



National Alumni Association of
Saint Augustine's University

NAA-SAU E-Newsletter

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CHAPTER PARTICIPATION

This Newsletter represents an opportunity for NAA Chapters/Members to submit items of interest that they would like to share with all Alumni. Please submit content to the NAA-SAU Website/Communications Coordinator (naasauwsm@gmail.com) for review.

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Please be reminded that the Executive Council will meet Monday, May 18, 2020, 7:30PM to finalize our 2020 Homecoming activities, which will include a discussion of the King/Queen contest.

Changes at Saint Augustine's and the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

There have been so many changes at the University over the last few months that it is difficult to know where to begin, but we will start with the most immediate and then move to the administrative changes. Since our last Newsletter, the Board of Trustees interviewed a finalist recommended by the Presidential Search Committee, but the individual was not selected as the new president because the Board decided to interview more candidates. The new Presidential Search Committee was appointed by the Chairman and has been asked to recommend candidates to the Board before the end of May 2020. Without doubt, SAU's next President must be an experienced leader with a strong business acumen to

develop the financial revenue streams to take us from surviving to sustainable to thriving. With the challenges of accreditation, student enrollment, infrastructure repairs and fundraising, it is going to take a unique individual to come in running and prepared to get us where we need to be in a short period of time. The COVID-19 pandemic will also require a president to have some emergency management and Internet technology knowledge, as the university may need to depend heavily on on-line degree programs to sustain its curricula.

As most of you already know, the Board of Trustees decided not to extend Dr. Gaddis Faulcon's interim appointment for another twelve months. Many of you voiced your support for his continuing as Interim President through the selection process of a new President, but no mutually agreeable arrangement could be reached with the Chairman of the Board. We appreciate Dr. Faulcon's hard work to increase enrollment, raise funds and work with Board members and the NAA-SAU to improve the dormitories and other buildings/infrastructure needs of Saint Augustine's University. He worked closely with the NAA-SAU, both as the Interim President and as a caring alumnus. The letters of support from our Chapter Presidents deserved a response from the Board Chairman, who chose to remain silent with regards to your comments, with one exception.

With your approval, your NAA-SAU Executive Council, sent letters to the Chairman and Board of Trustees concerning the need for greater transparency, openness, and integrity in the university operations. However, we never received a response. We were, however, pleased that the Interim President and Chairman held a conference call and Zoom conference with alumni as a first in being transparent on what is happening at Saint Augustine's University, particularly during this critical time in our history. Many questions were answered, and a number were unanswered.

Concern has been expressed about the University's current administration and the relationship with the NAA-SAU. We had hoped to continue the good relationship that had forged over the years with the University as the NAA-SAU membership worked to raise funds and recruit on behalf of the University. There is a substantial difference as to what information should be made public, the level of transparency and accountability concerning Saint Augustine's University's status as an institution committed to our traditional values and legacy.

The publication of the University's mandated annual audit report would be viewed as a way to assure alumni that the university is in a good financial state or convey the need for alumni to do more to raise funds. During the State of the University conference call and Zoom conference on April 18, 2020, the Chairman committed the Interim President to give a summary report to alumni on BOT and University actions. This would be a good platform to inform alumni regarding the University's financial status, enrollment, and other issues, such as the disposition of University assets.

The Interim President announced during the conference call that the Saint Augustine's Strategic Plan is available on the University's website. Since many of you have inquired about this significant guidance document, we strongly recommend you to review the plan [<https://www.st-aug.edu/ospie/strategic-planning/>] and provide your comments to the University.

The University Board decided that the Chief Operating Officer, Dr. Maria A. Lumpkin, would serve as the Interim President, until the selection of a new president. Dr. Lumpkin has stepped into this challenging position with an additional burden, the COVID-19 pandemic, which alone is causing a tremendous hurdle for all colleges, especially private HBCUs. The survivability and sustainability of Saint Augustine's will be tested over the next year, and there will be several critical decisions during that time.

All alumni and Saint Augustine's stakeholders need to be as supportive as possible and lift Dr. Lumpkin in our prayers over this time, for her success is critical to our alma mater's success. Hopefully, she will place transparency, collaboration and trust in her mantra and interactions with the NAA-SAU. We can and are eager to be a substantial resource to her efforts, but openness will be essential.

INVESTIGATION OF Allegations reported to SACSCOC

The Saint Augustine's University Board of Trustees (BOT) and Administration recently announced an investigation of allegations made by the Senior Vice President for Advancement and the former Senior Vice President for Enrollment. The allegations are against the Chairman of the Board, another Trustee and Senior Administrative officials in

replying to an inquiry from SACS and other issues. The allegations stated that in the University's response to a SACS inquiry, that minutes and other documents were altered, changed, or drafted to deliberately be misleading.

