

Minutes
Annual Board of Director's Meeting
October 4th, 2021
Via WebEx Call

Attendees:

Steve Deutsch	Brian Obach
Melinda Cirillo	Rachel Rigolino
Michele Halstead	Fred Destefano
Corinna Caracci	Emily Yulo
Jeff Gant	Logan Bross
Kevin Saunders	Kevin Dicey

Others Present: Joshua Gonzalez
Recording Secretary: Jacqueline Pascar
Call to order: 11:04 am

Introductions

Steve welcomed members to the first meeting of the year and explained that the annual meeting would be held directly followed by the October meeting as specified in the bylaws. The purpose of the annual meeting is to establish the corporation and elect officers/committees. **Steve** asked for all members to introduce themselves and their role on campus.

Officers

The officers for the corporation are all Ex Officio, or serve on the board by their position, except for the Parliamentarian which is an elected role. **Steve** introduced each Ex Officio officer: **Michele Halstead** (VP of Finance Administration) as the Chair, **Stephanie Blaisdell** (VP of Student Affairs) as the Vice Chair, and himself (Executive Director) as the Secretary/Treasurer. **Steve** explained that the Parliamentarian assisted the Board with Robert's Rules of Order if there is ever contention and asked if anyone was interested. **Brian volunteered.**

Committees

Budget Committee:

Steve asked for 3 board members to work with **Melinda** and him to create the budget that would be presented to the board in the spring. **Steve** noted that the time commitment would be 2 or 3 hours and the committee could decide whether to meet virtually or in-person. **Logan, Michele, Emily, and Corinna volunteered.**

Executive Committee:

The Executive Committee works with **Steve** and **Michele** to make any necessary decisions between scheduled board meetings. **Steve** noted, "There's a fairly lengthy gap between December and January...". This year the Executive Committee would also assist **Michele** with the Executive Director's Evaluation and presentation to the board. **Steve** asked for volunteers, at least one being a student. **Logan** asked how much time would be required. **Michele** responded that 1 or 2, 1-hour blocks would be setup around the committee's schedule. **Kevin and Logan volunteered.**

Jim Fredericks Scholarship:

Scholarships of \$500 are awarded to 10 CAS student workers each semester. **Steve** stated that the committee reviewed applications through an online system that was setup by Development, noting that the time commitment would be 2 hours at most. **Stephanie, Melinda and Rachel volunteered.**

Meal Plan Committee:

The Meal Plan Committee evaluated meal plan claims or requests to be removed from a campus meal plan that cannot be resolved operationally through Tim Dilger, **Melinda** and **Steve**. Though the committee had not met in a while, **Steve** stated “there could be the rare case where I couldn't find a resolution with a student.” **Emily, Jeff and Fred volunteered.**

Programming Funds:

This committee previously evaluated the process of programming fund allocations on an annual basis. **Steve** explained, “Over the last several years, we haven't been doing that much evaluation because I think the process has become pretty streamlined.” **Steve** asked for the board’s opinion about whether the process should be evaluated this year. **Brian** asked if there had been complaints or concerns about the process. **Steve** responded that there were some complaints about the funding. Due to financial challenges, there were no programming funds last year, and this year programming funds were allocated at 50% of normal levels.

Steve asked **Jaca** and **Melinda** if they had heard complaints about the process. **Jaca** said no. **Melinda** responded “No, but I do know from our conversation last week that we really need to come up with some procedures on spending for the programming funds.” **Michele** shared that she had been in contact with **Melinda** about the programming fund procedures, explaining that “I oversee one grant that the expenditures that were already done were not pre-approved, and I really didn't think that they met the spirit of the funding... I think that other VPs who oversee different kinds of block grants may have other thoughts about this, but I'd love to speak with everybody who does oversee these important funds to see if they're getting pre-approvals before expenditures go out.”

For those new to the board, **Steve** explained that an allocation of \$313,000 was typically given to various academic and student organizations on campus. The allocation for this year had been reduced by 50% due to financial limitations. **Steve** agreed that the committee should meet after hearing **Michele’s** concerns and asked for volunteers. **Michele, Melinda, Logan, Emily, and Brian volunteered.**

Logan mentioned that he had heard some complaints from smaller organizations who had received little to no funding. **Steve** reiterated that it could be the case since there were no programming funds in 2020-2021, and half of the typical funds were allocated this academic year. **Brian** noted that the programming funds followed a block grant system, explaining that “we give out the block grants and then Student Association has its own procedures or RHSA... so if it's a complaint about what a particular group is getting, it's probably not under our control since we just give out the block grant.” **Steve** stated that hopefully the corporation will return to full budgets next year.

