

Teach-In Transcript: Presentations



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Thursday, 4 December 2014

7:00 - 11:30 p.m., McGregor 113

The introduction from Student Union not recorded due to camera error. In lieu of recording, the following is Student Union's Statement of Intent:

Statement of Intent:

- To illuminate the history surrounding the causes of Antioch College's closure.
- Through this analysis, to construct a counter-narrative to the simplistic "toxic culture" understanding of Antioch College prior and after its closure.
- To clearly identify the chief challenges and successes of Antioch's predecessor institutions and build a history that incorporates the complex realities of the Old Antioch and the Nonstop Institute.
- To deliberately link the mission of Old Antioch and its successor institution Nonstop to the mission of Antioch Student Union: to empower students of marginalized identities by creating a community in which their voices are amplified by the collective support of the student body.

[Recording begins with first panel:]

Amanda Cole, Class of 2005 (Co-moderator): ... and the Renewal Plan, and also have Closure and Community Response? Is that right? How does she just disappear like that? It's spooky.

Taylor Larson, Class of 2017 [from back of room]: Yes?

Amanda: Just these two are up here right now? Not everybody, on the slide?

Taylor: Right!

Amanda: Alright. Just clarifying.

Jane Foreman, Class of 2017 (Co-moderator): Clarifying question. One minute. That's great.

Okay, so if you two wanna introduce yourselves, then I will time you and give you a two minute warning.

Eros Xena Starkiller: Wait, introduce ourselves and then speak? Or, like, immediately after this introduce ourselves? [laughter] I'll just introduce myself.

I'm Eros, or Xena, you can call me either. I am an alum. I attended before the college closed and afterwards. And I am an avid researcher of Antioch's history of Community Governance. And also I have, like to think I've been pretty involved in it, and certainly was very involved when I first got here.

Jennifer Berman: And I am Jennifer Berman. I am an alum from 1985, four? 1984, yeah. And I became the Community Manager the next year. And I was able to stay away from Yellow Springs for about 20 years. And then I came back when we needed a larger lawn, and I'll get into that later. But I lived in Chicago for many years, and now I'm back...

Eros: Do you want to go? I'm nervous, but I can go first, but...

Jennifer: I'll support you.

Eros: Okay. Sorry, this is just for time because I'm really bad at keeping track of it in my head.

Okay, so I'm going to start with a little bit of personal history. I'm reading from a paper I wrote for a class called Antioch Stories, which--I don't use this word often, but I was truly blessed to have taken this class with an excellent professor, David Thelen, who edits or edited, was the editor-in-chief of the...I forget, it was the American History Journal or Journal of American History or something.

Anyway, he was an excellent professor and we got to do a lot of research at the place, about the institution we were attending, while we were there, which meant we got to spend a lot of time in Antiochiana. If you haven't done that, I would highly recommend you do that. It's good to go in there with a purpose, but you kind of lose it once you're in there and end up with the excellent Scott Sanders just giving you lots and lots of things to look at, that...and you can touch things that were written in the 1920s by students who were trying to do the same type of things that y'all are trying to do, and it's kind of amazing.

But, I'm going to start with a quote from The Blaze, a November 5, 1925 edition, an article called "Our Governmental Riddle", which--and you can see a copy of this Blaze in Antiochiana.

"When is a government not a government? When it is a student government. Why? First let us agree on what a government is and then what student government shall mean in this discussion. Government is a state of controlling, directing and restraining; in other words, it is administration. In our nation we speak of the people being controlled by and for themselves. For convenience, then, we shall recognize as student government as an administration of the student body for their own good, by their own action. A government is not merely an advisory body, it makes final decisions. It is not a policing body only, it has positive functions. A government of any kind is recognized by the extent of its sovereignty, the matters in which it is supreme."

So, a little bit of personal background: Back in 2007, attracted by Loren Pope's promise that there is no college or university in the country that makes a more profound difference in a young person's life, or that creates more effective adults than Antioch, I applied and was accepted by Antioch.

Months after I had notified Antioch College of my intent to attend it announced that it would be closing its doors at the end of the 2007-08 academic year. With that in mind I still decided to attend Antioch College, if only for that year. What I found when I got to Antioch was an impassioned struggle to keep the college alive. I also found an amazing faculty, intelligent and involved students, an invested and caring staff, and some truly impressive alumni.

One of the parts, though, that I didn't anticipate in coming to Antioch is the importance that CG would play. It quickly became very close to my heart, and something that I was heavily involved in. During my time at Antioch I was elected to the Community Council--ComCil--both terms, I attended the Advisory Council--AdCil--regularly, and worked for the Community Managers--CMs--there's a lot of abbreviations at Antioch. There was a college to save, and even as we were being shut down there was day-to-day business still to take care of. We held joint sessions of ComCil and AdCil; Toni Murdock, the chancellor of Antioch University, came to AdCil; a vote of no confidence in the chancellor was passed; CM elections were held, and when both collectives ended up dropping out of the race ComCil had work overtime to make sure that the positions would be filled. Suffice to say, Community Government was very busy during my time on campus, and I was very much invested in it.

For my part, I am not of the mind that CG was without flaw. The dual council system of AdCil and ComCil always seemed to draw a strange and uncomfortable line through various responsibilities of governance as a whole. Furthermore, AdCil's position as an advisory council at present seemed to delegitimize CG's claims to actually be governing.

I say this because I have been constantly reminded, in regards to many Antioch traditions including CG, since my arrival on campus that just because we did things in a certain way before does not mean we must continue to do that way. I want to make it clear that I am not operating with some dreamy-eyed notion of CG at Antioch that was without flaw, and worked perfectly. I am well aware that just because we've always done it that way, there is no necessity to do it that way now.

That being said, there is a lot of value in looking at CG's history--which with very little time, I will expound upon.

Antioch's history has a lot to say on the subject of Community Governance. I am really going to talk about the early parts. You might have heard mostly about Algo Henderson's involvement, kind of started before he got here.

Student Government was created in 1921 at the urging of the faculty. This government, composed of three main bodies, the Student Council and the Men's and the Women's Conferences, as well as officers and a number of committees. This system had power over student affairs. The fact that at a college student affairs--much like Community Life--is rather nebulous and all-encompassing was to be a bone of contention. In 1924 students, feeling that it was entirely within their purview, voted to keep football even with the scheduling problems it caused with the five week div system currently in place. The faculty then, disregarding the vote of the students, abolished football at Antioch.

In 1925 an overhaul of the system of governance was begun. From the Blaze November 5, 1925: Realizing that the present conditions are highly unsatisfactory, the Division A student government appointed a committee to revise the present Constitution. They selected a faculty advisor and met at his home. I give the faculty member due praise for trying to be only an advisor and not a

dominating force, and yet the Division A committee began just patching up the rotten hull of the present Constitution. As evidence of the better results possible when the students must depend upon themselves, the committee in Division B is going deeply into fundamentals, wishing to know how far its sovereignty may extend, and, with this in mind proposes that an entirely new Constitution be adopted, should it be more desirable than the one being patched up by the Division A committee.

By 1926 the first constitution of Community Governance was compiled, and on February 2, 1926 Division B voted in favor of the new constitution and weeks later Division A voted overwhelmingly to ratify it.

The new plan included a manager and a council of nine, elected from the community at large. The council was to have one faculty, one male student, and one female student.

That would eventually grow into the CG that was around during my time, composed separately of ComCil and AdCil. And this is...Oh crap, my research...And this...

“Preamble to the Constitution: Community Government at Antioch is designed to provide an operating structure of genuine self-government, based on the widest achievable participation for the purposes of practicality and education.”...It goes in a little farther.

AdCil and Comcil...I have 30 seconds to explain this....The difference between AdCil and ComCil, basically, AdCil started off as the administrative council, in other words it took the role of administering the college. It had control over the annual budget, hiring head administrators, hiring in general, promoting and tenuring faculty, making recommendations to the President on personnel policies, and dealing with issues like college policies and budgetary concerns, like the college calendar and meal plan offerings.

So...Okay, I have to stop now, but basically, it had pretty extensive administrative power in the college at the time, but then was turned into the advisory council where the President could veto anything they had decided on. Sorry for going over my time.

Amanda Cole: No, thanks Eros. Is this on? No? Not on. Okay, well, a clarifying question is, would be something directly to Eros. Any clarifying questions? Also, so, working the stack, you know, write your notes down for the open discussion. So that would be a really great way. Unless it's something, like, really just need to get that—you know, what was that acronym?

Audience Member: When was the transition from Administrative to Advisory?

Jane Foreman [to Eros]: Could you repeat the question also?

Eros: When was the transition? I am actually not 100% certain about that, I want to say that was the 90s where the name changed...I mean it had...

Rose Pelzl: Bob is shaking his head.

Bob Devine: It was always advisory. That was legal rubric of the corporation that was Antioch University.

Eros: And so documents kind of refer to it as administrative sometime, though I guess it was always advisory. I know at one point they had the opportunity to include themselves in the College's charter, but actually of themselves elected not to, which is kind of an interesting decision.

Amanda: Okay, so I am going to let that one clarifying question...if we want to we can just spin. Okay, Jennifer. And so you need timekeeping, Jane is keeping your time over there. She'll give you a two and a, like a, fist, power, for your eight minutes is over. And, or I will ring the bell if you don't hear it. Okay?

11:51

Jennifer: Well, I timed myself, it's seven minutes, 18 seconds, so we'll see how we do. My only preface is that I just decided to keep this real. So, we're all family. We can handle this, right? [snaps from audience]

[reading from paper] I must admit it's bit traumatizing to think about my year as Community Manager in 1985. It felt like all eyes were upon me and judging intensely as I tried to lead our demoralized and cantankerous flock in a more positive direction.

Of course there were good moments and I'm glad I did it, but that was not my first feeling when contemplating my year in the hotseat at Antioch. To back up a bit, I think there's a good argument for me to say I attended Antioch at its financial and spiritual nadir.

In the Fall of 1979 when I entered, the faculty and staff had gone without pay for weeks, and most remained on the job anyway. I can't remember exactly how long they had gone without pay, I think it was months, as Antioch tried to cobble some financing together. The physical plant was literally in ruins: rusty steam emanated from muddy trenches, where our antiquated heating pipes lay, half-exposed underground. When it rained, water cascaded directly through the roof of the library in several areas. The meticulously dressed Joe Cali and tie-dyed Duffy were always prepared with a system of trash bins on timers to deal with the holes. The gym was truly disgusting. The locker room stank and everything was warped and rusty. Dorms where students lived had severe mold problems. Our once beautiful autodium had holes in the spires, and pigeons went there to die. The stench of Kelly Hall's rotting pigeon carcasses in the summer is still burned in my nose. [laughter]

At the time, Antioch's funkiness attracted me. But when I see it now in all of its cared-for glory, I can't believe any parent thought it was okay that we lived that way. [laughter] Come to think of it, many of our families never saw Antioch until graduation day. [laughter]

I didn't start out particularly interested in governance at Antioch. I was pre-vet and very seriously into science and programming music on WYSO. As I changed, through my co-ops around the country and steady diet of philosophy classes with Al Denman and others—oh, we had *three* philosophers then—I fell more and more in love with this scrappy and tenacious place and what it had done for me personally.

