

Approved by the UCLA Alumni Association Board of Directors (March 2, 2024)



UCLA Alumni Association  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
November 4, 2023

**Present**

**Board of Directors:** Araceli Almazan, Cathy Choi, Devon Dickau, Samantha D’Souza, Cinthia Flores, Dean Florez, Coretta Harris, Matt Kaczmarek, Ed Lew, Chris MacLaughlin, Paco Retana, Natalie Samarjian, Monica Sanchez, Matthew Saucedo, Ann Wang, Jenn Wells, Steve Yu

**Staff:** Allison Baird-James, Brandie Barrera, Alexandra Brown, Julia Brown, Denise Pacheco, Andrea Sork, Katie Ward

**Guests/Standing Guests:** Sonya Brooks, Wesley Brown, Shreya Dodbballpur, Rob English, Joel Fierberg, Naomi Hammonds, Henry Hsiao, Mitchell Liday, Paul Sinacore

**Welcome**

- President Ann Wang called the meeting to order at 8:57 a.m. welcoming directors, standing guests and staff partners to the second Board meeting of the fiscal year. The meeting, held in-person and via Zoom, was being recorded to assist with capturing minutes post-meeting. Note: all presentations to be made available for review in Alumni Board Box after the meeting. Wang welcomed new and returning standing guests to the meeting and conveyed the importance of building bridges between the Board and each of the organizations they represent.
- Paco Retana, President-Elect, reflected on alumni who have recently passed including former Chancellor Charles E. Young and Cindy Montanez, a former California State Assembly member. Retana also acknowledged the challenging times many are facing at an individual and global level and uplifted the Board environment as a safe space to come together. Araceli Almazan acknowledged that as a land grant institution, the UCLA Alumni Association acknowledges the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar (Los Angeles basin, So. Channel Islands).

**ACTION Approval of Consent Agenda**

- Wang presented the consent agenda and asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the August 26, 2023 Board of Directors meeting. Motion made, seconded and approved unanimously.

**Board Culture and Engagement Commitment**

- Wang summarized findings from the retreat evaluation report with responses from 11 board members. Overall, collected responses indicated the following positive outcomes: many “aha” moments related to how the Association’s strategic plan intersects with the University’s strategic plan and alignment across each committee’s efforts; time for dialogue, brainstorming and collaboration towards action; focus on board culture and engagement; and being in a space to focus fully on board work. Opportunities for future consideration involve the value of pre-meetings/prep work, the volume of emails, elevating partnership opportunities for board members and staff, continued awareness of the Chancellor’s search, University strategic plan and Hispanic Serving Institution focus. Main retreat takeaways related to goals for the year, including: continuing action on the Alumni strategic plan roadmap; partnering with the agency, THE WORK, in the development of the Association’s brand and engagement strategies; Board efforts to help develop impactful internal and external strategic partnerships; aligning on a collective

commitment to Board culture and collaboration to help drive the Association's mission; and being a catalyst of DEI and civic engagement for the larger alumni community. Wang also shared a handout for board members to review and provide input based off the retreat workshop with Yolanda Gorman, which focused on Board culture, fostering unity and participation. Board members discussed operationalizing these goals and creating clear measurements of progress for them. Matt Kaczmarek provided an update on the Board matching fund challenge that began at the retreat, reaching \$14K in board member contributions.

### **Alumni Affairs Update**

- Katie Ward, Executive Director, Alumni Engagement Innovation, provided an update on alumni engagement. There are now 654K alumni including degree and certificate holders. The deck provided current alumni location stats within the US and around the world. The Association expects to develop new engagement opportunities in various states as UCLA moves to the Big 10 Conference in 24-25. Demographics data indicate growing diversity across ethnicity, age and gender; one example is the increased proportion of alumni who identify as women. Ward also discussed event engagement related to archetype and life stage models. Overall, event attendance and total events have increased compared to the previous fiscal year. The average attendees per event has decreased slightly however, demonstrating the Association's efforts to create smaller more targeted community-based events. Aligned with the strategic plan, the association has implemented several strategies to engage alumni including collaborative programs with networks and campus partners, targeted engagement using employment info, lifespan programming aligned with alumni needs, spaces for alumni to share their expertise and uniting alumni at existing industry events. Questions and commentary involved the collection and management of gender and multi-racial identity data, which the Association is working to determine how to collect and include in reporting.

### **Brand Strategy Presentation and Strategic Plan Update**

- Rob English, Chief Creative Officer, and Wesley Brown, Senior Strategist from THE WORK, provided an update on the brand strategy for the Alumni Association including brand positioning, narrative, and initial visual identity and tone. A high-level timeline and milestones were shared noting collaboration with THE WORK that has taken place so far. Brand positioning was informed by the intersection of audience insight, UCLA brand insight, and cultural insights which THE WORK believes presents a powerful opportunity to shift the feeling and intent of the Association into a more active and reciprocal relationship that captures the ambitions and needs of its alumni. Four pillars were developed related to positioning. The brand campaign direction, "story of change", focuses on ongoing alumni narratives and personal experiences to celebrate the individual while clearly defining the diverse and multifaceted Bruin identity. Sample visuals and items showcasing the brand were shared for feedback. English also discussed the visual identity and tone related to color choice, photography style, typography and use of "alum" as a personal identifier that any Bruin can uniquely own. Next steps include gathering and incorporating feedback into the brand strategy, beginning final brand guidelines and continuing to develop a powerful engagement strategy. Discussion involved feedback and input related to the brand strategy presentation and overall campaign. Board members discussed the elements, language and concepts that resonated and whether there would be continued opportunities for the Board to review iterations of the work as it evolves. Matt Saucedo, Strategic Planning Workgroup Chair, extended an open-ended invitation for board members to continue to provide feedback and questions via email.
- Ward and Saucedo provided an update on overall strategic plan progress related to the two priorities of aligning and amplifying the Association identity and reimagining alumni engagement. Project goals related to both priorities are on track and aligned. In addition to next steps related to

