

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 12TH, 2017 ALUMNI COUNCIL MEETING

ANGLO-AMERICKÁ VYSOKÁ ŠKOLA, V.Ú.

ANGLO-AMERICAN UNIVERSITY, 2017, 18:15 PM -7:45 PM

AAU PREMISES (ROOM 1.33), LETENSKÁ 5, PRAHA 1 – MALÁ STRANA

ATTENDANCE:

PRESENT

SOŇA KRAUSOVÁ	(SK)	Chairwoman
ONDŘEJ PEKÁČEK	(OP)	Member
JIŘÍ SCHWARZ	(JS)	AAU Board of Trustees Chairman
ELIZABETH NOVÁČEK	(EN)	AAU Alumni and Events Specialist (Administrator)

ABSENT

JOSEF MULLER	(JM)	Member
JURAJ VOZÁR	(JV)	Member
OFELIJA UZUNOVSKA	(OU)	Member

AGENDA

1. New vision, mission, and key goals
2. Survey strategy
3. Alumni Edge Card value
4. (Just for AC)
5. Alumni Fundraiser Evening
6. Elections

6:17 PM, Meeting Starts.

Present: JS, SK, and EN.

EN outlined the AC members to JS.

EN announced the new mission and vision statement;

Vision: AAU aspires to be a global intellectual hub that combines study programs, research, and real-world experience to cultivate the next generation of leaders.

Mission: As a global and inclusive community, we are committed to preparing our students for success by developing critical thinking, effective communication, and responsible action through a personalized and transformative university experience.

JS reflected on the four to five month effort it took to create the vision and mission statement, and explained the importance they had in setting the direction and a new management style for each of the five Vice Presidents' goals and KPIs. He raised the fact that AAU has had a decline in enrollment since obtaining the WASC accreditation, a student body of 1000 is considered critical for the university to operate efficiently, and currently only 60% of the current student body are degree-seeking students. In reaction to these facts, he stated the importance stopping this decline.

SK asked what the strategy and action is intended to back up the new mission and vision statement.

EN speaking on behalf of the new Development and Communication Department (DCD) stated the two key goals and strategy lead by the department's VP, Kiril Ribarov; firstly to increase number of students; rather than casting a thin, widespread net with no strategized focus, AAU has now officially selected four countries to focus recruitment efforts on for the coming year with these countries being Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, the UK, and the US. The US will be led by Alan Kraustengl, while the other three will be led by AAU's Recruitment Director within the DCD.

JS raised the importance of Alan Kraustengl having a permanent office in the US to help properly utilise the WASC accreditation and address the potential market. This office will be supported by the Founders for one year, which is quiet hopeful since one year is not enough to turn results.

SK asked for more specific follow up to how the new vision and mission is being implemented in action and communication.

JS replied that the marketing was a weak activity previously with no target group, and that the presentation was very poor. Now Zita Lara, the new Marketing Director, and Irena Valesova, Recruitment Director, are the ones executing the new communication from the new vision and mission statement; they have better capacities then previous and we must follow up with them on how they are implementing the new vision and mission statement. We also must analyse how proportional their activities' expenditure scales to results; there is currently five times as much going into marketing then recruitment. There is a new shift to marketing to a target group, rather than a broad population like before; this is fundamental also because of AAU's financial situation. We must also evolve our marketing since our market has awareness that we are here, and we need market research to analyse who are our potential students are. This can be done through student satisfaction surveys.

EN raised that there are two existing surveys from 2014 and 2016 which addressed alumni's satisfaction with their time at AAU.

SK responded that we could get fresher insight from current students.

EN said that Peter Bolcha and Katarina Stehlikova are responsible for managing the surveying of current students.

JS affirmed EN comment, and said that the quality of students should be higher and perhaps this has changed.

SK said that having higher quality students to a challenge for all universities.

OP arrived.

JS agreed with SK, but said that is very relative since the best students from the Czech Republic still prefer to go abroad or to go to public universities; our marketing strategy now seeks to define AAU as a first choice. We must do this through offering something unique that other universities do not have for this target group.

EN raised that AAU has hired an advertising expert to help successfully deliver our key messaging, and in a consistent strategy.

OP commented that he observed that AAU doesn't have posters around Prague for the first time in while which he thought could be a positive thing since many of the other Czech private universities now have posters; this differentiates us.

JS from his personal view that he thinks poster advertising is obsolete; students are not going to make a decision according to a poster. There is a passivity of teachers and we should use other tools, importantly like exposure in the media and journals which is missing now with AAU. Top Czech universities have visibility of their popular professors' actions, so that potential students can aspire to learn from that institutions professors; we need to focus on this this academic year and next with a set of incentives for teachers to be visible in affiliation with AAU.

SK suggested we could send professors as guest lectures to other universities of our target countries to promote our school.