Kevin S. asked if **Steve** could briefly review where the funding came from for the block grants. **Steve** explained, “CAS as an entity is a profit-making operation. We operate the food service and the bookstore and a number of other services. Most of our profits actually come from food service.” The profits made from operations are returned to the campus in various forms: programming funds, scholarships, and capital investments such as rebuilding dining areas or launching new dining concepts. **Steve** concluded, “So each year we provide over \$300,000 to student organizations like RHSA and a

number of the schools get these grants where they can spend money on things that they probably wouldn't get funding for from other sources. The nice thing about having CAS money to spend things on is there's a little fewer restriction on a lot of the spending than state money."

Kevin S. responded, "And the reduction obviously was because the amount of profit that the corporation made during the COVID period was significantly less than in regular years, so it was a necessity to cut the programming budgets. Correct?" **Steve** confirmed, noting that he would further explain in the October meeting how the corporation ended the year with a net profit due to the portfolio's performance. **Steve** commented, "Maybe we would've given out programming funds had we known that we were going to actually be profitable, but we had no clue." **Steve** asked if everyone understood programming funds. The board responded yes.

Service Evaluation:

Steve stated that the Services Evaluation committee may be very valuable this year with the lack of staffing in Dining Services. Currently at a 60% staffing shortage, students have become dissatisfied with what had been provided for the cost of meal plans. **Steve** emphasized that there was no easy solution and asked for the committee to consider the issue of "how to match student expectations of service versus service that we can actually deliver given the constraints that we're working against." **Steve** was unsure how much time would be required of the committee but hoped that the group would be able to meet often. **Melinda, Emily, Kevin, and Jeff volunteered.**

Review of Handbook & Conflict of Interest Policy

Steve stated that all board materials had been shared through One Drive (the bylaws, Board of Director's Handbook, contract with the College, etc.) and welcomed the board to reach out with any questions. **Steve** announced that everyone was required to sign and return the Conflict of Interest Policy that was sent via email. The policy disclosed of any relationships to the businesses that are currently in contract with the corporation.

Steve asked if it was okay to close the annual meeting and move on to the October meeting. The Board agreed.

Meeting adjourned: 11:26 am

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October Board of Director's Meeting
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Unanimous approval of agenda and May 10, 2021 minutes.

Ozzi Program

Steve welcomed **Kevin Dicey** to present on the new reusable container program in retail dining. **Kevin** began presenting the sustainability initiative by referencing 2 years ago when it was first thought to bring reusable packaging to campus to reduce overall waste. The program was introduced to campus in the fall 2020 semester as reusable containers were used for all to-go meals. **Kevin** explained, "When the pandemic hit, we chose to use that opportunity to make it a campus-wide initiative to use the reusable, green containers through Peregrine due to the restrictions that were laid forth by the county and the state for dining on college campuses." All students were provided a "starter set" of the reusable containers and utensils which were distributed with the help of Residence Life. **Kevin** added, "We've felt pretty strongly the program was going well, working with the focus group from the CAS board last year, and Lisa Mitten, that we decided to take the program into retail and figure out how we can utilize this program to cut back on waste and Styrofoam use in the retail environment."

It was decided to expand the Ozzi Program into retail dining through a pilot program at Element 93. As the program was operating in Peregrine, students were now provided with the same reusable containers at Element 93, which they do not need to clean or keep in their dorm rooms. **Kevin** noted that there had been an issue of students not returning the containers. He explained, "They felt as if it was just a high priced to-go container that they didn't have to return. It was a significant investment from CAS to buy these containers for the students. So, we had to figure out a solution to get the containers back to dining services so they could get washed and redistributed."

After working with Ozzi Systems, Lisa Mitten, and sustainability ambassadors, they decided to bring a reusable system on campus through Ozzi's vending machine program. **Kevin** mentioned that the vending machine, temporarily placed on the second floor of Wooster Hall, would be moved down to Element 93's vestibule during winter break for easier accessibility. Another addition to the program that had been implemented at the start of Fall 2021 were coins that are accepted in exchange for the reusable containers. The coins were distributed to all students at the beginning of the semester, instead of the containers, along with keychains for safe keeping.