I was deeply moved by faculty and staff who had believed in this place so much that they had continued working without pay. We were family, we were in classes together, many staff and faculty regularly came to events, we went to their houses for dinner, or to work on projects together.

For the first time in my life I really felt I had found home. I loved many of my fellow students, the faculty and staff, the village, and the co-ops. This made me want to give back to the college. So I got involved in Community Government in a big way. Those were exciting days for a student interested in the running of a college. Students were on every committee. They probably

participated in more things, like budget, and tenure, and personnel decisions, than any other school in America.

The mantra at Antioch was, if you're interested in making something happen, and if it doesn't cost much money, you can do it here. That led to wildly creative projects and outrageously adventurous co-ops. Supervision was minimal to say the least, and budgetary creativity was rewarded.

Unfortunately, the total freedom also led to a staff and faculty that didn't have good boundaries with students, way too much dangerous drug use, heroin, cocaine, and alcohol, and people unwilling or uncomfortable with getting help for their friends. In one year we had two suicides. I was called out to identify one of the bodies.

We were all full of passion for justice and lived in a very frightening world. Ronald Reagan was president and was funding secret wars in Central America, propping up murderous dictators—that the then State Senator Mike DeWine was supporting, by the way. The Cold War was on, and we all felt like a full-scale nuclear war could break out at any moment. The struggle to end Apartheid was raging in South Africa. Israel and Palestine were in flames. There was a war in Lebanon.

I think the combination of not being offered social tools by the college, the lack of real resources, and our rage against the injustices in the world, made some of us feel like we had no time for niceties.

The truth was we were pretty cruel to each other, and many people soon learned not to speak for fear of being publicly humiliated. Something about our lives here led to a culture of ideological bullying. A good example of that is what happened to Eric Bates.

When I entered in 1979, we had a big bookstore that sold lots of books and magazines, as well as other things. One of the things they sold was playboy. A group of student on campus called for the removal of all pornography from the bookstore. There had been two or three rapes on campus—by outsiders, by the way—and some students felt that pornography contributed to a misogynistic culture. Eric cited the first amendment argument against censorship, and that if people didn't like playboy, they should simply not buy it and it will go away.

Vicious name-calling and total isolation ensued, and Eric's fate was sealed. He was shunned all four years he was here. During his time as a student, he went on to be a huge champion of the college anyway.

At the time we had a very visibly alcoholic president who lived in New York and despised the College, especially the faculty. While a student, Eric was one of the people early on who tirelessly called for the independence of the college from the university, which was starving us and making us fight each other for scraps.

His last year on campus, Eric applied for the job of Community Manager. Even though he ran unopposed, he was denied the job because of his political misstep four years earlier. People hated him and didn't even know why at that point. Eric went on to be the managing editor of Southern Exposure, The North Carolina Independent, and Mother Jones—not exactly the right wing ideologue, as he was painted at Antioch.

Despite being treated so unfairly, when the College was shut down, Eric again stepped in, and even though he came very close to losing his job as managing editor of Rolling Stone, his ferocious negotiating skills helped to secure the successful purchase of Antioch College by the alumni from

the University.

So back to governance at Antioch when I was Community Manager. I pushed through two things through ComCil and AdCil—Administrative Council, which Eros and Bob Devine will probably talk about.

One was a written version of the Honor Code, worked on by a committee of students and faculty, which we still use today. Another was a weekly Community Meeting. Before we had this valve, we only got together as a community when there was a crisis, and these meetings were very difficult. I felt that if we had the chance to know each other, eat ice cream, and gather regularly, we could work problems out as they came up and not wait for crises. We also did fun things we did at Community Meeting like we do today: brief musical acts, talks, updates. I think it works.

There were a lot of things about my Antioch that I loved...The dedication of the faculty was mind-blowing. The co-ops left me changed for life. My best friends today are the people I encountered my first term at Antioch. They are still the first people I call when I need to talk. When Matt and I were looking for a bigger yard for our four dogs, we moved to Greene Country from Chicago, even though neither of us had jobs here, just to be back in our chosen home.

The closure of the college was a horrible spiritual death, and the reopening, while also very painful--to me--is a miracle. Nothing like this has ever happened in the history of higher education in America. It is my hope that we can continue Antioch's legacy of social change, agency, fierce loyalty and love of our friends, while being much more compassionate with those we might disagree with.

[bell]

[applause]

Amanda: I'm going to amend the clapping rule. At the end of the panel we can clap because then we're clapping for everybody. How does that sound, are we good with that amendment? It's like the fifteenth one in this half hour... Thank you, both of you.

So, is this on? It's a frickin conspiracy. Am I allowed to cuss? [inaudible] Okay, so, our next...Oh, any clarifying questions? Clarifying is just, you know, real direct. Remember, write down your questions so they're part of the discussion, because they might have a lot...Or comments, you're allowed to have a comment also.

Let's see. Bob Devine will be our next. Former president, alumni, faculty, former faculty... Sorry, Bob, I introduced you. He has some handouts. So we'll get those around. So we have a little bit of time here, so this is a good time to stretch or whatever. And if somebody could please help, I appreciate that, thank you.

Alright, let's come back around. [bell] We are over time. We are not running on time...Just so you know. I don't think we'll be kicked out of here, we just want to be mindful. I'm not going to call anybody out, but I did see a yawn. It's okay. While I was talking. Little personal. Just joking. We're going to keep moving through, keep taking care of yourselves. Everybody has the handouts, anybody need a handout? There are three handouts. You can share with somebody next to you possibly. Greta, can you help make sure people have them? I think there are some people in the middle who don't. Hang tight, we're gonna move on, and go.

Jane: If you don't have a handout, please share with your friend, because we are very low on

time...I'm sure you can have access to them in your future.

26:36

Bob: I am Bob Devine and I'm older than dirt and I was here for the New Directions program in the 60s and I was here for the payless paydays and I was here for the dissolution of the College and Nonstop and I probably spent 1/16th of my life in this room, which is very sad to acknowledge. [laughter]

I wanted to talk about the closure of the College, and the things leading up to it.

I served as President at the end of the last century and was responsible for patrolling the border between the College and the University. By patrolling the border, I mean keeping the University at bay, and I wanted to summarize some of that, which I've done, and the major piece that I will be working from is the Corporatization of Antioch.

The reasons that people give--The most common narratives you'll hear about the closure of the college, is one, because of the toxicity. One of the three handouts is That the College was Toxic, that the college is...And the second reason that's most often given is that the college was failing. The college was not failing and the college was not toxic. The college is always volatile, has always been volatile, throughout its history. And by that I mean a community that really deliberates about things that are very important and very value-laden, and sometimes that's conflicting.

Those are the common narratives though and I wanted to dispel those a little bit. The actual factors I sort of summarized on the sheet that says "Three Things" on the top, and towards the bottom of that it says, "Factors contributing to the rapid decline of the college."

I'll go through those but here's what I want to do, I wanted to walk through the differences between the College and the University, the University being so-called "adult campuses"--although undergraduates went there--but they were called the adult campuses, five campuses in California, Seattle, New England, and one here in town. And the differences are striking because the differences are the attitudes that led to the closing of the College.

So, excuse me, if you look at the Corporatization of Antioch--the reasons, the things that I heard as President of the College, for the five plus years I was in the President's role and before that in the Dean's role...the reasons that I heard that had to do with the differences between the two, for why the College was not viable, and running through them very quickly.

The University, and particularly the University administration, felt that income ought to be earned income. They did not understand donative resources. By donative resources I mean annual fund, major gifts, endowment earnings, etc. Resources ought to be earned, it out to be earned income, and could not understand a college that had fully half of its income deriving from donative resources and not from what people paid to come here. One of the sheets, Three Things, it says at the top: Higher education is the only business in the world in which the product is sold for less than it costs to produce it, and that is because of the donative resources.

And the second one is that financial aid is a major waste of money. When you have 60-70% percent of the students on some kind of financial aid, the University attitude--and that is a generalization. Bing! You can eject my seat or whatever you want to do. [laughter] The attitude was, why are you giving away all of this financial aid? Because it comes right from the top. A college like Oberlin, which has an endowment of \$600 million, had all of their financial aid derived from the revenue

from the endowment. Antioch College, which when I started had an endowment of \$11 million, couldn't possibly do that. So it really was just reducing the amount paid for the College. But the University was like, that's just ridiculous, you people don't know how to run a business. It's not a business. It's more like a church than a business, I'm sorry to say.

A third one: the overhead expenses in a residential institution were too high. I would get comparative chart between the University and the College, and they would say, "You've got all these staff! What are you doing? Your overhead is incredibly high." I would say, yes, we're residential, we have a cafeteria, we have housekeeping, we have security, we have maintenance, we have counseling, we have all the things that the adult campuses didn't have at all. And not only that, but we have 37 leaky buildings to take care of, and not only that but a thousand acre nature preserve.

At any rate, anyway, that was one of the things: residential expenses in a residential institution was seen is too high. And by the way the library of the college was the library for the University, that they claimed as--for North Central Association--they claimed as their library. Well guess what? We had to pay for the library. That's part of the overhead.

A fourth factor: the labor institution--the labor in a higher education institution, they felt should be as cheap as it possibly can be. Which is why most of those programs were running on adjuncts. And running on 80% adjuncts. And by that, I mean somebody who has no benefits, no benefits at all, no health, no retirement, nothing like that. And gets paid a minimal amount for teaching a class and going home, period.

As opposed to faculty--full-time faculty at Antioch, that do advising, that serve on committees, that are part of the governing process. *And* they teach, *and* they try to maintain their careers. And that was one of the things that bothered them. The unions and tenure had driven their cost too high, they said, had just driven the cost too high. Get rid of the unions and get rid of tenure. That was part of the University attitude.

A sixth thing--oh, well, a fifth thing. Tenure renders the college less than nimble. The way the program worked at the old College was that the administration would design and sort of vet the program, and then they would hire faculty to teach it. The undergraduate program involved the faculty developing the program and implementing it. It didn't have much to do with the administration. It wasn't a top-down model. And the feeling there was that the College could not with tenure faculty couldn't be nimble, and say okay, there's a new trend and we ought to have some adjunct faculty and such and such, so we'll hire them. Renure faculty, what are you going to do? You're stuck with them forever, right? So, tenure made the College less nimble. That was the thing I heard over and over again.

A sixth thing was that the various governance councils of faculty, students, staff should be consultative but should have no final decision making authority in campus policy, budget and personnel...Administrative Council, for example, at the College, decided all matters of budget, decided all matters of personnel and review of faculty, tenure and promotion, decided all college policies, decided all college planning, and in the charter, the legal framework for that was Administrative Council--AdCil--is advisory to the President.

But I was told by an ancient former trustee, that I spent a lot of time with, he said, "You have maybe four or five silver bullets." And I said, "What do you mean? He said, "You can override AdCil maybe once, maybe twice, but you don't know how many of those silver bullets you have.

There better be a darn good reason why you override as President the will of Administrative Council. You don't know how many silver bullets you have. This was Leo Dry, and this college would not be here if not for Leo Dry.

But at any rate, the notion was that that was... I had trustees telling me on a regular basis, "the inmates are running the asylum." [noises of shock, laughter]. Because students served on AdCil, two to three students served on AdCil, along with faculty, and along with a staff representative. Students served on ComCil, they made decisions. Algo Henderson... [bell] It's called a Laboratory in Democracy, that I cribbed from something I wrote about fourteen years ago.