the brand strategy, other items involve refining and gathering feedback on the work plan (roadmap), mapping existing technology products and solutions, and develop a progress tracker or mechanism to provide updates on the strategic plan. Ward also discussed the strategy roadmap for reimaging alumni engagement from analysis to implementation. Steps consider the key problem areas, solutions to develop, communicating the value proposition, pathways, people involved, vision for the future, and impact. The Strategic Planning Workgroup will next focus on developing key indicators to monitor and measure progress.

### **Campus Update**

- Allison Baird-James, Interim Vice Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer, provided an update on campus financials, campus expansion and the UCLA Chancellor search. Key numbers for UCLA involve the enrollment of more than 47K students across 16 schools and divisions, an \$11B impact on California's economy, \$1.6B in annual research funding for more than 7,200 current research projects, and a medical enterprise that encompasses 250+ UCLA Health medical practices throughout Southern California. Baird-James reviewed UCLA's revenue sources and expenditures. The UCLA's medical centers are the largest revenue source providing for 32% of funds. Despite revenues resulting from various system wide charge adjustments and enrollment growth over time, UCLA's general funds have remained flat in constant dollars and decreased on a per-student basis over the past 10 years. The combination of state funding shortfalls and nearly flat tuition levels over the past decade help to explain this trend and are being considered in the campus's future sustainability and endowment use. Related to future sustainability, UCLA's campus expansion involves the purchase of the UCLA South Bay Campus and the Trust Building in Downtown Los Angeles. Goal are to increase the student population, deepen UCLA's engagement with Los Angeles, enhance research and creative activities, and for public/private partnerships. Baird-James also discussed the timeline and process for the UCLA chancellor search. Currently in the learning and listening stage, the Board along with other alumni, are invited to attend a Town Hall to learn more and provide input on the needs and interests of UCLA constituencies. Wang discussed opportunities for how to include alumni voices and provide input. Additionally, a search advisory committee was formed and will be involved in recruiting, screening and conducting interviews with candidates. As Alumni Association President, Ann Wang, along with other campus leaders, will serve on the search committee.

### **Committee Roadmap Updates**

- Paco Retana, Governance and Nominations Committee Chair, provided an overview of recruitment this year including rotations, open seats and board members eligible for re-election. Initial information was shared about the re-election process including key dates and to inform recruitment of new Directors, Board composition and recruitment strategy were reviewed. To help focus the Board's recruitment efforts and identify the preferred size/scope of the candidate pool, the total number of available seats, gaps in representations/perspective, industries and expertise aligning with the Board's direction, and skills/experience to support the strategic plan and trajectory of Association, should be taken into account. In order to support recruitment efforts and relationship development between alumni and the Association, Retana encouraged all Board members to help identify and build relationships with alumni who offer perspectives, skills or experience that would benefit the board. Resources for the Board to support recruitment are available in Alumni Board Box. Wang announced the Vice President election process will begin on December 11 and shared key dates. An overview of the process, timeline, role and eligibility will be outlined in an email to the Board.
- Jenn Wells and Cathy Choi, Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC) Co-Chairs, discussed the committee's goals for the year which include operationalizing EDI into the work of the Board and

work with alumni and help identify and continue cultivating strategic campus partnerships in order to help amplify alumni voices in strategic university matters. Two examples of how DAC is accomplishing these goals will be to create toolkit for committee leads to utilize that informs how to keep EDI at the center of their ethos/approach and partner with President Wang to offer listening sessions or other methods for feedback related to the chancellor's search.

- Araceli Almazan, Finance Committee Chair, invited all board members to attend the first Finance Committee meeting which is in the process of being scheduled and will include a finance onboarding session and overview of financial statements for Q1.
- Devon Dickau and Matt Kaczmarek, Strategic Partnerships Committee Co-Chairs, discussed the goals for the year, which involve formalizing a vision and strategy for strategic partnerships, developing tools to codify and implement the strategy and activating board members to participate. The committee is currently in the process of assessing data collection and synthesis needs to understand existing elements, sources and potential use that will inform partnership needs.
- Cinthia Flores, Civic Engagement Taskforce Chair, discussed goals which involve engaging with inter and intra university representatives and legislators to help advocate for the needs of alumni. In partnership with Government and Community Relations, efforts include hosting a Bruin elected fireside chat discussion, participating in UC Action Day, and working to identify and connect with five UCLA alumni in positions of prominence at state and national levels in anticipation of the 2024 election cycle.

#### **Reflection**

- Wang concluded the meeting by reviewing upcoming items and communications for board members to look out for related to the strategic plan and recruitment, and to also keep in mind board, committees and individual efforts taking place before the next board meeting.

#### **Meeting adjourned by Wang**

- Adjourned at 1:47 p.m.