

December 4, 2009
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SYNOPSIS OF THE MEETING OF THE BOSTON ALUMNI CHAPTER ON NOVEMBER 15, 2009

The meeting of the Antioch College Boston Alumni Chapter with Matthew Derr and Morgan Fellows Anne Bohlen and Scott Warren produced a great number of suggestions, concerns, and good ideas. We will make every attempt to deliberate on each of the points made during the discussion to determine how we might incorporate them into the planning and design of the concept and curriculum for the new Antioch College. Following is a synopsis of those ideas and comments, which I have tried to organize by various relevant categories. I have also put key words in bold, so as to help focus attention on central points.

A. Calendar

1. The possibility of a **three-year program** leading to a B.A., with the further possibility of a three-year/two-year program that would lead to a Masters degree after a total of five years: some alumni were skeptical of whether a 3-year program would provide sufficient time to deliver an adequate program. Others actually found the idea appealing, especially if the Internet could be used on Co-op to continue and finish courses begun on campus. Others found the 3-year program to be attractive on a cost basis, offering more students access to Antioch.
2. Some alumni thought it important that students be allowed to transfer between “**Divs.**”
3. A number of alumni also felt strongly that the calendar include a “**C-Div**” for the sake of building and maintaining community.
4. Finally, the idea was raised that perhaps **Nonstop** might serve as a good option for students who wanted to wait a year between high school and college.

B. Curriculum

1. There was strong sentiment during the discussion that **science and math** should be important components of the new curriculum.
2. One alumnus emphasized that even more important was a strong component on the relationship between **science and technology**.

3. One idea suggested creating an **incubator culture for the sciences** in the context of student entrepreneurship, as had been done in Antioch's past.
4. Yet another alum recommended pursuing **partnerships in the sciences** with other institutions, given the issue of limited resources.
5. It was recommended that the curriculum focus on issues that graduates will have to face, like **sustainability, global warming, and environmental issues**.
6. Another suggestion was that the curriculum be focused on a limited number of integrated themes, such as **human ecology, arts, literature, and life skills**.
7. One alum suggested looking at Tufts University and their concept and practice of "**juried classes**" in their experimental college.
8. Many alumni/ae felt strongly that the **global dimension** of the curriculum was absolutely crucial.
9. Another comment suggested that science offerings be focused on the **environment**, again given the resources issue.
10. It was suggested that perhaps a "**freshman seminar**" be explored.
11. One alumna thought it would be a compelling idea to have a program that focused on the **global economy**, and especially the question of **labor** in that economy.
12. A number of alums felt strongly that the College continue to have **cross-cultural** requirements.
13. Finally, there was general support for the concept of "**hybrid courses**," which would begin in the classroom on campus, and then continued on-line when the student went on Co-op.

C. Faculty and Pedagogy

1. There was strong consensus that the College should hire faculty with a serious passion for the liberal arts and experiential learning (to which we added that they should also be versatile and able to work across disciplinary lines, and also committed to integrating issues of diversity into the core of the curriculum).

2. Some alums suggested that the faculty should be kept small, especially at first, and that the College make extensive use of **guest faculty** from the alumni and other institutions.
3. There was also mention of the pedagogical importance of involving students in the very question of “how to learn,” so that they become truly **active learners**.

D. Community

1. There was overwhelming consensus that community and community governance continue to be central values of the College program.
2. Some alums stressed the importance of maximizing use of the internet, facebook, etc. to create an on-line community to supplement and complement the face-to-face on-campus community.
3. Some concern was expressed about whether a 3-year program would vitiate the possibility of a strong community.

E. Co-op

1. Again, there was obviously universal support for the centrality of Co-op to the future of the College.
2. The main question raised was what should the Co-op program look like, and how might it be different from the program of the past. (There was some definite support for the concept of having students move from local to national to global Co-op experiences, as long as flexibility was allowed for the varying developmental stages of students).

F. Access and Support

1. Alums responded positively to our strategic and principled decision to make the College not only accessible to all interested prospective students, but to ensure the perception of accessibility as well.
2. A few alums stressed the importance of making sure that all students, no matter their financial status, have access to computers and the internet.
3. There was animated and enthusiastic support among the alumni/ae for ensuring that the College offered substantial **academic support services**, and especially that we be supportive of different learning styles and personalities.

G. Process and Transition

1. As the transitional process moves forward, a few alums suggested that the College explore developing partnerships with Wilberforce College and Central State University.
2. Another suggestion involved exploring the creation of a kind of Chautauqua program, somewhat like the Summer Institutes of the past, to enhance the cultural life of the College and to involve alumni and others in contributing to that cultural life.
3. Many alums stressed the importance of using focus groups of high school and college students to test the appeal of any proposed program and curriculum (which is currently part of the planning and design process underway).
4. Finally, an intriguing idea was suggested concerning the possibility of offering “short courses” to the public during the second year of the transition, both as a way of generating extra revenue for the College, and of keeping intellectual life alive on campus next year.