But the notion was, for Algo Henderson, If you want people to be leaders, if you want them to be problem solvers, if you want them to be good citizens in society, then they've got to have a meaningful, *meaningful* experience in making decisions that are problematic decisions. What was never understood by the critics at the University, and some alums, and by, certainly by donors and by the business community, and by a lot of board members, what was not understood was that shared governance was not the strategy for running the college and administering it, it was a *pedagogical* strategy, [bell] it was part.. [bell]. Okay, -- I got through six of the eight.

Amanda: Do you have a good stopping point?

Bob: I'm fine, I'm fine.

Amanda: Okay. We need to clap.

[applause]

Amanda: I feel like there's a lot of probably clarifying questions, and we're tied on our time. Can we hold those, can you keep your thoughts and write them down please, and we'll bring them into discussion. Is that cool?

Bob, thank you.

Bob: Sure.

Amanda: Lots of materials here and I believe you can probably reach out to Student Union, there's things that went into this, so if there's materials if you want, there's papers that you want, you can reach out.

Also, we can also clap one more time while the next people come up...

I was just going to thank Taylor, and we can clap for the Student Union, okay?

[applause]

Because of time and Casselli had to leave, we're going to have to miss this part, okay?

Taylor: Yeah, I forgot to....I wanted to pass out an annotated bibliography of all of the former faculty and alumni whose essays, published essays went into this...So, we have have a website, Student Union has a website, and they're under "Readings." So, I'll write that on the chalkboard on the end so if anyone's curious...

Greta Treistman: It's really easy to remember. It's AntiochStudentUnion.wordpress.com.

[Audience Member]: Can you repeat that into the mic?

Jane: Antiochstudentunion.wordpress.com. What a great website. Thanks, Greta.

Okay, we're going to skip right past our good friend Casselli and into the Interim Period, so Hassan, Dennie, and Rose, if you want to take your seats of honor at the table up here.

Dennie: I wonder if I can just fill in a little. We need a little bit of transition before this...I'll try and, just, well, just create the context of what Michael was talking about.

So, Steven Lawry was the President of the College during the last three years of the College being open, and two years possibly...It was a very chaotic time. He was somebody who had done development work in Africa. When he came to the campus, he immediately identified us and named us as a toxic culture and didn't spend any time to get to know any of us. And so he was the person who sort of generated some of that narrative that we were all trying to dispel, and he didn't give us much opportunity.

The...He was working, he was invited, he was hired to turn the College around. We had been mandated by the Board of Trustees to create a new curriculum which was interdisciplinary, all core classes with first year students, taught by three faculty. It was, there was commitment for five years for us to be able to create this very complex curriculum.

We delivered it for two years--the first year was really difficult because none of us had done it before. We were able to have 65 students come to something that they weren't really sure what it was ...The first year was really difficult, The second year we were really beginning to get a good sense of this, and we created some courses that I thought were very innovative and students really enjoyed, and we were beginning to really understand how to make this work. It was all at the expense of upper class students because most of the senior faculty were involved in these Learning Communities.

Steve Lawry went to a board meeting in, I think it was in May of 2007, and he had communicated to the faculty--and please help me, people who have better memories than me--that he expected--there was a president of McGregor who we were in a lot of conflict with, she hated the college. We shared the campus with the adult McGregor school, which was housed in Sontag-Fels, but she wanted her own building. And Steve Lawry was communicating that...he thought he was going to be invited to be the president of both Antioch College and McGregor, and he came back from that meeting and announced that to all of us in Kelly Hall that the college would close at the end of the next June.

We were floored. We had...You know, maybe we were kidding ourselves, like they can't possibly close the College, but we were quite stunned. And all of the people who were present in that room know the kind of impact that it was.

And in terms, you know to try to get into our content more, the next year was spent--there was a very strong alumni response, very strong response in the community. The people who were here began to feel that, you know, what we were doing as a shared enterprise was very precious because it was going to become extinct. We were struggling to save the College on all kinds of fronts. To renegotiate that agreement, not accept that...find ways to not have the College close.

We had celebrations throughout that whole year. The work that was done was extraordinary. It was a very painful and poignant time, and there was a tremendous amount of chaos and conflict that happened as we were negotiating, in those AdCil meetings. So the College did close in June 2008,

all of the faculty moved out of their offices. Many students had to finish in three and a half years--Micah can attest to that. It was a very difficult year and at the end we had a graduation in Kelly Hall that was...it was a really kind of painful and celebratory and beautiful coming together in the face of this tremendous loss. So, I think maybe, I hope that that brings us up to date, and maybe, Hassan, you can talk about formation of Nonstop.

Amanda: And that was a great, thank you for doing that. Thank for coming in and bringing us through. That was a wonderful call. I appreciate that so much.

Hassan: Thank you, Dennie, brings a lot of memories... [inaudible]

Hassan: Well, Nonstop was my first co-op experience. It was intensive but very fulfilling. I feel very passionate about it because it brought a lot of energy to surface and I think we made a significant mark on the history of this institution. And I thank organizer of this forum to bring this hidden, buried information to the surface here.

For me it was personal--my engagement in the movement--was personal and political. Personal because I feel very personally connected to Antioch, and here became my home and my community, and my biography for 28 years--almost half of my age--tied to the history of this institution, so it was very personal for me.

It was also political because I felt that, like many of my colleagues, students, that the decision--at that time suspension--of the college was unjust and insulting to the energy and talent and intelligence that our faculty, our students put into this institution. So, it was a political movement, a protest.

I don't want to go through the detail of chronology of events that led to the emergence of Nonstop, but I think we have to remember that how this decision mobilized so much of energy on all the stakeholders--alumni, as you said, in June 2007, the Reunion was supposed to have about 200 alumni and we had over 1000 people showed up. The energy, by that afternoon, the amount of money collected, and account was open in the Credit Union. It was just amazing movement and encouraged everyone.

Faculty had many meetings, and the question was whether we should go on strike. And then we thought that no, our students need to graduate. And we have to actually add to our courses in order to make sure that they get their degrees. Instead we thought that faculty were the only, was the only stakeholder that had legal standing, and we put together a lawsuit. We met...[inaudible] Amazing that few of us remember actually that one of the basement here and the lawyer that we invited to join us to evaluate our position. So we filed a lawsuit, and it wasn't compensation, it was to put injunction to the suspension.

Alumni, in the meantime, were negotiating. There were two rounds of negotiation. And the second one was led by Eric Bates, as Jennifer talked about. And unfortunately both efforts failed. And I remember--I was member of AdCil--that the negotiating team came to AdCil to give a report and it didn't seem that it was going well, so I asked what is plan B? And they didn't have plan B. And Lee Morgan asked me, do you have a plan B? And I said, well, Antioch in Exile.

So that kind of generated a thinking about alternative to Antioch. And so I resigned from AdCil and then we--Eric--we started a new governing structure called ExCil, which is AdCil in Exile. There were seven faculty, four students, two Community Managers, three staff and two alumni member of that ExCil. And one of the first action of ExCil was to create an Executive Collective, with three

functions and three members. I was in charge of Academics, Chris Hill was in charge of Communication, Alumni Relations and Susan Eklund-Dean was in charge of administrative matters, at first.

And also the name Nonstop came up and for three weeks intensive conversation [inaudible] with alumni. Finally we came with the name Nonstop. We were not allowed to use Antioch name. We immediately put together curriculum and a plan of action and went to alumni board and requested financial support. And they committed themselves to one million dollar, and part of it was financing faculty lawsuit, and part of it was Antioch Confidential that was a documentary support for...Oh, I have to move faster.

Nonstop meant different things to different people. A protest movement to lead to support the negotiation to get College back. The need for activism, psychological reaction to being in suspension, [inaudible] put us in a very active mode, so Nonstop was an activism that energized us. It was educational innovativeness, and we thought that's essence and soul of Antioch. It was alliance among stakeholders, and meant to keep Antioch faculty in place when the College is open.

There were multiple narratives of closure, Bob alluded to some of them. I think the tension between cash cow and sacred cow is important, because this extensions were kept, were supposed to provide financial support for the College and then the economic valve become political valve, so as they got more room, more power in the board, they resented that contributing to the so, it became sacred cow, no one could say anything about the College and the cash cows. [bell] University/ college tension, tension between personalities, mismanagement, all of these were narratives that I believe that each one of them—and probably Bob and I have different interpretation of this—that each one of them had some grain of truth. [bell] And we made it political if we choose one rather the other. [bell]

Amanda: Time's up. Is that a good stopping point? That's your eight minutes.

Hassan: I hope I have chance, because I want to talk about the governance of NonStop.

Amanda: I know, I know. And I really hope we'll come back around to these things. I just have to say, this is the hardest thing, because these people were my professors, and I have to tell you guys to stop talking. [laughter]

Dennie: I want to comment on...you know, we were in the middle of kind of a heart-breaking situation, and in February or March, Hassan and other people started talking Nonstop, what is this Nonstop? And it was like a pied piper almost. It started--what a preposterous idea, there's no way we're going to pull this off--and it started getting traction. And why it started getting traction, the community that was on the ground, we had alumni who were in this circle very directly around us. The village came to support us really, really strongly. So we weren't doing this alone. There were a lot of eyes on what was happening, and we all knew that it really mattered.

And so, there was a presentation at the alumni Reunion about this idea of Nonstop. A mobilization really had a shared interest and caring and commitment for this place and not wanting to let it die. And some of it was not accepting that they would close Antioch College, you know, not accepting that as a premise.

So over the Summer faculty met. We created a curriculum and our intention was that we would create multiple type of course offerings and they would be open to college age students and it would be open to people in the village. And we went to the churches and the cafes and people's

houses, and asked if we could hold classes in there, in these spaces, and the Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church opened their doors to us. We had a lot of planning meetings in the Emporium--the Emporium became our downtown office space. And then, you know, August came around and we were having this grand opening, which was hosted by or vetted by the Rude Mechanical Orchestra, which came from Brooklyn, they were on the road, which is an outrageous radical orchestra, one of the members is an Antioch grad,

And what a way to start. We were downtown parading. We didn't know who was going to show up. We had a course offering fare, and there were twenty or twenty five college age people who came back to join us. Some had been Antioch students before, some had read about it on the internet and came up here from Texas.

So we had built something that other people were joining us, and we wanted to create a course structure or kind of a credibility of course offerings that kind of honored our own professionalism, because we had lost everything, tenure, everything, but that students could use to create portfolios. We weren't accredited, obviously, but they would have something to show if they wanted to transfer to another college, or our best hope was that the College would be able to reopen and they would be able to get credit for the work that they did. And so we created curriculum, it was very, very, we had I think 18 different faculty, some were faculty contributing to other colleges and universities.

Are these the pictures? Yes. You know, for me, this says it all, and yeah, we can just look at this, because it showed the kind of spirit and the innovation and the resilience and the heart, that we all were bringing to this enterprise. It was really hard work and it was very difficult work, and Rose can talk about her experience as a student. We were doing what we could in a really terrible situation, and in the process, trying to negotiate...we were considering that we were carrying Antioch forward. That was *our* vision of this. I don't know who's going to get to talk about where that went. It was pretty much of a failure. It was a, it was a...At the end very few of us were invited back to the college, and it was another round of disappointment and loss for many of us.