Additionally, there are allegations of Trustee members going beyond the role of governance and managing staff activities.

Only a select subset of the BOT members reviewed the document sent to SACS; therefore, the BOT cannot attest to the veracity of the response to SACS. A committee of members of the BOT is conducting the investigation, with outside legal counsel to review some documents, conduct some interviews and make a recommendation to the Committee. Saint Augustine's University must do everything possible to address this issue, including demonstrating that it can regulate itself and make whatever changes are necessary. The implications of these allegations are incredibly significant and can seriously harm our alma mater. This matter is further complicated by the recent dismissal of the General Counsel and abolishment of the Office of General Counsel. (Note: University's motto: "**Veritas vos liberabit**" – "**The truth will set you free.**")

**LETTER OF CONCERN FROM DEBRA SAMUELS, WASHINGTON, DC
METRO CHAPTER**

May 8, 2020

Dear Dr. Larkins,

I hope this communication will find you safe and well. I am writing to express my concern about the barrage of unfavorable information surfacing about our Beloved Saint Augustine's University. Several weeks ago, I participated in the conference call with SAU Alumni Chapter officers that was hosted by the SAU Office of the President and the Board of Trustees. After the call I felt it was a step towards opening up communications with alumni to address concerns, however, several days later, a letter was made public containing disturbing allegations. Can you tell me if the SAU National Alumni Association (NAA) will play a role in looking into the allegations and working with the University to help stabilize the public view of what's happening there?

The Washington DC Metropolitan Alumni Chapter has a long history of being very engaged with the University. We have hardworking members and officers who have been constant contributors to the University and to the National Alumni Association. I served two terms as president of our Chapter and I'm a life member of the NAA.

We recruit heavily in the DMV, attending college fairs throughout the region. We invest countless hours and personal funds engaging parents and students by hosting meet & greets and preparing care packages for students. And we host a variety of activities in an effort to: unite alumni in our region; build affinity for SAU and its brand throughout the DMV region, and raise funds for the University. We also worked hard to nurture relationships with several Episcopal Churches in the DMV, including St. Luke's and St. John's whose congregations worked with us to financially host the University Choir for several years, until the choir was no longer able to travel.

Like all of the SAU alumni chapters we love and work hard on behalf of our dear Alma Mater, and we continue to raise funds and recruit. However, it is very distressing to hear the series of questionable information floating around, especially when you consider the adverse effects it could have on alumni support, public support and student interest. The esteemed legacy of our Beloved Saint Augustine's University deserves so much more. #ILoveMyHBCUSAU.

With Falcon Pride,
Debra Samuels

Other Board of Trustee Action Items of Interest

The Board of Trustees in open session decided to not to reappoint four (4) Episcopalians at its “Annual Meeting.” Three individuals could have been reappointed for a second term, but none were offered a second term. Although they may have offered a differing point of view on issues, they did bring financial support and a willingness to participate in resolving some of the difficult policy and academic issues facing Saint Augustine’s. This action sends an alarming message to numerous Episcopal Churches and individuals that donate annually to the university. This action occurred immediately after a live message from the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, Bishop Michael Curry, stating his continuing support for Saint Augustine’s and Voorhees College. Over 153 years the Episcopal Church has been pivotal in the growth and image of Saint Augustine’s and has been a close friend and supporter of our alma mater. The NAA-SAU has worked closely with the Episcopal Churches in fund raising and marketing events. Hopefully and prayerfully, we can maintain a beneficial relationship.

Three new Board of Trustees were approved during the Annual Meeting, including a new Student Trustee. Their names and biographical summaries should be available on the University’s website.

Recruitment and Fundraising

The local Chapters of the NAA-SAU received a list of all the students who have been accepted into Saint Augustine’s

for the Fall 2020 semester. The NAA-SAU Chapters are working on reaching out to these individuals in various states and cities via phone, text, email, and social media to keep their interest in Saint Augustine's University. This is a major task, as there are close to thirty-five hundred (3,500) students that need to be contacted. Often there is a need to answer questions and direct them to the appropriate staff for help.

The NAA-SAU is exploring ways to identify recruitment methods using video conferencing and/or social media. Alumni during 2018 and Spring 2019 did an outstanding job recruiting new students for Saint Augustine's University, especially when the University's recruitment resources and efforts had been

limited.

Prior to COVID-19, we had expected an increase in enrollment again; however, the financial impact on parents and concerns for controlling the virus will make this goal difficult.

