

# **ANSWERS TO THE MOST FREQUENT QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TRANSITION FROM NAAB TO ALUMNI COUNCIL**

## **What is the St. Bonaventure University Alumni Council?**

To align directly with the Office of University Advancement, a new structure has been created to support the expanding needs of our alumni.

The new St. Bonaventure Alumni Council has been developed collaboratively with alumni and University leadership to support the Office of University Advancement in its mission to expand alumni engagement opportunities and increase alumni participation in new and existing programs. The members of the council will serve as active and engaged role models and will encourage fellow alumni to connect with the University in innovative and meaningful ways.

## **Why is the National Alumni Association Board transitioning to the St. Bonaventure University Alumni Council?**

There are several factors contributing to the fundamental shift from a board to a council. The new structure of the Alumni Council will allow for greater flexibility and efficiency, both in the operations of the council (committees, meeting structure, format, etc.) as well as in the partnership with the Office of University Advancement and other University representatives.

The new Operating Guidelines reflect a structure that the Alumni Council (formerly the NAAB) has largely been working within, although beholden to the previous bylaws which outlined specific committees and meeting requirements.

Lastly, there is a shift in higher education to move away from a formal alumni board (many of which are dues-paying) towards an alumni council or advisory group.

## **Who was involved in the decision to move to the new structure?**

Conversations regarding the purpose and mission of the NAAB began at the last board meeting in April 2022. Following the discussion and feedback from that meeting, members of the NAAB Leadership Team engaged with staff from the Office of University Advancement and University President Jeff Gingerich to review the NAAB by-laws and structure and the University's alumni engagement goals.

Over the summer, this task force conducted an in-depth analysis of national best practices for alumni engagement, legal consideration, and mutual strategic priorities. This resulted in a recommendation to Dr. Gingerich for the NAAB to adopt a new, aligned model – the St. Bonaventure University Alumni Council – which received his full support.

### **How does the new structure affect current members?**

Your roles will not change. The new structure and Operating Guidelines provide a clear mission and vision along with detailed job descriptions and member expectations. All current members are part of the new Alumni Council and all existing terms will be honored.

To reach the 20-member limit, we will scale back the number of new members for the next 3-5 years. No more than two members will be added to the Alumni Council per year until we reach 20 members.

A new onboarding process and orientation will be designed to acclimate new members to the Alumni Council and provide clear expectations.

### **Why is the Alumni Council membership decreasing to 20 members?**

The new model focuses the priorities of the Alumni Council on needs that are more defined and aligned directly with University goals. Twenty members are the optimal number of alumni volunteers to carry through this work in a more engaging manner for all constituents. Importantly, the new structure makes room for non-elected members to serve on committees as needed, which fosters inclusivity while also building a pipeline of potential new Alumni Council members.

### **How does the new structure affect the Leadership Team?**

In the transition from a board to a council, some changes will be made to the roles on the Leadership Team. The President and Vice President roles will become Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, respectively. During the transition period, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Presidents will share the role of Vice Chairperson. The role of Secretary will remain as part of the Leadership Team. Each of the Leadership Team roles has been defined with a detailed job description. In addition, the revised structure allows flexibility for members of the extended leadership team (i.e. committee chairs) to become members of the Leadership Team should the need arise.

The Alumni Council officers will be appointed by staff from the Office of University Advancement and subject to the approval of the University President. As a result, formal officer elections by the Alumni Council members are no longer necessary.

The chair of the Alumni Council will continue to serve as an ex-officio member of the St. Bonaventure University Board of Trustees during the time of their term as chair.

### **How does the new structure impact our committees?**

The new model moves the responsibilities of the nominating committee to the Leadership Team, which will work in conjunction with the Office of University Advancement. The final appointment of Alumni Council officers will be subject to the approval of the University President.

Franciscan values, integral to the mission of St. Bonaventure University, will guide all committee work and is a responsibility of the entire Alumni Council with guidance from the Alumni Chaplain.

The new model allows for ad-hoc committees to be formed at any time as special projects or needs arise as guided by the Office of University Advancement.

Additionally, each committee will work in conjunction with a staff liaison named by the Office of University Advancement.

### **How does this change impact the Alumni Council meeting structure and frequency?**

The new structure promotes enhanced flexibility by providing two on-campus meetings per year and one virtual meeting. While in-person attendance is strongly encouraged, all on-campus meetings will include a virtual option. The reduction to two on-campus meetings supports the need for more robust and frequent committee work outside of Alumni Council meetings.

### **How do the SBU Alumni Chapters function under the new model?**

Alumni Chapters will not experience any immediate change in operations or communications. Chapter Leaders will continue to serve as volunteers of the University with oversight from the Office of Alumni Engagement. The Alumni Chapter Committee will work in collaboration with the Office of Alumni Engagement to develop clear chapter guidelines and to provide support to Chapter Leaders as they develop and promote programming in their regions. To incorporate chapter representation, select Chapter Leaders will be invited to participate in committee work.

### **When do we expect to complete the transition?**

The transition to the St. Bonaventure University Alumni Council will be considered complete once we all come together at the Oct. 22 meeting. A press release from the University announcing the new Alumni Council will follow, along with a story in the next issue of the Bonaventure magazine in the first quarter of 2023.