Update from the October 2014 Alumni Council Meeting

By Sarah Maris ’85, At-Large Member

The weather was gorgeous for Carleton Alumni Council meeting on campus October 10-11th. Despite the distractions of the exquisite fall foliage, we managed to complete an ambitious agenda that included reports from volunteer boards, discussions about Carleton communications, previewing plans for the College’s 150th Anniversary, networking with students and exchanging ideas with the Alumni Annual Fund Board and Careers Board.

What is the Alumni Council?

The Alumni Council is the umbrella organization that represents Carleton alumni. We have members representing all of the major alumni volunteer boards and groups: MCAN (Multicultural Alumni Network), OAC (Out After Carleton), ‘C’ Club (Varsity Athletics), Alumni Annual Fund, Career Board and Alumni Admissions Representatives as well as At-Large members who represent the alumni body as a whole and our student Council members, who also participate in the Alumni Relations’ SNAP (Students N’ Alumni Programming) group. Our goal is to build connections to the College and represent the voice of alumni in the College’s planning and operations.

“We keep an eye on alumni engagement”

What are we working on?

Our October meeting had four major focuses:

- Evaluation of our own mission, goals and operating principles
- Sharing information among the alumni volunteer communities
- Review of how Carleton communicates with alumni and other audiences
- Preview of the plans for celebrating Carleton’s 150th Anniversary in 2016-17

Our mission, goals and operating principles

Over the past few meetings we have examined our role in supporting alumni stewardship and engagement and determined that we will be more effective as a working board, rather than just advisors to the College. To that end we have clarified our roles as board members and have committed to deeper engagement with the College’s volunteer programs. All Council members have agreed to support the Alumni Annual Fund, act as an information ambassador within our personal networks, and support the College through at least one additional volunteer or programmatic activity each year. We also committed to serving on at least one of our four working groups:

- **Awards and Nominations Committee:** responsible for considering the nominations for the annual Alumni Association Awards and nominating new members for the Alumni
Council. Recommendations are given to the entire Council for approval at our Spring meeting.

- **Assessment Working Group**: focused on formulating key questions about the College’s stewardship efforts to research and bring to the Council for discussion and feedback.
- **Carleton Connects Working Group**: provides input for the Carleton Connects online lecture series for alumni featuring faculty and other special guests.
- **Alumni Adventures Working Group**: provides feedback about Carleton’s alumni travel program.

**Sharing information among the alumni volunteer boards and student-alumni initiatives**

Representatives from alumni boards and student Council members discussed their current efforts and future plans. Highlights include:

- **MCAN (Multicultural Alumni Network)**: Shao Zhu ’10 discussed MCAN’s partnership with the Career Center to support internships for students of color through the MCAN Scholars program. He also reported on the MCAN Alumni in Residence program which invites alumni back to campus to share career advice and network with students. More information on MCAN can be found at [go.carleton.edu/mcan](http://go.carleton.edu/mcan).
- **OAC (Out After Carleton)**: The OAC board is busy planning the fifth OAC Reunion to be held on April 30 - May 3, 2015. Their goal is to welcome, unite, and reunite members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and allied Carleton community. More information can be found at [go.carleton.edu/oac](http://go.carleton.edu/oac).
- **’C’ Club** Don Dean ’68 P03 reported on the ‘C’ Club’s activities and shared the newly updated Carleton Athletics webpage ([go.carleton.edu/athletics](http://go.carleton.edu/athletics)) with us. For more information on the ‘C’ Club visit their Web page.
- **AAR (Alumni Admissions Representatives)**: Gail Cederberg ’77 P12 shared news from the Admissions program. The AAR program is the largest volunteer program at the College, involving more than 1100 volunteers who contact prospective students, represent Carleton at college fairs, interview students and attend gatherings. More information can be found on the AAR website.
- **SNAP (Student ‘N Alumni Programs)**: SNAP was created to help students build a stronger connection with their classmates and the College and create opportunities for students to engage with alumni. Hannah Nayowith ’16 and Becca Scribner ’16 shared SNAP’s plans for Fall Freshman Day, Homecoming and Sophmorphosis (special programming for sophomores in January). To learn about SNAP go to [go.carleton.edu/SNAP](http://go.carleton.edu/SNAP).

We also held a joint session with the AAF (Alumni Annual Fund) and the Careers Board where we discussed the challenges facing each group and the initiatives they are planning:

- **AAF (Alumni Annual Fund)**: The AAF has set an ambitious goal to increase AAF participation to 56% by 2020 to allow the Annual Fund to maintain its current level of budgetary support for Carleton. Getting there will be challenging: our historically successful Student Phonathon doesn’t work as well now that caller-id, ubiquitous cellphones and multiple messaging platforms have made us all less likely to answer the
phone. New strategies are required to connect with alumni and make the case for Carleton. For more information on the AAF go to go.carleton.edu/AAF

- **Careers Board:** The Careers Board is focused on supporting the “Life after Carleton” initiative in the Strategic Plan. They are working with the Career Center to bring more career exploration opportunities to Carleton students including programs on campus, internship and externships. Find information on how to help Carleton students on the Career Center website.

**Review of Carleton Communications**

In several sessions throughout the weekend, Council reviewed Carleton’s approaches to communications. The College’s new home page, which rolled out earlier this year, was reviewed and Council discussed the themes and messages called forth in this and other outreach efforts and communications. Earlier in the year, the Alumni Council had provided input into a series of messages to help guide College communications; Council feedback was incorporated and the messages are now being used by volunteers of the College as well as in College communications. One line, “Once a Carl, always a Carl” reverberated throughout our weekend meeting.

**Preview of Carleton’s 150th Anniversary events**

Carleton will celebrate its sesquicentennial on October 12, 2016. Planning has begun for a full year of events and programs to honor the College’s history, traditions, values and contributions to the greater world. Much more to come on this!

**What’s next?**

Our Spring Meeting is scheduled for April 17-18, 2015 and will coincide with the Spring Parent Advisory Council (PAC) board meeting. Preliminary agenda includes updates from the key stewardship groups, a discussion of alumni engagement metrics led by our Assessment working group, approval of new Council members to replace those rotating off the board, updates on plans for the 150th Anniversary, networking with students and more.