Kevin highlighted how this sustainable initiative had resulted in a lot of national press for SUNY New Paltz's Dining Program. He explained, "We took the initiative to go green during the pandemic when most other universities were really struggling on how to provide food service." **Kevin** concluded his presentation by sharing a few Tik Tok videos, created by the campus's dining interns, which demonstrated how to use the Ozzi vending machine and exchange the coins for new containers at Peregrine and Element 93. **Kevin** highlighted that the Ozzi machine could notify staff when it is almost full, noting that since containers must be inserted into the machine closed, the machine is able to remain clean. **Kevin** asked if there were any questions. **Steve** asked how the program was going. **Kevin** replied that there was a learning curve, but the program was going well. Although communications were pushed out through social media, **Kevin** explained, "I think the freshmen did better than the upperclassmen because we had orientation groups this summer in small groups of about 100, so we were able to talk to them about it more." **Kevin** thought there was still room for improvement, suggesting that more machines could be placed around campus in different dining areas. He stated, "Those machines aren't cheap, but they are very functional and very useful."

Brian asked if the container return rate was 95% as mentioned in the presentation. **Kevin** responded that the return rate was about 90% last year when the reusable containers were only used at Peregrine. Though it was too early this semester to review analytics, **Kevin** stated "I bet it's way higher than that now, because they have a coin, and they don't have to keep the green containers in their room or lug them around campus. All they have to do is bring [the container] back and get the coin for the next time they want to use it." **Brian** congratulated **Kevin** and the whole team for setting up the program after it had been a topic of discussion for years. **Kevin** thanked **Brian** and shared that CAS made the initial investment to give all students their first coin which equates to a reusable container. If a student were to lose their coin, they would have to pay \$5 to get a new coin. Students could pay the additional fee with dining dollars, hawk dollars, cash, or card. **Steve** added that when ordering from Element 93, if you don't select that you have a green container or a coin there would be a \$1 charge for the paper materials. **Steve** commented, "that's significant enough to be an incentive to make sure that you have your coin and that you're using the reusable container system. I think that alone is the strongest thing that we do. Nobody wants to be charged an extra \$1 on top of what they're paying for their sandwich."

Brian commented, "the great thing about it is that, as you suggest, they're learning and the system you created makes disposal the weird, abnormal thing and reuse the normal, routine thing and that's just such an important lesson for them to take away even beyond the campus." **Brian** continued to ask if there were any thoughts about using other materials such as non-disposable utensils. **Kevin** responded that compostable utensils were being used as much as possible, but current supply chain issues had interrupted a full commitment. **Kevin** stated, "The groundwork is set to broaden this program even further in the future. When the supply chain issues go away, which hopefully they will soon, I can't see why we couldn't go to compostable." **Kevin** added that it may be more difficult to introduce the program within the Starbucks, but all the internal dining brands would be able to implement the sustainability initiatives.

Brian recommended that Lisa Mitten was kept in the conversations and that they reach out to the composting company that serves the campus. **Brian** explained, "a lot of times the compostable stuff doesn't actually work with their systems or isn't truly compostable and I wouldn't want to see us wasting money on something that doesn't work." **Steve** noted that most of the compostable materials did wind up in the landfill and commented, "I don't know if I see that changing, but what I do see as being a great thing is that we really can influence behavior by the system that we've created. If we can incentivize people to use their own utensils and bring their containers to the SUB, and there's a cost savings, there

will be a cost savings for dining services as well, because whatever type of to-go packaging you use is expensive.” **Steve** commended **Kevin** for his work in implementing the program on campus during such challenging times. **Steve** asked if there were any additional questions or comments. There were none. **Steve** reminded the board that the Ozzi machine would be moved down to the concourse level in the winter and noted that a summer plan would be to expand the program into the SUB.

Labor Shortage

In reference to a student’s email, **Steve** shared “essentially what the email talks about is frustration and poor management of the GrubHub app, about people waiting in lines, that it's clear that there's not enough staffing and they're frustrated because they're paying a decent amount of money to eat on campus and they're having to wait for their food, and they feel that they should be better served.” **Steve** emphasized how the current staffing shortage had resulted in these unresolved issues and asked for the board’s suggestions for how CAS could address the problems and help manage student expectations “...or explain better so that people don't feel like they're just being shoved off.”

Kevin S. noted that there were some frustrations about GrubHub time estimates being inaccurate and suggested working out the timing to set realistic expectations. **Emily** added that Starbucks tracked orders in real-time, showing when they are being prepared and completed, while all other GrubHub locations displayed an estimated time. She suggested “adopting that into the other places on campus so there's a more accurate time so at least people know when their food will be ready accurately.” **Logan** agreed and noted “I think students are more understanding of the long waits as long as they get accurate time.” **Joshua** also agreed that Starbucks had the most accurate system in GrubHub. **Steve** asked if **Kevin** had any response to the comments.