But for me the project and many of the faculty and for the students, the kind of community that we tried to build was really powerful and really innovative, like we were able to teach to our strengths. I taught Community Journalism, Sustainable Agriculture, we had Art of Political Discourse, we had Guided Tutorials in African Cinema, French New Wave Cinema, Italian Neorealist Cinema, Revolutionary Cinema by Bob Devine...Drawing and Community, Comparative Cultures, the Qur'an, Muhammad, and Islam, Science Journeys, Sounds and Circuits: Interactions between Music and Physics, we offered math, we offered French, we offered...we offered, you know, a really interesting...[everyone laughs at old picture of Casselli on slideshow].

We started out in a small house about a block away from campus, and we outgrew that within about two months. Also the neighborhood was very uncomfortable with what was happening in this house, or what they imagined was happening in this house. [laughter] So we looked all over for another space. And we found this very industrial space in Millworks, which is now where the brewery is. And Michael Casselli came back and created the design and helped us renovate the space, and it became our meeting space, we couldn't teach in there...Where are we? Yeah, I'm gonna let you see the pictures. Am I out of time?

Hassan: We organized every week two, three major events in town, and so we had a lot of activities in town...

Dennie: It became kind of a, you know, I had, I was teaching photography, and I had eighteen year olds and I had sixty-five year olds. And we worked doing photoshop and making books. I think that that was one of the real beauties: we had many older people from town participating in this who were really excited about taking college level courses, and that generated a lot of excitement, and we had something called Nonstop Presents, and we had symposium and arts events and cultural meetings.

Does that...? So it was my pleasure to be able to create the document of that. I also have the document of the closure and all these really horrible meetings in AdCil that we participated in. They're really painful to see, but they're an interesting record of our experience at that time, so yeah. I can stop.

Rose: Is it my turn?

I am Rose Pelzl. I grew up in Yellow Springs. My mom was an Antioch alum. I went to the Antioch School. I got my first email address upstairs at the OKL. I spent lots of time on the swing after school, asking Antioch students who were coming in and out of North to push me and my friends on the swing. But I didn't think that I was gonna go to Antioch. I guess I got involved in May 2008. I went to gaducation. I went to Reunion. I was an outsider at that point. I was planning to go to Chicago for school in the Fall, and.. I just met some people in town and on campus and got involved and I...

My friend had a copy of Chris Hill's Women and Media curriculum, her class. And I read it and I knew that I wanted to go to Nonstop instead of leaving Yellow Springs and I'm still here, so. I mean, but, you know, I cried...

First, I want to say that there are a lot of voices that you're not going to hear from for a while who...I mean this period of time was really painful and hard to talk about and I feel like my suffering through all of it is just a drop in the bucket, you know, to the loss of people's careers and the heartbreak of, you know, losing friends over this and, you know, not coming out on the side of success and I want to talk a little bit about what I think happened based on what I experienced at Nonstop, so...

First I want to say that I... So the academics were amazing and really hard, and I probably had more reading to do than I, you know, had time--we didn't have time to sleep, and we had meetings all the time. I was on ExCil as a first year, and ComCil the second semester.

And so, when Nonstop was formed--I think other people are going to talk about the CRF--so the Alumni Board created the College Revival Fund, and the College Revival Fund was an organization, a nonprofit, to raise money, and some of that money was, I think--this is my opinion, this is my understanding--for, you know, the negotiations and the lawsuit and to move forward with the campus, and some of it went to Nonstop. A lot of money went to Nonstop from alums. But we only knew that we had funding for the first semester, because we didn't know how long the negotiations were going to go.

At this point it's, I think it's the Pro Tem Board that's involved in negotiations. Yeah, so the Alumni Board creates the CRF, there's a board of the CRF as well, and they also create the Pro Tem Board or Board Pro Tempore. And they...The Alumni Board cut all ties to having any authority over the Pro Tem Board, and all of their--I would very much like to know what happened in their minutes, but those are not released and I think...there's just so much that we don't know.

So that semester we were doing Nonstop Presents every week, and having Community Meeting every week, and having ComCil every week, and, you know, like, if you think that there's a small amount of people doing a lot of things here, you have no idea. And, you know, it was our lives.

So there are some events, that, looking back on them, sort of, in my mind, we could have known that Nonstop was not going to be carried forward into, when we got the keys to the college. But we didn't know that then and we, I think a lot of decisions were made that I regret supporting and not talking about, against more vividly that we just made based on the understanding that everyone had the intention of coming back to campus and and reviving the old College on campus and bringing forward the students and staff and faculty, but that didn't happen.

An early thing that happened was a workshop at Earlham, that only a couple people from Nonstop were invited to, that was called "Building a College." And Nonstop wasn't really talked about--I wasn't there, I wasn't invited--but I remember...[inaudible]...why was it happening an hour away? That's what we were doing here, building a college. If someone wanted to come and give us advice, I feel like they could have done it here, and we were being invited to...Anyway.

So thankfully we got funding for the second semester. We were all really relieved. [Amanda interrupts to give time.] Okay. And at the end of the second semester, there was a Board Pro Tem meeting. We had...So Nonstop created a proposal, wrote a 30-page proposal with the Alumni Board, co-wrote a proposal with the Alumni Board, the Alumni Board presented it to the Board Pro Tem after--I think this is after the College is bought. I was at that meeting, and they tabled the proposal indefinitely, and when you do that, in Robert's Rules it's called "killed", you kill a motion, so...and it's sad...[bell] I mean that's...I...yeah. So that's eight minutes, right? Do they have questions for all of us now?

Amanda: So we were only doing any clarifying questions, then there's a discussion that's at the end. And when we do the discussion and questions or comments at the end, we'll have everyone sitting here, so anyone can answer...

Rose: Can I say one thing? I just want to say that if you have any questions afterwards, if you want to email me or call me or meet up with me, I am willing to talk about it some more if that is of interest to anyone.

Amanda: Thank you.

[applause]

Amanda: I'm talking while Jane finds the powerpoint. I am talking while Jane finds the powerpoint. [Eric asks if we can start.] We can start, so...Alright, so our...Taylor is running down the stairs. Yes?

Alright, settle in, our next round of panelists, introduce yourselves first...

Go ahead and introduce yourselves. And then...It looks like John is ready to speak, my apologies... Go ahead and introduce yourselves and we'll get started, okay?

Eric: I'm Eric Miller, I've been connected to Antioch for all of my adult life in one way or another. I'm an alum, so I graduated in '81, lived in town. My wife is also an alum, we met here. One of our children also went here. Unlike Jennifer, I didn't escape for 20 years, I only escaped for five years. And then I came back, I was co-op faculty for 10 years, and lost my job as co-op professor in '08

and moved over into the CRF, College Rival Fund as a major gifts officer, at that time. And I've been on the fundraising side since...

John Hempling: I am John Hempling. I was recruited by Rose Pelzl, really became involved during the second semester at Nonstop, but most of what happened at Nonstop it seems happened during the first semester, so...

Micah Canal: My name is Micah Canal. I have worn many hats through this narrative, and I'll talk more about those as part of my story. But essentially I am a graduate of Antioch and I graduated in 2008. I am one of the 67 people that entered in the new plan, and I think I am also one of the 11 of us who graduated, so I have an interesting and somewhat...I guess now almost decade long history with Antioch.

John: Alright, so, my real source for information for this is Laura Fauthaur, who would be presenting it in my place if she was available. So, I have to thank Laura Fathauer. She graduated in the 1990s, and she was particularly active in the Save Antioch movement. She was a member of both the Alumni Board and served as the Alumni Board's secretary for two years. Living in Columbus, Laura frequently traveled down to Yellow Springs to participate and attend events. Working with Laura, particularly for an event like this, is extremely exciting because everything she says is 100% on-point. Whatever aspect of recent history you are investigating, she has the facts and the analysis.

So, the Save Antioch movement. Nonstop and the College Revival Fund, can only be understood as products of the larger Save Antioch movement, as luckily our previous presenters just explained. I'm really grateful for them for providing more of the emotional context for my presentation, which will be sort of shallow towards that view of what happened.

So, the Nonstop-era itself, from Summer 2008 to Spring 2009, was simply one of the later chapters in the Save Antioch movement's history.

The College Revival Fund was initially created at the June 2007 Alumni Reunion, the birthplace of the Save Antioch movement. At that reunion, former Community Managers organized and mobilized the attendees. A pledge card was developed, and the Alumni Board created a bank account to accept donations. The College Revival Fund organization took shape following that event. Here's what the white paper published by the College Revival Fund, just a few weeks after Reunion, says about the birth of the effort to save Antioch College:

“More than 500 alumni attended the June 2007 Alumni Reunion that was held on the heels of the University Board of Trustees' decision to suspend operations at Antioch College. Attendees made their opinions clearly known regarding the decisions of the University Board. On June 24, 2007, the elected Alumni Board, representing more than 17,000 College alumni, unanimously accepted a Resolution for the Revival of Antioch College.

In the resolution, the alumni expressed their commitment to the uninterrupted continuation of Antioch College as an institution of higher education with a tenured faculty.

Also mandated in the resolution was a charge that the Alumni Board negotiate the following with the Antioch University Board of Trustees and the President of Antioch College:

The establishment of an autonomous Board of Trustees for Antioch College. That's point number one. And bullet point number two: The protection of the assets of Antioch College for use by

Antioch College. Those assets include its faculty, staff, Glen Helen, endowment, Antioch Education Abroad Program—the University ended up keeping that—the Library and its holdings, and the physical plant and land.

The College Revival Fund, or CRF for short, was a new 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation created by the Alumni Board, and its board of directors was identical to the Alumni Board's board of directors. For this reason, following common parlance, I will simply refer to the people controlling both organizations as the Alumni Board. Why did the Alumni Board create the CRF? According to the same 2007 white paper:

“The sole purpose of the College Revival Fund is to save and strengthen Antioch College. The College Revival Fund is committed to engaging with all concerned groups. We assume the good will and intentions of all those who express strong support for the future of Antioch College.

We seek to cooperate specifically with alumni, board members, administrators, faculty members, students, residents of Yellow Springs and all friends in our effort to ensure the future of Antioch College.”

You can hear in this white paper the spirit with which the Save Antioch movement was undertaken. It was this spirit of collaboration between *all* concerned groups, all stakeholders, aimed toward the common goal of reviving Antioch College that made Save Antioch, in my opinion, a movement rather than a faction.

And, as the white paper describes, the movement had strong feelings about Toni Murdoch's 2012 plan, which was the plan to close the College for four years and then reopen it:

“It is not possible to predict the extent of negative consequences of such a closure. For example, current faculty will not have any claims to tenure, entering students will have no connection to the rich history, the shared governance, and the vibrant community that Antioch College has traditionally offered to undergraduates. The reputation of the College has already been damaged by the current decision-making of the University Board of Trustees.”

Although the College Revival Fund was created in a spirit of broad participation and aimed not only at saving the College's physical plant but also at preventing a purge of the faculty and students, ultimately, as we will see, the CRF became either a tool of those who sought to purge the College, or helpless to stand their way.

Let's use this handy-dandy powerpoint to fast forward through the history of the major organizational structures that existed from this point... [bell]

Amanda: Oh, no, accident. Sorry!