The NAA-SAU President is working with the United Negro College Fund/National Alumni Council in identifying and implementing collective and collaborative ways to stimulate and maintain high school student interest in HBCUs.

The Chapters are also exploring ways to raise funds virtually and through other methods during this period of social distancing. There were several fund-raising events planned across the country, most of which had to be cancelled or postponed for now.

The NAA-SAU, with a lot of alumni support, did a super job of fund raising, including \$170K for the Renovation Campaign, and other significant donations and support. The NAA-SAU provided emergency support (COVID-19) to help pay the expenses of approximately twenty (20) students that allowed them to get home, assist with storage fees, and have funds for food and lodging.

A great big thank you to one of our NAA members who housed 2 students at her home for a week after the university closed abruptly due to the COVID-19 pandemic.





Annual Commencement Meeting and National Conference

The annual commencement, NAA-SAU meeting and Summer Conference have been cancelled.

Information that normally would have been discussed with NAA members at commencement will be included in a future Newsletter. A presentation on the financial status of the NAA-SAU will be transmitted to let everyone know that the organization is doing well financially, and we are collecting donations significant enough to provide substantial support to our alma mater.

SAVE THE DATE

We are planning to hold a virtual NAA-SAU (June 18-20) Summer Conference mainly for the Executive Council, but there will be open sessions where all members can join in and express their views on how and what the organization is doing, including things we can do better and how we can be more responsive to membership. As plans develop on this virtual conference, we will keep membership informed through the Newsletter and on our website.

Homecoming



Our 2019 Homecoming was great as usual, except for the outcome of the football game. It was great “hanging out” last year at the Thursday night activity in the lounge at the Sheraton Hotel and meeting so many returning alumni from all over the country, but we needed a bigger room for our 2020 Thursday night reception, along with some “better food.” Assuredly, we are still planning for SAU’s 2020 Homecoming, with our annual NAA Life Members breakfast, national meeting, social hospitality event, NAA-SAU Scholarship (Wiley Davis) Jazz Banquet, and Saturday Night Dance. Additionally, we are looking at another event if time and

interest is there.

This year the host hotel is the Hilton Convention Center, and we are expecting to make improvements on both our Hospitality room and food. The other activities will be on campus, except the dance, which will be at the Hilton. It is our understanding that the Martin Luther King building is partially renovated and should be in spectacular shape by Homecoming.

Reaching Young and Not-so-Young Alumni

It is worth noting that an active and transparent NAA-SAU is critical in sustaining and maintaining Saint Augustine's University as the alma mater we love and want to see flourish.

To that end, NAA-SAU President Dr. John T Larkins has encouraged the Young Alumni Council to engage new Alumni as much as possible and keep them aware and involved as much as they can. Young Alumni need to be brought into local Chapters and become active participants. Chapters need to be aware of young alumni in their area and attempt to reach out to them. The Young Alumni Council will be sponsoring events during Homecoming to try to get recent graduates and young alumni engaged.

Alumni participation is critical to the growth and sustainability of Saint Augustine's, and all active alumni should work to get more alumni involved. Additional resources are needed in the University's Office of Alumni Affairs to ensure the maintenance of an alumni database that includes mailing and e-mail addresses, telephone numbers and other contact information, which will likely help increase the alumni participation rate.



The NAA-SAU also maintains a database of paid members that is kept up to date, to the extent possible, with information from members. Given this, we need your help in keeping our records current. We are working on a new membership platform that we hope will adequately serve our needs. Stay tuned!

Election of NAA-SAU 2020-2022 National Officers

Voting for the NAA-SAU national elections was completed on April 25, 2020. The official vote count took place on May 8, 2020 and the 2020 -2022 new officers are as follows:

President	Dr. John T. Larkins
Vice President	Dr. Johnelle Sherald
Secretary	Mazie Lewis
Assistant Secretary	Shirley Colden
Treasurer	Dorothy Roper

Financial Secretary
Alumni Trustee

Bernadine Jordan-Howard
Joseph Lynn

The President in consultation with the Executive Committee will appoint the positions of Executive Director, Parliamentarian, Chaplain, and other special committee chairpersons as needed.



Elected officers will be sworn in via the virtual National Conference and take office on July 1, 2020, for a two-year term. The position of Alumni Trustee will need to be ratified by the Board of Trustees.

FUND RAISING, FUND RAISING, AND FUND RAISING!

As Alumni, we must do all we can to raise money for University scholarships, infrastructure and athletics and to support a dedicated and competent faculty and staff. As part of your *Resolution to Give* to your alma

mater, please pledge your support—time, talent and treasure (money)— to your alma mater; you will be better for it.