JS said he would be hesitant to send professors abroad, and brought the role of geopolitics in recruitment, for example, there is resistance to Russia in Georgia so students are attracted to oppose this by attending a school like Anglo-American. There is great importance in having a network of alumni ambassadors.

SK replied that we have started such a program.

JS remarked that this is a critical activity, we must find our alumni and restore our connections with them to scout out ambassadors. It would be the best if we offered them a flight ticket to Prague for alumni ambassador training.

SK expressed that we solidify the framework of our alumni ambassador program.

EN followed up the SK's comment listing the current state of the program; we have four ambassadors with little activity, and explained that they are there to support prospective students, current students and alumni through their Facebook groups and one social mixer a year, and that they are to help recruit with some skype training and support from Irena Valesova. Juraj Vozar has been the only ambassador that has had some recruitment activity. EN asked how she could further motivate activity.

SK agreed that the current ambassadors are currently more theoretical than active, and added that they are very busy with their own professions.

JS made a point that motivation needs to come from their interest, and that interest would be driven from financial and prestigious incentives. He raised the idea that alumni ambassadors could host their events at the offices of reputable companies; the company would get exposure from potential employees and AAU could use the hosts brand to attract potential students.

SK replied that we need the leads for prospective students first and that's where we have the challenge, the organization and arranging the space is doable.

JS replied that this is up to them and commented that there have not been enough results so far.

SK replied that the average alumni is not going to have this know how.

EN followed up saying that Alumni Ambassadors are encouraged to do a skype training with Iveta Valesova, she pass any knowledge or contacts specific to that country that she may have. EN said that we have the framework, but we need to focus on incensing for more action from our Alumni Ambassadors.

SK emphasized that it takes particular organization skills and connections, we should build a knowledge kit to help set them up and choose which area they are comfortable with.

EN mentioned that she has sent out a list of all the alumni of our Alumni Ambassador's countries, however, aside from Slovakia, we do not have many alumni (less than five) in the countries of our Alumni Ambassador network.

OP raised the idea that we can contact and train alumni specifically for education fairs, and that this also furthers brand recognition.

SK agreed that education fairs are important; making face to face contact, and they are reassuring to parents.

JS replied that he has doubts with these fairs, it is more important to have someone to systematically work and have contacts. We will not be able to solve the details, and we must focus on our target countries. He raised doubts about our current ambassadors; if we don't have many alumni/ students from the past, we should not focus on them too much for the future, however, diversity of English speaking students at AAU is what makes it special; it would not be attractive if all the students were speaking the same language in the hallway. We could offer more recruitment commission to country which we desire to keep and improve AAU's diversity. We have started to measure our impact at education fairs in ratio to the expenditure to shape our future strategy.

SK replied that she does not think fairs should be the main strategy, rather is important supplementary strategy, it targets not just students but also parents.

JS mentioned that parents and students can call and skype our admissions staff.

OP raised the issues of translations.

SK replied to OP's concern based on her previous experiences; schools will have their staff which translators in the anticipated language needed.

JS raised importance of social media, AAU has not used it properly.

SK replied that it has improved.

EN agreed that the social media had improved the past three years, and brought up another point; AAU hopes to host more events which will increase our exposure, if we have attractive names at events at our school it is great branding with little to no cost for us.

OP agreed, and brought low cost- high impact solutions. AAU could record these discusses and share online like MOOC or Coursera. AAU's professors could talk about their niche areas of expertise and interest that is talked about much yet, like Daniela Chalaniova could talk about political cartoons. This would be brand building, rather fundraising. OP asked if about AAU's SEO efforts.

EN replied that Rosta Supa, our web specialist manages our SEO and Google Words.

SK added that we should also think about AAU's presence on the web question forum Quora.

OP added that Quora gets a lot of clicks which would increase our SEO of AAU's webpage. OP reaffirmed the importance of SEO, a low-cost and high-impact solution.

EN further suggested the value of low-cost and high-impact solutions because our target market will not respond so much to direct marketing, but rather these little to no cost affiliations, such as having AAU on Quora. EN followed up that she will get a report from Rosta Supa about how our SEO is.

EN brought up the second key goal of AAU through the Communication and Development Department; diversifying AAU's income. Currently AAU gets 99.3% of its income from students (majority of which are through other semester abroad exchange agencies), it is not sustainable to be dependent on one income. EN and her team are working for AAU to host events by partners who will pay.

SJ suggested that the American Chamber of Commerce could have events at AAU, they are very reputable and could be a good way to get the ball rolling with AAU's reputation for events.

JS brought up that we do not have anyone working fundraising, and that AAU needs at least a part time professional fundraiser.

OP brought up the opportunity for AAU to partner with companies.

EN followed up; AAU could offer intensive training and weekend courses and workshops to working professionals.

SJ reaffirmed the demand for training from companies, and brought up a case of a company paying 20,000 CZK for a weekend training course.

EN said that she is working on the framework and delivery of this with her team.

SJ suggested leadership trainings for smaller companies.