John:...until the transfer of the College's assets to the corporation that currently owns them.

So, it starts out with Antioch University being basically the only incorporated player. We've got the Alumni Board saying what they're saying. Next. The Alumni Board creates the CRF so that they have a place to put the money that they're raising. Next. As was referred there was a first round, or rather first two round of negotiation that failed, with the first incarnation of the ACCC. Next. Those negotiations fall apart in April 2008 and AC3 enters a period of dormancy. Next. Antioch College closes. And as was said, I mean Nonstop basically was formed right on the heels of that. Oh, I should also mention and I'm sure you guys have the precise dates, ghzg at some point the

University laid off the College's fundraising staff...

Eric: We were laid off at the same time that everybody was laid off, so the end of June of '08...and I wasn't fundraising staff at that point.

John: Okay, but I knew you would know the answer. So yeah, and they hired that staff, the CRF did, to fundraise for them.

Nice, so. The next slide please. Oh, yes. Perfect. So, this is really where I'm going to spend my time. This is the Nonstop era.

In August 2008, Toni Murdoch's 2012 plan was rejected by the University Board, when they met in Keene, New Hampshire at Antioch New England's campus. A number of Nonstop participants, including Laura Fathauer arrived shortly before the University met to organize against Murdoch's plan.

A second incarnation of ACCC, many of the same people from the first incarnation, but some different people, sprung into action immediately, so quickly, in fact, that some have speculated that they knew in advance that the University Board was going to reject Murdoch's plan. The Board in control of this body was the Board Pro Tempore, or Board Pro Tem, and their most prominent staff person was the Chief Transition Officer Matthew Derr. Derr would go on to be hired as the Interim President of this College, until Mark Roosevelt was hired.

Nonstop also began teaching classes for their Fall term, as planned.

Although Matthew Derr frequently spoke to Nonstop, and the Board Pro Tem did send a number of their members to visit Nonstop, formal relations between Nonstop and AC3 were never established. In response to constant calls from Nonstop to establish a formal relationship, or to discuss the future of Antioch College--because no one knew what was going to happen, like with their job security or anything, or their educations--Matthew Derr would frequently explain to us that until negotiations were concluded AC3 could not make any promises to Nonstop participants because AC3 would have no way to back up those promises if negotiations failed.

According to Laura, unbeknownst to the Alumni Board, the CRF Fundraising Staff were instructed by the Alumni Board President Nancy Crow, and the CRF's Executive Committee to cease actively fundraising for Nonstop in September.

Laura learned this during a February 2009 conference call, [bell] in which Risa Grimes, the Executive Director of the College Revival Fund, in Laura's,....wait, is that it?

Amanda: That was for real, so can you find a stopping point?

John: Just the end of this presentation? [laughter]

Amanda: Well, it's eight minutes and this is the format decided by the Student Union, and I just have to enforce the eight minutes per presenter.

Eric: I'll give him some of my time. He can have two minutes of my time.

Amanda: Okay, two minutes. On the clock.

Jane: It's cool. Got it, got it.

John: Laura learned this during a February 2009 conference call, in which Risa Grimes, the Executive Director of the College Revival Fund. In Laura's words, "let it slip that all fundraising efforts of the CRF were going to directed to the fund controlled by the Board Pro Tem."

When Laura protested that the Alumni Board had never authorized such a decision, Risa Grimes

defended the decision, claiming that it was too difficult to fundraise for Nonstop, and there was some talk that fundraising for Nonstop represented a “divided purpose”. In general however, the Board joined her, demanding that the CRF resume fundraising for Nonstop. In the words of one Board member, Tim Klass, “We find ourselves in the unique position that we’re a nonprofit with a fundraising office and are now inhibited from actively fundraising for one of the projects we started.” The option to donate to Nonstop was put back on CRF’s website, but, according to Laura, all active fundraising was...had basically ceased.

Amanda: One minute.

John: Thank you.

So, in any case, this situation led to budget crisis for Nonstop. Nonstop was going to run out of money in February, I believe. The Alumni Board, however, overwhelmingly supported Nonstop, and funded it primarily out of their own pockets, in addition to some donations from the community and fundraising by Nonstop participants.

The clearest story about the relationship between the Alumni Board, Nonstop and the Board Pro Tem--was kind of already told by Rose--is the story of Alumni Board Task Force, which was created to foster collaboration and build consensus with representatives of the key stakeholders... Nonstop, the Board Pro Tem, and the Alumni Board’ The Task Force was charged to develop the proposal to integrate [bell]...it’s over, it’s over.

Micah: No, no, I’ll give him two minutes too.

Amanda: This is community in action making moderation difficult, and it is wonderful! Thank you guys, thank you. So you have two more minutes!

John: The Task Force was charged to develop the proposal to integrate Nonstop into the New College that had been developed, had already been started by Nonstop so it could be presented to the Board Pro Tem. The Pro Tem Board has subsequently declared that they wouldn’t send representatives to the Task Force, because, according to Matthew Derr, part of the board should not be involved in making a proposal to themselves.

The Task Force developed the the proposal, and presented it, and the Board tabled it, indefinitely, kill it, which is Robert’s Rules euphemism for killing a motion, as Rose said.

Ultimately, CRF’s money ran out, and all Nonstop employees were laid off at the end of the Spring Term. Foreseeing this, Lincoln Alpern had wrote an open letter to the Board in April, calling on them to engage with the Nonstop community.

Amanda: One minute.

John: Thank you.

He wrote, “Well, time is running out. [laughter] And if Antioch College does die after all, it will not be the University Board that killed it. It will be the Board Pro Tem, for withholding medicine from a dying patient is murder as sure as driving a knife into their heart.”

I feel like I’ve already taken up so much time, I just, I won’t even finish it.

Amanda: Oh, that’s okay. Thank you both for sharing time. Great. Okay, oh no clapping. Clapping at the end of the whole panel, not in between. Alright, Eric, thank you.

John: Wait, oh, can I say something?

Amanda: How about we save it for discussion? Just because we want to be mindful of the other people who stuck to their time.

John: Sounds great. Thank you.

Eric: Alright, well, one of the reasons why I yielded is because you were covering a lot of the territory that I was going to cover...One of the things I wanted to do is describe the lay of the land in terms of who were the actors, who was involved. Do you have my slide somewhere...? My slide is a little more simple.

Taylor: This one?

Yes. This was on a chalkboard in Main Building, I was trying to describe who was involved. This is at...I believe this is at Reunion 08. I was talking with alumni who were on campus who wanted to know what's going on, and so... I'm trying to think what was not covered.

Elijah Blanton, Class of 2015: This is still up, right?

Eric: Yes, it's still there. I don't like to tell people because somebody's going to go erase it.
[laughter]

Things that were, kind of, interesting to me...One was the Alumni Board, CRF Board animal--it was, as it's already been said, they were all one set of people, embodying two boards, two different missions, and the only configuration difference was the Vice President of one was President of the other and vice versa. And the CRF was really... Micah and I were in the CRF office raising money, so the CRF was really, kind of, our boss, which again set up an interesting dynamic, because sometimes they were the Alumni Board, and sometimes they were our bosses.

The...I think probably it's worth talking a little bit about what it was like fundraising. When we were out there, I was out there on the road talking to large donors, potentially large donors, who--in the best case scenario--are risk averse. They, people with a lot of money generally don't give a lot of money to something they see as having a low probability of survival. So getting people to give for *any* reason was difficult.

And people would tell me--regardless of what they may have been hearing from various sources here in YS--they would say, we have to focus, you know, we have to try to do one thing, right? And there was a dichotomy created--for whatever reasons, in whatever ways--between Nonstop and the reopening of the college, and the people who were willing to give would give to the effort to reopen the college with the understanding that, you know, if Nonstop is part of that, great, you know, they weren't necessarily opposed to that, but if it wasn't, that's okay with them too. They didn't distinguish, but they went on that first box of reopening the college as the primary goal. There was a lot of support for rehiring faculty, at least among people I talked with. There was a lot of understanding that the faculty were not to blame for why the College closed.

Maybe I could get my other two slides, just while I have a little bit of time, partly in support of what Bob was saying earlier in terms of enrollment. This is something I put together, I don't know if anyone has seen the whole history of enrollment at Antioch, but... I went into Antiochiana and did this. Partly because what as Bob was saying, the narrative that the Board was using was that we're closing the College because enrollment is down, or has been going down, but they would never put on it the time frame. They would kind of leave it to the listener to kind of understand that this is a losing endeavor and that's why we're closing it.

So, next. So this is 21 years of Antioch College enrollment. You can see that it's steady. It fluctuates...it was rarely below 500 and rarely above 600. Pretty much right in the middle. This is when the board intervened with the Renewal Plan, at the end, when Micah entered. Our normal entering classes before the RP were about...[Taylor intervenes to ask Eric to define the Renewal

Plan] ...oh, okay, I thought, we went by it pretty quickly, it's been mentioned, but...

Before the closure, the Board came in 2003 approximately saying we had to do something to boost enrollment. And they had five things they were supposed to do. The only thing they did do was meddle with the curriculum, which was the only thing that was actually working. And I can--because I have time I won't defend that but if anyone wants to challenge that, come see me. So, that was the only thing that dealt with. They didn't deal with finances. They in a very minor way they dealt with facilities. They didn't deal with governance. They were supposed to look at the overall governance of the whole University, not just the College, etc.

So Micah's class was 67 students. The class before Micah was about 160. And normal was about 180, give or take. But, so, their plan cut enrollment by two thirds [bell], and then they used that as a weapon.

Next, I think there's one more. And this shows how consistent the enrollment was. It was that number, the 545ish number, wasn't a great number, but it was consistent. The budget that we had was fairly consistently about 5% deficit that was made up by the University satellites, Bob, I'm sure, would have more accurate numbers on that. This is an attempt to dispel, again this is part of the data dispels the narrative that was used against us in terms of our closing.

Okay, I gave up my two of my minutes, so...[Amanda replies that she gave him his two minutes back.] Oh, you did?

There's so much more to be said, and what was said in terms of how painful this is was *understated*. I generally think of it as a war, I think the analogy of a nasty divorce is very accurate, so people who were here, when you see them, they are people who have been through a nasty, really nasty divorce, and carry that pain with them.

1:34:47

Amanda: Thank you. Micah?

Micah: Okay, well, as I mentioned when I was introducing myself I've worn a lot of hats here. I came with that first class that was part of the Renewal Commission. We had a whole different curriculum, it was largely untested, in fact, entirely untested. And we arrived on campus to discover that we were going to be the subjects of a grand experiment, and I can imagine that some of you may know...[laughter] And, by the way, I am still paying off my student loans from that experiment.

So, I arrived in 2005, and we learned of the Renewal Plan. I have been so privileged to have been able to wear so many hats, because I know that we haven't all gotten to have that experience. And I know there are so many narratives of truth that have come through the past decade of Antioch, and I think that they all ought to be honored and considered, and I'm grateful to the organizers of this forum for putting together the start of what I hope will be a larger conversation.

