

NIU Alumni Association Special Meeting
16 April 2020
7-8 pm

(480) 297-0773 Passcode 3382619

Participants:

Christal Archibald, '14, President
Tom Van Wagner, '94 NIU Liaison
CW3 Steven Venezia, '18, Strategic Communications
SMSgt Amber Abramowski, '17, Volunteer Coordinator
LTG Jeff Kimmons, USA (ret.), '79 NIUF Board Liaison
Danny Vergamini, '01, Northern Virginia Events Coordinator
Ray Cross, NIUF ExDir, NIUF Alumni Liaison Committee member
Kathy Coviello '01, Huntsville Network
John Garland, '12 Seattle
MSgt Huey Bridges, Midwest Network

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SUMMARY: The meeting discussed near-term goals for the NIUAA, roles/responsibilities for the NIUAA board, and determine how to grow the network after setting a solid foundation for the past year. LTG Jeff Kimmons, USA (ret.), and NIUF ExDir Ray Cross provided great insight and a bit of reflection on the great amount of work that has been done over the last year and some motivation to keep the momentum going through the end of the year. Also discussed the possibility of hosting a few virtual events based on the current circumstances. A total of 10 members from the NIUF, NIUAA boards, and NIUAA regional networks attended the strategic planning meeting in advance of the NIUF biannual board meeting, scheduled for 6 May 2020.

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RADM Schneider, USCGR (ret.), conveyed his apologies for not being able to attend, given a previously scheduled engagement.

Meeting Notes: President Christal Archibald '14 briefly opened the meeting at 7pm by welcoming all participants on the line and quickly set the agenda for the meeting. Ms. Archibald explained the objectives to be accomplished over the next week, in preparation for the NIUF biannual board meeting, scheduled for 6 May 2020, namely finalizing: 1) NIUAA roles and responsibilities; 2) NIUAA website refresh package, for the review and consideration of the NIUF Board, and 3) NIUAA interim report, outlining where the NIUAA is at and what is working, current challenges, and where the NIUAA is going.

II. BUSINESS:

A. Old Business: NIUAA Board Descriptions and Work Roles:

Following the 9 April 2020 monthly NIUAA meeting, LTG Jeff Kimmons provided poignant comments of the current state of the NIUAA and some advice moving forward as we build the network. The 16 April 2020 meeting started based on some initial recommendations from Dr. Schneider, focusing on roles/responsibilities of the NIUAA board. This would allow assigned board members the ability to fully understand day-to-day requirements and provide a narrow focus for each work role. This is a critical function of any successful operation as members are required to work together and grow the network in a healthy manner.

NIUAA Volunteer Coordinator Amber Abramowski praised the clarified roles and responsibilities as being exactly what the NIUAA Board needed to attract volunteers, and assign volunteers with particular skills against the specified roles.

The group next discussed the succession order of the NIUAA board positions. RADM Schneider, USCGR (ret.), had previously explained most alumni associations involve a solid 6-8 year commitment for anyone that accepts a position on the NIUAA board, starting as an Executive Officer for 2 years; and then progressing through secretary ((and/or treasurer)), vice president, and finally president. LTG Kimmons, USA (ret.) confirmed this synopsis of what Dr. Schneider had previously stated. Ms. Archibald explained that, given the specialty role of the treasurer, that person may be best suited for the role of treasurer, and provided an alternative progression to president. LTG Kimmons further specified the treasurer should be given the right of first refusal for any position along the progression that opens up, and should not be forgotten about, or left to languish in the role of treasurer. The NIUAA Board agreed that the progression is aspirational, given that unforeseen circumstances could impact the progression model.

Ms. Archibald specified the only thing she would change was the Fundraising Coordinator's responsibilities, vis-à-vis development of any NIU Foundation fundraising database.

Steven Venezia: Concur with the language in the roles/responsibilities document. Something that would provide volunteers an idea of what is the expectation with each position. StratComms Officer Venezia further envisioned as a way to attract more members: developing not only the NIUAA website content, but also branching out to social media platforms, to include posting pictures from G2G dinners. Ms. Archibald cautioned that the NIUAA must remain sensitive to NIU alumni, given that there are those who are not currently serving within the Intelligence Community and have no qualms about officially joining the NIUAA and being publicly advertised, while another segment will come out for events, but do not want to have a presence on the UNCLASSIFIED Internet, to include being identified within photos.

Christal Archibald: The next NIUF Executive board meeting is scheduled for 6 May 2020. The meeting will provide guidance on how to proceed with the NIUAA board work roles and approval process for website content and new updates. The NIUAA is in a unique position to appeal to currently serving intelligence professionals and retired members of the IC. Moving forward, it will probably be a two-phased approach on both unclassified and classified mediums to keep the association involved, informed, and engaged. Through unclassified social media accounts and highside iSpace/Spyspace pages would be an ideal start members. There will be some due outs to the board prior to the 6 May 2020 meeting with the NIUF, which should go out to the NIUAA governance email group soon.

John Garland inquired about creating a NIUAA group within I-Space on JWICS. Ms. Archibald recalled ((David Southworth, during the 14 Nov 2019 meeting)), had previously brought up this idea and encouraged such forward-thinking to meet the NIU alumni where they are at, be it on the UNCLASSIFIED internet, or within classified networks. Ms. Archibald described how she maintains a SpySpace page for personnel on Fort Meade, and throughout the NSA/CSS-USCYBERCOM extended enterprise.

Kathy Coviello identified the [Association of Former Intelligence Officers \(AFIO\)](#) as an organization from which the NIUAA could perhaps model best practices. Ms. Archibald commented that Dr. Hammersen had previously recommended such modeling against other DoD-related Alumni Associations; now that the NIU is transitioning to the ODNI, the NIU Foundation and NIU Alumni Association should consider intelligence-related models, and not be limited to DoD-specific foundation-alumni association models.