EN said that her team is getting feedback about what courses they could offer, and that it seems like AAU could best offer to the realm of project management, and HR.

OP mentioned other prestigious online courses and trainings offered online which offer a certificate, it could even be collaborated with normal semester classes.

EN raised the SEO and graphic design would be good topics. EN asked the attendees for more topic suggestions.

SK replied that public speaking and presentation skills in general would be useful, and to emphasize transferable skills. In addition to this each faculty could stay tuned to hot topics, like for law, the topic of new privacy law in the EU which will take effect in 2018.

JS raised the challenge that we teach UK law which may struggle to address this topic in particular, and for law workshops in general. We must look for parallel identity for this school, and questions if it will stay open because it is so small. The law school is not sufficient as it is currently.

EN commented that she is planning a roundtable discussion with the Dean of Law about property law, as it is a broad interest to many professionals, however there still is a barrier with the type of law.

SK commented that she liked this idea of a round table discussion, because others can add their experiences.

EN brought up that we had two academic conferences last year in reply to OP asking, and explained the three we will be having this academic year.

JS brought up the next partner who will be hosting a conference at AAU (Education for a Changing World), and explained the content.

SK said we could potentially hire in event planners who could help stabilize and legitimize our entry into event hosting.

OP and JS discussed the complications of having conferences around classes and semesters when AAU's classes are empty.

EN said she will prepare brochure to offer partners, then in the near future after a couple of events, we could consider getting professional event planners to help host.

EN moved on to the next topic regarding, what to call students who have completed classes at AAU but not a degree because President Pajas was not keen on what Alumni Council voted for, "Non-graduate alumni".

SK said that most US schools use this, and replied to JS why this market is important to address; they could be potential contacts, particularly in the US, we should underestimate their potential. They do need all the services and benefits offered to our alumni, but we should keep some data on them.

JS said it was not necessary to put effort into the market mentioned above.

EN raised the next topic of surveys and gave a brief overview of surveys sent out in 2014 and 2016 to the whole AAU mailing list regarding their satisfaction. EN raised the proposal that is not totally useful to ask the relatively same survey questions to the same pool again. She suggested that we send out a survey composed of two parts to alumni two years after graduation (and potentially later again)

Survey 1: anonymous satisfaction survey and ask income

Survey 2: collect personal info (name, city, and career) which could be shared in an alumni directory upon their permission.

JS added that it is very important to get alumni's starting wage to gauge the usefulness of the school.

EN is to follow up privacy laws if sharing and saving information of students and alumni.

SK brought up the importance of informing the Alumni Community why we are collecting their data and how it will be secure to encourage them to share.

EN brought up an off topic point related transparency of our outreach efforts; when fundraising, we should fundraise to a particular effort.

SK followed up that kick-starter campaign could inform alumni where their money is going and give the cause more emotion and therefore desire.

EN shared an idea that AAU could have an art installation wall where alumni could leave their finger print for a donation.

SK followed up that they had an idea that alumni could buy chairs with their names on the back.

OP raised that it is a great idea to help talented students who need a leg up through alumni donations.

SK followed up that the opportunities mentioned above cannot be too time restricted.

EN brought up the lack of desire for an Alumni Edge Card, and suggested offering a discount for alumni who want to enroll or audit classes, since a flat rate discount is not available.

OP suggested offering more experiences rather than discounts.

SK suggested promoting the library with a video more to increase desire for the card, rather than discounts.

JS commented that the student lounge does not seem to be used.

EN explained Alumni Fundraising Evenings JS, and OP explained our guest speaker, Jakub Sedlacek.

OP suggested that his topic can be “whatever he thinks will challenge the common perception”.

OP and EN stated they did not feel in the position to say how much we should pay Jakub Sedlacek.

JS suggested measuring our progress with our alumni programs with professors at AAU before excusing himself to leave. He suggested the goal of getting 10 new alumni ambassadors this academic year.

SK suggested scouting ambassadors while they are students, it would be easier to train them while they are here.

EN replied that she will follow up with professors, Deans, and David Lipka for their ideas and suggestions.

JS thanked Alumni Council for their work and excused himself.

7:48 PM, JS leaves.

SK said that we should at least try to break even with the Alumni Fundraiser Evening.

OP suggested two additional speakers, Tomas who would be more expensive, and Kristian who could do a brief opening talk about his research around the theories of happiness and would likely it for free. Kristian. OP agreed to get him in touch EN.

OP, EN and SK calculated that ten guests should generate 5,000 CZK, wine and basic finger food should cost 2,000 CZK in total.

SK said we should make 1,000 CZK so that we can pay Jakub Sedlacek 2,000 CZK.

OP, SK and EN unanimously agreed that Thursday, November 2nd from 7 PM.

EN brought up the elections, that she will be asking Alumni Council for brief testimonies to help market to opportunity for next term candidates and stated that the we be accepting application for candidates in December with elections.

7:48 PM, meeting ends.