Of course *my* ax to grind is with Antioch University, and maybe next time we can get Angie or Toni or one of those characters to appear before the tribunal. [laughter]

I was privileged to have Bob *and* Hassan as my academic advisors during the course of my time at Antioch. And when I was on co-op in my second year, I received a telephone call and the call said, "Antioch College is going to close. What are you going to do?" So I decided to come back, I

graduated early...I left. When I left Ohio, I said I'm never going back to that place which has taken so much from me. And then a few months later, I was back. And I was...I helped at Nonstop, I took classes at Nonstop, I participated in Community Meeting. I tried and was not successful in getting the position of co-Community Manager. And I helped Casselli and others renovate the space down in Millworks.

And sometime in February, March 2009, I was hired by the CRF, which was the core group from the old College that was responsible for fundraising. So basically what this group had was about eight fundraisers and a database, eight fundraisers and a database that had about 12,000 usable names and addresses. And using that database, and the alumni network through the Alumni Board, we raised the money, and most of the money, I mean about \$1 million, the primary chunk of the money that was used to support the efforts down at Nonstop, came from actually one donor, who actually is now a member of the Trustees of the College now.

There are so many sort of overlapping narratives and stories of the way that the...the way that the priority shifted. The priority shifted, from fundraising for Nonstop to fundraising for the College. And I think everyone who has been part of this thing probably has a slightly different view of it.

When I was working at the College Revival Fund, I was mostly sort of making sure that the WiFi stayed up, and working on fixing people's computers, and getting a website stated. But I was involved peripherally in negotiations with Antioch University. I knew Matthew Derr and worked with him very closely. I know that at this point Matthew may be, may become sort of a pariah for some of the folks in this room. But Matthew is also an alum of Antioch and without the work that Matthew put in, we wouldn't be here.

So I think that that story too is important because the reality is this has been an incredibly difficult and injuring moment for *many* individuals and that's part of why I'm happy that this forum going sort of as positively as it is, because within the new growth that the College has been fortunate to sustain, we have had many moments of trauma and I'm glad that we're sort of beginning, taking the beginning steps to try to heal some of that. So, I'm willing to talk more about any of this stuff, just as some of the other folks have said. I'm at my...almost at my six minutes now.

Amanda: You can have your two. We gave the two back to Eric. It was a great thing you guys did, so, yeah.

Micah: Cool.

So I guess I can tell you all a little bit more of sort of what it was like. There were eight people, right? They're working across the street in 716 Xenia Ave in a rented brick building that was mostly cold in the Wintertime. When we finally sort of got into the final phases that Summer, Summer 2009 of negotiation with the University, there were these very sort of draconian, explicit rules that were imposed upon us by AU, that basically said, "You can't talk about what's happening in these conversations with *anybody* outside and, by the way, if you do, we're going to call off negotiations." And we had already seen *two* failures, we had already seen *two* failures of an attempt to purchase the college back, by the Alumni, by the Alumni Board, by AC3 1, AC3 2...And at that point we were sort of like, okay, it's almost end game here, there's this population of alums,, they're kind of getting tired of these people in Yellow Springs, these various factions sort of claiming to represent the College, and we better nail this thing down.

So we knuckled down and actually on September 4 of 2009, we signed an agreement. And it came

totally out of the blue--I mean it was like September 2, September 3, we sort of knew something was happening, but not really...And then on the morning of September 4, Matthew Derr came into the office with Lee, and said, "Hey guys, so I think we have reached a conclusion with the University." That afternoon they went over to sign the paperwork and we set up this like crummy little tent in the U. And there was this big signing ceremony where they handed over the keys to us, and okay, wow, here's one of the largest physical plants of a private college in the country, it had been closed for two years, we had basically no staff, and we had to--in about two years--put together a curriculum, hire faculty and staff, and bring in the first sort of really pioneering group of Horace Mann Fellows that would lead this effort to help bring Antioch into its next phase of existence. Thank you. [bell]

1:42:45

Amanda: Eric Miller is running a student phonathon right now, so there are students are calling alumni asking them for money, so we keep on keeping Antioch open, and supporting you and growing and fixing things. So he'll be back in, but I just wanted to let you know that's why he stepped out. So thank you.

We're going to welcome our next..."Non-Successor Institution"...I think I said that completely wrong, I'm exhausted.... "The Reorganization of Community Government."

We did, we clapped for those guys. The clap was for them. Want to do it again?

[applause]

Elijah: So...

Amanda: So, how about each of you please, go ahead, introduce yourselves. And then we'll have eight minutes each. Okay?

Elijah: Okay.

Amanda: Alright. Wonderful.

Eros: Sure, I'll reintroduce myself. I, actually, won't, no. I will just say, I feel like a lot of people have said, "Come up to me and talk to me about this after", and it's because they really want to talk about it. And I feel that this story is something that I, it's, easy to forget, maybe, for me, or, actually, the words are hard to remember, the incredible heartbreak that these stories involved. Even my time at Antioch--I didn't really get into this--but a lot of people have--just the amount of emotion involved, and the amount of heartbreak involved, bringing that back to me has been pretty powerful.

And I would like to kind of expand on this project at one point, so I will probably be contacting people on the panels, and people who are interested in doing something like this in a documentary format, that allows us to, like, go more in depth and draw out people's stories. If you have skills in that sort of things or don't and want to, I would be really happy to hear from you. I will write down my email somewhere. But most people here probably know how to get in contact with me. You know, just talk to someone who I know and it's a pretty small community, so I'll probably hear about it pretty quickly.

But, yeah, I think this is a really important story that we're telling. And I'm glad we're coming together to tell it as a community as opposed to one person telling the story. And I really want to

thank everyone for coming and for this event being organized. This is something that we've kind of been hoping for and talking about doing for, since, before Antioch, before students arrived at the new Antioch. So, over three years of hoping for something like this. So it's heartwarming and heartbreaking all at the same time. So thank you to everyone who organized it, and everyone who showed up.

Amanda: That's the longest and most beautiful name I have ever heard. Seriously that was really lovely. Okay. Go ahead and introduce the other two, introduce yourselves, and then we'll get started, okay?

Elijah: I'm Elijah. [laughter]

...I'm a member of the class of 2015.

Jack Guy Matthews, Class of 2015: I'm Jack, also a member of the class of 2015.

Elijah: So we didn't really prepare for this very much. Do you want to talk about Conveners, Guy? And then Eros, do you want to talk about initial student organization, and then I can take it into ComCil from there?

Amanda: Community in action again, go!

Eros: Yeah, that's...

Jack: Sure.

So, when we first got here, there were a lot of rules that were sort of set up already. We were told, here's the Visitor's Policy, here's the Alcohol Policy, here's the Smoking Policy, and all of these things are sort of negotiable, they are gonna be things that we're talking about, as our exhaustive ten day orientation goes along. Here's the SOPP, we're never going to touch this. And, yeah, just know all of the policies while you're here.

The governance structure was explained to us over time. Initially, we would just meet in Community Meetings and sort of popcorn discuss things. And then as--through the first few weeks we started meeting in small groups, after the sort of larger Community Meeting, and each group was told to select a Convener. And, the Conveners then were sort of the facilitators for most of the groups--some groups had a separate facilitator. But then the Conveners came back and sort of reported back to the larger community. So we would have Community Meeting, go into small groups, and then come back, and report back.

So then each week or two weeks, the Council of Conveners would meet. And the Council of Conveners had a lot of the same responsibilities as ComCil does now. But they were sort of, they were representing their small groups rather than representing their constituency or the entire community as a whole. And after a while...actually, I will let you take on from here.

Eros: So, where should I start?

Elijah: Wherever you want.

Eros: Yeah, I guess, I feel like, yeah, giving a little bit of background in general...That's something that hadn't really occurred to me as I was thinking of the story: we walked into this structure, and there was already so much in place. The word I would use is "overplanned." It's like, if you've ever

been on vacation with one of those people that planned literally every second of your vacation. And then it's not so much fun anymore and you're just trying to meet your agenda and see all the things and you're basically exhausting yourself trying to have fun.

There was an intense structure that we were walking into. The closure of Antioch, I describe it as kind of an emptying of content from the structure of Antioch, and in that emptying of content, people projected onto it so many things, so many hopes and dreams. And a lot of people again, the story of Antioch is often the story of heartbreak. A lot of people feel heartbroken by this college, and I think ninety percent of the time they have every right to.

And, so, it's always...People just wanted Antioch to, like, fulfil so many of their hopes and dreams and the closure, which--I don't know if this fact has been brought up, because I was out for a little bit--but, the closure of, there was actually suspended for four years, [inaudible] said it closed--but the idea behind that, was that after four years the faculty had no right to reclaim their tenure. If it had been a three year closure, after that time period, there....this is the rules, where they would be eligible to continue their position. But because four years, no.

And so, this, it was a very intentional clearing out of Antioch. And then, in that time, so many people, you know, before it was closed so many people wanted it to be so many things, it wouldn't become those, because Antioch is a beast that you kind of have to ride and can't really steer, and because it's a community you can't do what you want. You have to be there to support it and let it grow in the ways that it does organically. And so, so many people, then when it closed people wanted it to be a retirement community. People wanted it to make money. People didn't want it to be residential. People didn't want it to be the way that it was because so many people has been heartbroken by Antioch and thought, "If I could just make it the way I imagined it ought to be, it wouldn't be so horrible."

And so what we walked into was the dreams of so many people who had been involved in reopening the College. And even though those were dreams with the best of intentions, the most sincere hopes for Antioch succeeding as an institution that has the ability to radicalize students, to make people aware, to make people involved, to make effective adults as Lauren Pope said....It was a mess, it was a total mess. Everything was kind of untried. Even Mark Roosevelt said that there was--I believe he used the term "novelty for novelty's sake". And that was reflected in the original organization of Global Seminar, and the block system, and especially in the governance system.

I actually had to write it down for my paper because there had...there's no document describing the original governance structure we walked into. But, and it was intensely complicated. Actually, it was based on something that had been tried in Algo Henderson's time in the 30s, but had...

Elijah: McGregor.

Eros: Oh, McGregor's? Sorry, McGregor's time in the 50s, and had been the work...people put so much effort into. But ultimately it became....the system, it was more work keeping up the system than there was generating product. And that kind of balance between product and process--that I actually learned about in a class called Media and Social Change, taught by Bob Devine--where you need process to make people feel involved, but you need product to make people feel like something's happening.

And whether this was the intention or not, the structure that we walked into--as much as Mark always said he's not a process liberal...and it was all process, it was all debate and discussion

and there was not a clear path to product, policy in particular.

So what ended up coming out of that is the organization of multiple committees, and that's something that had worked at Antioch before, where, you know, some discussions don't work well between thirty-five people or more. Some discussions work really well between seven or eight people who are interested and knowledgeable and willing and ready to work together, whereas things just kind of became a mess because there were so many voices in the room.

And so with the interest of changing the way things worked and, and actually...I said, "In my mind, the system outlined above--which was the ConCil system, Council of Conveners [laughter]--is not a sufficient system of governance, in fact I would go so far as to say it wasn't governance at all."

And in that vein, I--we organized student meetings where the issues of governance was discussed. We elected four students--I was one of them--to represent the community in pursuit of an improved governance system. We sent a letter to the President announcing our election, and the mandate the student body had given us, and the following Wednesday, February 8, we sat in front of Community Meeting and presented our proposal.

The reaction at Community Meeting was mixed to say the least. In small group, the President Mark Roosevelt told me that the faculty and staff are with initial faculty searches and accreditation efforts, too busy to be involved in an effort to reexamine governance.