B. New Business

Read Out to other similar organizations: The NIUAA Board discussed similar organizations such as the Association of Former Intelligence Officers, National Defense University, Various War Colleges, and Academy schools could provide great insights on building, growing, and maintaining a vibrant association, which may provide best practices and lessons learned during their own build up process.

LTG Kimmons, USA (ret.), identified the NIUAA is at an inflection point, moreso now that it has reached the 1,000-member milestone, from 500 to 1,000 in one year. LTG Kimmons assessed the need to formalize the NIUAA into a better structure and framework, and praised the group for doing what is necessary to put a framework into place. LTG Kimmons supports and is proud of the NIUAA Board's current efforts, as a prerequisite for maturing the NIUAA governance model. The pain points the NIUAA is experiencing and the efforts the NIUAA is taking to address those issues are good problems to have. Both Mr. Kimmons and Ray Cross reiterated the fact that the NIUAA is much more than a social club. The NIUAA is a group of national security professionals at the forefront of some interesting times for our nation. The establishment of a network of intelligence professionals could benefit the nation during this time. Ray Cross echoed SMSgt Abramowski's praise for clarified roles and responsibilities, and encouraged everyone to lean-in, as the NIUAA needs everyone's help and support.

Huey Bridges Midwest Network update: Provided a quick update on some initiatives for the Midwest region network. The response from the "bcc:" announcement sent out to the NIUAA alumni base in the vicinity of St. Louis has been positive with 15-20 alumni contacting him for more information about the local network. Huey is currently engaging with the Scott AFB All Bulletin press release regarding former graduates of NIU and its predecessor schools/programs (NDIC, JMIC, DIC, DIS, PGIP, UGIP).

MSgt Bridges reported initial feedback from what communications he has had on behalf of the NIUAA, stating that individuals have come to him to learn more about attending NIU. Ms. Archibald identified that the NIUAA Network Leads are often the best advocates for the NIU in their geographic locations, as well as in regionally-based organizations. Ms. Archibald identified that MSgt Bridges might also want to become an official NIU Ambassador, which is a program organized by NIU official Charlotte Collinsworth. Ms. Archibald committed to provide information to MSgt Bridges on the NIU Ambassador program.

Kathy Coviello inquired about the network's connectivity with TRANSCOM; Huey responded that 70-80% of the new members come from TRANSCOM. Ms. Coviello offered to broker an introduction for MSgt Bridges with the TRANSCOM Deputy J2, who—while not an NIU alumnus—is a U.S. Army Intelligence professional, and personal friend, to spread the message around TRANSCOM.

MSgt Bridges commented that it seems the NIUAA needs help, and volunteered as he had a few extra hours to give to the NIUAA.

1,000 NIUAA Member: The association recently surpassed the 1,000 member mark. John Garland suggested identifying the 1,000th member to register, and build an NIUAA announcement of reaching the 1,000-member mark involving a personal interest story with the individual, creating additional content (provided the individual was willing to be interviewed). Mr. Garland also suggested taking a picture of the individual, with "bling" from the NIU. Steven Venezie agreed to assist with developing the content once the member was identified.

NIU SWAG packages: Huey Bridges inquired about NIU swag packages. While Ms. Archibald sent out the NIUAA marketing cards, Ms. Archibald committed to follow-up with NIU VP for Engagement Tim Latta about sending out NIU swag packages to network leads once the COVID-19 restrictions were lifted. Ms. Archibald clarified that the marketing cards should not be treated like “coasters” ((e.g.: one marketing card should be provided only to individuals who have not yet registered, as a “call to action.”)). Further, Ms. Archibald explained she had coordinated with Mr. Latta about sending out NIU swag to the network leads, in preparation for any 2020 NIUAA network activities. Christal will follow-up with Mr. Latta once operations resume at NIU; if necessary, Ms. Archibald will take steps to send out the NIU swag, as NIU leadership may be more focused on the impending transition of NIU from DoD to the ODNI.

Online Virtual Events: Mr. Vergamini informed the group that Generation-to-Generation dinners within Northern Virginia have been put on hold, on account of COVID-19. Mr. Vergamini is organizing an online book event with Mr. Peter Singer for his latest book titled, “Burn In: The Real Robotic Revolution,” with a 30% discount for the book. Ms. Coviello suggested there might be a way to have books signed by the author. Mr. Vergamini explained this virtual book talk can provide an opportunity for people outside of the DMV to participate; this may actually establish a new NIUAA model for future events.

Within this vein, Kathy Coviello also mentioned the possibility of the NIUAA developing webinars to assist mid-career alumni with career progression. Ms. Coviello cited Senior Executive Association webinars, such as “Exploring the Mindset during the Pandemic” and online offerings from the National Acquisition University.

Action Items:

1. Include the alternative progression, and right of first refusal for the treasurer (Christal).
2. Change the Fundraising Coordinator’s duty towards the NIUF fundraising database (Christal).
3. Provide information to MSgt Bridges on the NIU Ambassador program (Christal).
4. Broker an introduction for MSgt Bridges with the TRANSCOM Deputy J2 (if DJ2 is willing) (Kathy)
5. Identify the 1,000th member (Christal, Matt)
6. Draft human interest story with 1,000th member (if willing) (Steve, John, Jennifer Kim)
7. Follow Up on NIU swag with NIU VP for Engagement Tim Latta after NIU reopens (Christal)

NEXT MEETING: Will be held on Thursday, 14 May 2020 from 7-8 pm via conference call.

Close/Adjourn: President Christal Archibald ‘14 adjourned the meeting at 8PM.