agenda and Action items for next meeting:**

1. Follow up with Stefan Buckman, on his request for removal from list serv (Matt Arbor)
2. Identify registration page information gaps and compile information requirements for further vetting by NIUAA Executive Board (Matt Arbor, Mike Edgerton)
3. Identify alumni volunteers for member registration page redesign (Matt Arbor)
4. Explore NIU coins with Follett's and frames. (Action: TVW)
5. Request NIUF provide names of donors to the NIUF website for FY 19 and a regular report of any donors each month. (Action: TVW)
6. Add Information to the next NIU Campus News Note, about networks forming in NYC, San Antonio, Georgia and the Hampton Roads area (Action: TVW).
7. Send notional job descriptions to the board members in the hope of generating new volunteers (Action: TVW)
8. Send 20 recruitment cards to MSgt Bailey; Maria Hayden, Jamie Lorio, as well as other key NIU alumni leaders (Action: Christal).

**Tabled for next meeting:**

- Discussion on how to prevent alumni "reply all" emails from inadvertently giving everyone access.
- Brainstorming the 2020 Initiative: how to leverage available data (LinkedIn, Event Registrations, etc.) to build the membership to 1,000 by 2020!

**Close/Adjourn:** President Christal Archibald adjourned the meeting at 8PM.

**NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting will be held on Thursday, 8 August 2019 from 7-8 pm via conference call.