Kevin said that he would follow up on the GrubHub issues discussed and explained that “we've been struggling with the lag time that we have in the system between one order to the next order... There's a built-in lag time between orders to try to pace it out to service.” **Kevin** mentioned another issue of students expecting to pick up their food right after placing orders on GrubHub. On a positive note, the new dining concept, World of Wings, would have its grand opening on Monday, October 4th for dinner. **Kevin** stated that this opening would take pressure away from the other dining locations in the SUB and added, “Our hope was by delaying this opening, more staffing would get better, and the supply chain issue would get better.” Dining services had continued to advertise job positions, but they had not seen an influx in applicants.

Brian asked if people were able to specify a pickup time within the GrubHub app. **Kevin** responded that GrubHub did not offer that feature, but alternative technologies were being considered. **Kevin** explained “The system that we liked on paper was just too new and we wanted to let them go through their trials and tribulations on another campus before we brought it to ours. So, I think that Steve, Melinda and Tim are going to take a hard look at that other system come the spring.”

Steve suggested for the Service Evaluation Committee to meet with **Kevin** before his last day on Friday “to go over what Kevin's going to find out about the GrubHub ordering system after his feedback, and then talk about a strategy of advertising to the student body how we can make the experience better for them; methods that they could use to optimize what we're currently working with so there's less frustration.” **Steve** asked if there were any other comments about food service or the labor shortage. **Kevin S.** emphasized finding an ordering system that would allow people to schedule a pickup time and suggested conducting a campus survey to determine where people like to eat at different times. **Kevin S.** added “I know that I've heard a little bit of feedback today that the World of Wings menu is pretty

extensive, and it might be a decent eatery to have open at a lunch time because of the amount of variety that that location would be able to put out there.” **Steve** responded that it could be considered and further discussed with the service committee. **Steve** stated “I agree with you. The menu is very expansive. We’ll satisfy a lot of different folks, but to expand those hours, it’s going to cost us somewhere else.”

Rachel asked if food service employees were part of CSEA. **Steve** confirmed. **Rachel** asked, “Do they have an EAP program or any kind of employee assistance program?” **Kevin** said yes, explaining that “They’re all Sodexo employees but they’re union employees, and we have a really good relationship with the CSEU... They understand the situation we’re in.” Dining Services had hoped the labor shortage would end in September, but they had yet to see an influx of new people coming in the door. **Kevin** also noted that they had been working with the union to offer a monetary incentive for current employees who refer their friends and family to apply for open positions in dining services. **Steve** asked if there were any additional thoughts. The board said no. **Steve** stated that **Jaca** would be reaching out to schedule a Service Evaluation Committee meeting this week.

Good and Welfare

Steve reviewed a few notes from his Executive Director’s report, one being that the corporation was profitable last year. **Steve** explained, “We went from thinking we were going to lose \$1 million, we revised that down to \$600,000 and because of great returns from our investment portfolio, paring down of operations and rent forgiveness from the college we were able to stay in the black. He noted Melinda’s shrewd management of all company expenses.

Steve also announced that there was a pilot program to launch with Follett Access which would allow for major cost savings in course materials if the college committed to only purchasing from Follett. **Steve** shared that Follett would attend an upcoming board meeting to explain the program and commented that “if we can get our students the books at half the costs that they are currently paying for them, it may be worth looking into.” **Rachel** asked if the program would cause students to pay a blanket cost for their course materials. **Steve** responded no, explaining that all students would be automatically signed up for the program through their registration. Students may be allowed to opt out. **Steve** noted, “by allowing Follett that kind of access into the buying population, they’re able to provide tremendous discounts on materials. So, we should look at it because anything that we can do to bring down prices is a good thing.” **Steve** asked if there were any additional questions. There were none.

Steve announced that **Kevin** would be leaving on Friday for his new job at Georgia State. **Steve** welcomed the board to attend **Kevin’s** going away party on October 4th at 3:00pm in Peregrine Dining Hall which would be followed by the grand opening for World of Wings from 3:30pm 4:00pm in the Student Union Building. **Steve** shared “Kevin, since you’ve been here, you’ve practically worked every single day. You’ve really given your all to this campus and I’d like to recognize that and thank you for everything that you’ve done.” **Kevin** thanked **Steve**.

Steve asked to end the first meeting of the year if there were no objections. The board agreed. **Steve** thanked everyone for joining.

Meeting adjourned: 12:06 pm