He also felt that our rather high level of access to him and the rest of the College administration should make up for the lack of a complete and transparent governance system. Other concerns raised were the legitimacy of this effort, the role of ConCil in this effort, that we hadn't given the former system a chance, etc. These concerns were raised by staff and faculty, as well as some students.

Amanda: So, one thing, just as a reminder, on our ground rules, if we just keep it in our minds, throughout this whole thing, all the different perspectives that are a part of this, and that some people are not here. So just in that way of speaking specifically about someone who is currently working here, and not to silence, just as a reminder, it's really just a tricky thing. Is that okay? Just a reminder about mind, okay?

Eros: Anyway, something that came out of this that, a quote that I got to reread from the letter we ended up sending, was that--I, kind of made me nostalgic: "We realized that what we are proposing seems monumental, and the size of the task has not escaped us."

I feel like something that's still happening here, and the size of the task has not escaped the students involved in it. The Student Union is an amazing monumental effort, and that, I think kind of out of that initial push, which didn't exactly go anywhere except it changed the way we elected the Council of Conveners...I think still pushed us forward into kind of rethinking things and reexamining the way--and then eventually led to the Governance Task Force, which I assume you would like to address.

Elijah: Yeah, I can do that. So, the initial Governance Task Force was something that was formed during the closure, of a number of alums--Hassan was included, Al Denman, who's in town was included, couldn't make it today, Karen Mulhauser, who many of you know--a lot of our alums who were the most passionate about governance came together to kind of make this governance structure, and it was meant to do a couple different things.

It was meant to address the problem of adversity, between certain parts of the community,

students in particular and the administration. It was supposed to make us all work better together. And it was supposed to let student leaders emerge in governance to reshape it how they saw fit. Is that fair to say? Those two things? [Addressing Hassan] Okay. That's what I gathered I guess in the first year when we were kind of looking at governance as a student body, as a community, those were kind of the intentions that emerged from that original authorship of the governance structure.

So we did the Council of Conveners thing, Guy was the Chair of it. They got a lot of stuff ratified, they got a lot of stuff ratified. The criticisms that existed of that structure were that it wasn't efficient and it didn't have a powerful representative voice to the actual decision-makers of the College. I say "actual decision-makers" because the Council of Conveners wasn't in charge necessarily of anything other than ratifying community policy. It wasn't supreme in anything, like that quote from the Blaze from the 30s said...20s? 20s.

So, we organized, and we elected these people, and then we all came up here and said, "Hey, I think we should make governance new", and they everybody was like "No!" And that was stressful.

And then we talked about it more, we talked to some faculty, did it again and people were more receptive, and eventually we formed the Governance Task Group--not to be confused with the Government Task Force--of students and staff and faculty from the College at that time and we all got together and authored our current government structure, including ComCil, the Community Council President, various committees.

And that was, I mean it was good, everybody was pretty happy that we got that done, because it looked more, it was more solid, it had the elected body structure that we all know today. It had more direct control over policy-making and over some decision-making within what became the department of Community Government of the current college.

But it was also a little bit said because this effort to end the adversarial relationship between the students and the administration had resulted in this thing that was, looked more like the old structure that many people saw as adversarial. And there's a lot of different perspectives on this, but I'm just trying to bring in everything that I've heard from people about governance while I've been involved in it.

So, what we ended up designing ended up looking like a miniature version of the old governance structure. It didn't have AdCil but it did have ComCil, and it had a lot of the same committees that we had before, and it had a similar representative structure, and it had a kind of gravitas that was useful in representing student and faculty interests when they weren't necessarily in the front of the minds of the people who were making decisions. Does that make sense? Okay.

And then it was just the work of implementing it, so it started out with just, like, the whole government budget was my paycheck because I was the only employee, like my hourly and then we were like working with ComCil, we ended up getting it divorced from the Department of Community Life, which was more of a happy divorce than the one we heard about earlier. [laughter] So, now, since then, we have our own budget and CG and we have control over policy-making still, to some extent, and we still have that kind of ability to make decisions that are respected even if they're not final in a legal sense, or in the College's charter.

And CG now is a little bit confused about its direction, I would say, because of the high turnover rate of students going out and coming in from co-op. It has a tendency to lose direction from one

quarter to the next. But it's better than it was, and it's always been improving. And it's certainly not done being written yet. That's everything I have to say.

Eros: Actually, and one thing I guess I want to say is, I think a willingness to reexamine structure is very important and sometime we kind of constantly kept in mind through that process. I know that people said we didn't give the former structure a chance, but actually the idea of changing the structure was proposed using the former structure. So, you know, hopefully the structure is never so inadequate that it can't be used to promote its own change, or even demise...

Elijah: Commit summary suicide.

Eros: Yeah. And I think one of the reasons that I have chosen this specific moments of history, in my previous time here, was this idea of sovereignty, which is what we were really trying to achieve through this. And that, the defining moment for me, in my history and reading of Community Governance at Antioch, was oddly enough about football. But it was *because* the students had gotten together and made a decision which they felt fully in power to make, and then were told that they were not in power. And so that discrepancy, that problem came out in the open.

And I hope that...I mean, I think we should always be willing to make those challenges and bold decisions, never simply for the purpose of making, of challenge, but because we believe we're making the right decisions. And regardless of if they're bold, or we don't think they will work out, and if they're the right thing and it doesn't work out, it tells you something about the structure in which you are working.

And that's important and very Antiochian to constantly push at the edges of the structures in which you are working. So, I meant, these have been just amazing stories, and I hope they inspire people to action in the way that Antioch has always inspired people.

Elijah: Yeah, so now we're kind of at the end of history here, so now it's kind of your job to do the next part, not just in governance, which you're fully empowered to do, but really with everything here, which, as you all know, is still very much in progress.

Amanda: So before we clap Eros, I actually want to apologize for interrupting. I had stepped out of the room and when I came back in, I had wanted to remind us of that, because there was other places in our conversations where it was like, oh these people aren't in the room or whatever, so I apologize for interrupting, and I just wanted to clarify. It was a reminder I wanted to give all of us. I just needed to settle in, so I hope you can accept my apology.

Eros: Yeah, that's fine. And I hope in my speaking, I was not speaking detrimentally. It's hard when you talk about the history of the institution in which you're living, because the actors in that history are not long dead folks, they're people that you know and have to see everyday, so I was not intending to be disparaging, and hoping I wasn't, but you know, it's...

Amanda: And that's not what I was trying to imply. I had just stepped out and came back into this space. And it's true for all of us up there, because unfortunately, Horace Mann and a couple of other people are the only ones that are long dead gone. [laughter] So, thank you for accepting my apology. And thank you everyone for giving me a moment to clarify, and being patient with me as I do this moderation part. Is that okay?

Eros: Yeah.

Amanda: Okay, the three of you shared time nicely. We can clap.

[applause]

Amanda: So, I want, should we put it up to the vote--what do you think, Taylor? About how to do the discussion part? What do you think? [Inaudible conversation.] Panelists? Okay.

Okay, so here's the deal. We have one more phenomenal panelists. And we're over time, but time is circular and doesn't really exist. We're just going to do the time warp again and bring it back to 7:00. So this discussion part is like really crucial. But the panelists are here really late. So there's two things. And Taylor jump in on me okay. So I was thinking about this. So originally it was going to be all of the panelists up here and questions. And it would have to be timed and really, very, very timed. The other thought that I had was that panelists who wanted to stay--and Levi, I'm not usurping you at all. Okay, didn't want you to get nervous--panelists who are able to, willing, capable of staying, could just kind of break into groups and have conversation that way. The benefits of small groups, it's more one on one, you can get into it a little more, it's a little bit easier to move through the time. The drawback is, it's not the same of everybody's hearing the same information and taking it in. So, but, the benefit is that it's not...I'm not going to have to be on you on that [snaps]. Does that clarify the two kind of options? Taylor, what do you think?

Taylor: I think we should leave it up to the panelists.

Amanda: So we could leave it up to the panelists, about which format you'd like. I though we might be able to take a whole entire vote...I feel like a lot of the time at Antioch--I work at the Alumni Board, and sometimes I feel like we're deciding the fate of the entire free world in our way of doing things. So here I was like, we need to all vote. I think we need to all vote. So I will turn it over to the panelists to think about that. And then Levi can present. And then we can come back in and talk about it or vote. What do you guys think about that?

Eros: Do you mean, come back in and vote on whether we're going to...

Amanda: So what I'm saying, let's let Levi, so those are two ways of structuring it, and I'm putting it to the panelists to say, you know, can you be here past time. So let's let Levi, you guys think about it. And then we'll kind of, we'll come in, huddle, make a decision, in like two minutes, okay?

Alright, so let's clap again.

[applause]

Okay, so, final panelists. I don't know how that changes...There we go. This is one of the reasons we didn't put "no cursing" as a ground rule, because then this would be extremely difficult to talk about.

Levi: And I wouldn't be able to give my talk.

Amanda: We're not silencing, we are working. So, eight minutes? And introduce yourself.

Taylor: No, yours is twenty...

Levi: But it's not going to be twenty. It is not going to be twenty, everyone.

Amanda: I mean...if it's a twenty minute, wonderful presentation.

Levi: It'll be exciting. [laughter]

Amanda: Use your time, introduce yourself, and if you could make it less than twenty.

Levi: My name is Levi B. I graduated in '08, I was Community Manager in '06-'07, during a really tumultuous time, obviously...and I moved away to California. Then I wanted to be somewhere that felt like home, and even though I'm not from here, it was the place that felt most like home, so I've returned and I have a two year-old, who some of you have met. And I'm here talking to you tonight. And I am going to give you opportunities to leave, but I have three disclaimers first, I'd like you to stay for the three disclaimers, and then decide.

So, the first is that I just want to say that I live here in the village, and I wear a lot of hats in the village, so I want you to sort of compartmentalize me, for a moment. I am going to talk to you about some sort of tentative things, and I want you to understand that the way that I talk to you about it, for example, is not the way that I would talk to young people that I work with about it. For example, boundaries are important to me, and I hope that you will also feel the importance of those boundaries. Does that make sense? Yes, okay. Not that I am ashamed of anything that I'm saying, but, just, you know, context.

I know that we are over time, so if you need to go because sleep is important, or homework is important, or spending time with your boo is important...please go ahead and go, that's fine, I won't be offended.

Also, I am going to talk somewhat anemically about sex and sexuality, and use some swear words. If these are things that are triggering or are unsafe for you, please take care of yourself. I fully support you taking breaks, or doodling in your notebook, or just leaving if you need to.

That being said, I want to clarify that there is a difference between being unsafe and uncomfortable. And if you are unsafe, please go, I mean, that is very real. If you are feeling uncomfortable though, I would just like to challenge you to just sit with that, and try to embrace the idea that it is okay to be uncomfortable, and that learning only really happens when you're uncomfortable. If you are very safe in your safe space, then you are really only hearing things that are sort of conforming what you already believe. And if it something that is challenging to you, you are going to and should feel uncomfortable, and that is okay, and that's good. Also, you can squirm in your seat, or whatever, it's okay...So make that decision: you're not feeling good. Am I feeling unsafe? Then please take care of yourself. Am I feeling uncomfortable? Then please challenge yourself.

Okay, so, I am going to start by talking about GenderFuck. I know that that's been a delicate issue here. And I'm wondering if anyone has proposed to you that you have the party, but call it a drag ball. I'm seeing some nods. Okay, so I want to say a few things about that.

Drag is beautiful. It is beautiful pageantry, performance, ritual, history. It has a deep, meaningful history to lots of communities: to the gay community, to the gender non-conforming community. Drag is fantastic in a lot of ways.

It is also problematic: It is often mocking. It often relies on misogynistic tropes. It often reinforces a gender binary. Drag is rife with problems as well. So, that's okay, that's a thing that we can sit with.

But Genderfuck is fundamentally different. It is challenging and it is subversive. It is a

container--both the party and the word itself--for *exploring gender, challenging gender, celebrating the limitlessness of gender*, in a defiant opposition to a culture that polices our gender, and tells us, under threat of--and this is important--judgement, mockery, isolation, and even death, that your gender must fit into a box.

And that is what makes GenderFuck fundamentally different...and yes, it is a fun, wild party...But it is also very politically important and poignant to not call it a drag ball. It's important, and there's a lot of...by the way, Antioch didn't invent that term. We are not the only one that uses it. So I just want to say that if you are curious about that, if you want to learn more about that, you live in the wonderful age of the internet, and I encourage you to find out more about that, because it's really important.

So, a little bit about GenderFuck at the College, before it closed. So, for the reasons I stated, it was amazing. It was the best party, of every term. The decorations were amazing, the outfits were amazing. It was just a lot of fun. And I think that that's important, I think that's an important thing. I mean, we work, and I mean when I was a student, and I'm sure you do as well, we work really hard, right? We work really hard, and school can be incredibly stressful...And having those moments to just celebrate and have fun, and have an amazing party, I think can be pretty important to your sense of balance in life, to your mental health, to just have a spot to have fun. So having an amazing party, I mean we had a lot of amazing parties...[laughter] But have one you know, you can count on, it's going to be amazing, and everyone's gonna be there, that's important. It really is.

There were problems with GenderFuck, that I don't think were unique to Antioch. I think they are cultural problems that we have. And in the interest in not romanticizing the old Antioch, I want to put these out there as problems that you can wrestle with as well.

You know, we do live in a culture that polices gender, and so it can be challenging to ask people to do things that are challenging to gender without veering into a territory that does becoming mocking of trans and gender non-conforming folks. And that definitely happened. Particularly the novelty of dudes in dresses. Like, it's so fun because it's so funny, right? And that's not really appropriate, or a useful, or life-affirming to people who are trans and gender non-conforming.

So that was definitely a thing that we wrestled with, I mean we tried to name it...set up workshops leading up to GenderFuck that address that, that really helped people understand, you know, the reality of being trans, and why maybe it isn't hilarious to say, "Look, I'm a dude in a dress!" So that's a thing that we wrestled with.

Another thing that was a personal pet peeve of mine was that it was also the party where everybody was ready to have sex, with each other, in the middle of the dance floor. [Surprise] Ehhh, kind of, yes, actually. [laughter] So, you know, I mean, obviously, I fully believe in sex and feeling the fullness of your sexuality, and doing it as often as you can.

But I do think that there was something about...this sort of cultural misunderstanding of queerness, that it's really *about* sex, that made people feel like, if this is a party about queerness, then it's definitely a party about fucking, right?

And, it's been proposed that perhaps the inclusion of the word "fuck" in GenderFuck misleads people into thinking [laughter] that it is a party about fucking. But, I want to push back against that, because we use the word fuck in a lot of ways, and when you say, for example, "fuck this

bullshit,” nobody thinks you want to make love to the bullshit. [laughter] Just gonna say that. But, again, it’s a thing that we talked about, right? It’s a thing, nobody...I mean, I did roll my eyes, but then we talked about it, in Community Meetings, and in our dorms. It’s a thing that we wrestled with, and we didn’t find an answer or a solution, but we did talk about it.

And another problem is drinking, which is not unique to GenderFuck, and is not unique to Antioch, and is not unique to our time. But people getting really, excessively drunk in a way where they are risking harm to themselves or others is a problem. And I am going to just say, speaking totally outside of my expertise, that we don’t have a culturally good relationship with alcohol. I’m a fan of alcohol, I do like to drink. But we don’t have a culturally good relationship with alcohol because we’re not an emotionally healthy culture, right? We do a lot of repressing, a lot of repressing, and oppressing each other. And we use alcohol as one of our many devices to deal with that, and perhaps having something so challenging as challenging gender, which we’re taught is sort of at the center of our identity, brings up a lot of shit for people, and maybe they drink more. So I’m not sure that that’s really a problem that needs to be resolved around GenderFuck, as much as just a problem, that we need to think about, and wrestle with.

So...And there other interesting thing that we kept coming up with solutions for, but then...So, my favorite example is that we always had performers, you know, drag performers, profession or semi-professional drag performers, and for a couple of years it seemed like all of the performers were white. You know, it was whoever was available locally, or who we knew. But it was you know, that kind of seems like a problem, like we need to dig a little deeper. So then we had a lot of performers of color, a lot, to a point where we mostly or *only* had performers of color. Then we were like, well wait, because it feels a little bit reminiscent of a minstrel show, because honestly, there are not that many people of color at our school, and yet all of the performers are... Again, I don’t know what the solution is. But it’s a good question, right? Like it’s a good question to wrestle with. And it brought up those questions. And these are things that we wrestled with.

So those are some thoughts that I want to give you as you venture into perhaps having GenderFuck parties of your own, and I am going to switch to talking about Sex Week.

Okay, so, I’m going to tell you--I told Taylor this, sort of, with some shame--I’m going to tell you the not-so-noble origins of Sex Week.

This is not a longstanding Antioch institution. It was fairly recent to, you know, before the closure. And this is what happened.

I was the coordinator of the Womyn’s Center, and a friend of mine--who I will not name--was the coordinator of the Queer Center, and we were really into each other. Like, *bad*. There was so much sexual tension that all we could do when we got together was, like, think about it and, like, dance around it and just flirt, and it was painful, it was painful, but he had a girlfriend, and...whatever.

So, we discovered that maybe we were not so devoted to our jobs as we were to this sexual tension, and that we needed to find some resolution to that...[laughter] So, we came up with this great idea where we would collaborate, which is awesome, right? Collaboration between IGs. [laughter] And come up with this week of just like sex workshops, so that we could both think and talk about sex all the time and...work.

And so that’s what we did. And I kind of feel like it’s, that’s a beautiful story, because, why not? Right? I mean why is that any better or worse an origin for happening that anything else? I mean,

that was real, that was where we were, and we did some creative problem solving. [laughter] And what came out of it was actually really fantastic. I mean, I'm really proud of that very first sex week that we did. We honestly worked very hard, we were very motivated. [laughter] And people came together, I mean we had a lot of collaboration too.

So I want to give you...I'm trying to remember all the things we did, there were so many workshops and gatherings that first sex week. We did a feminist porn viewing in the Womyn's Center, which was fantastic. We watched sort of, like, radical queer porn and more mainstream lesbian porn. And we talked about it, we talked about it in a, sort of like a personal, like, feelings and working through that kind of way. We talked about it in a really academic way, drawing from our classroom learning. Because that's what we do, because we're antiochians. And it was really an amazing discussion. We had a safer sex workshop, we had a BDSM workshop, we had dildo-making...which was interesting...[laughter] There was a picture of all the dildos on the front of the paper, and then it was prospie weekend, and then the Dean of Admissions was really mad...We didn't time it that way, it's just how it happened. [laughter]

And some of the other groups on campus just took it up as their theme that week. So we had a fat group that talked about that: you know, like what it means to be a fat, sexual person, and both in sort of like practical ways and emotional ways. The Trans and Genderqueer Group took it up as their topic that week. So really there was a lot, it was a very collaborative thing across the campus, which was really amazing.

My favorite workshop was the masturbation workshop. We were just gonna get together and jerk off together, that was the workshop. And it didn't happen. And this is the beautiful thing about it, right? This is part of sex-positivity, right? Is really being really in touch with where you are, and what you want, and what you don't want. And so...you know, there were a lot of people who were really excited about this idea, it sounded great. And then the time came and people were like, "You know what? I'm actually not so into that idea. Feeling uncomfortable, I'd rather go to brunch, so..." [laughter] So, it didn't happen! I kind of thing that that's beautiful, and amazing... And it's exactly how it's supposed to go. That's exactly how it's supposed to go. The people who were part of it made that decision, and thought, you know that's fine, we don't need to do this, and we're fine with that.

I think this kind of sex positivity is *really* important. I think it's really important. I think that...You know, I did my senior project on children's sexuality, which was a really cool and interesting thing to do and I learned a lot from it. We are inherently sexual beings, from the womb. I mean, we just are, it's a lot of our motivation in life, it's just what we are. And then we also live in a culture with a lot of gender policing and sexual role policing. And so there's something to me that sort of personally liberating about sex positivity, about, you know, learning about the different ways that there are to have sex, about having your own desires...having the shame removed and having it affirmed. Learning how to negotiate your wants in a way that is respectful of yourself and respectful of the people around you, is really important and is something we don't do well. It's not something that we're taught to do.

And it helps break down a lot of our prescribed notions in other ways that bleed into our understanding of other people in general. And I'm going to tell a story about another person that I won't name. It's a personal, you know, slightly telling story, but I trust you guys.

So there was a cis-boy who I was seeing for a little while, and he was really excited about the idea of anal sex. It was something he wanted to do. But he couldn't quite cross this, like, aversion

inside of himself because he was brought up in a really conservative Christian environment, and to him that was gay sex. Right, so, there's several things going on, even though in a totally heterosexual context, right? But to him there was something about that that was just, he couldn't quite cross that line.

So a lot of things happening. One is having his own desires affirmed, right? That's not happening for him. But also, the homophobia that's at play. The notions sort of, like, his own narrow gender role box. I mean that, that is deep. That's actually really deep. So when you're thinking through these things, and really learning how to live into your sexuality, I mean, it's about sex, but it's about so much more. I mean...there's a lot to break down, and it's one avenue, one of many avenues.

So, I am going to close by saying something that I am just going to take the liberty to say because I have a microphone. [laughter]

I know that one of the things that you are being told and that antiochians have been told for a while, at least, is that talking about these kinds of things and doing these kinds of things is somehow a threat to the stability of the College, right, because older, wealthier donors don't want to donate to a school that swears and talks about sex. Right, have you heard this, maybe? So I just want to say this, because I get to.

In my personal opinion, you are not, and should not, be building a school that serves the needs of fifty, sixty, seventy and eighty-year-old wealthy donors. [applause] I think that the role of elders in a community is vital. I do. But this is not their space. And even though they should be a part of it, it's not built for them. It's built for you. I think you that should be building a school that is exciting, and relevant, and challenging to young adults who are young, and present, and curious right now.

And I think that people who are fundraising should be people who are captivated by and excited to tell that story. Because that's a good story, about how invested young people are in the school. That's a good story worth telling. And can help donors put their concerns into context. Because, even though, of course, Antioch is unique beautiful snowflake, [laughter] *actually* almost every other college and university in our country right now is talking exactly about these things in pretty much exactly the same ways: in social settings, in student organizations, in administrative negotiations, and in serious, rigorous, gritty, academic settings, and that is real. And that is it. [applause]

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