**Ross University Veterinary Alumni Association Action Committee**

**Meeting Minutes**

**September 12, 2022 8 pm**

**Teleconference**

**A quorum being present, the AAC Meeting was called to order at 8:00 pm.**

**Members Present: Mark Salemi, Nejla Azima, Nisha Sanathara, JP Carew, Mickey Axelband, Dianne Rey, Alexandra Quarti, Kimberly Riker, Brian Husbands**

**Members absent: Mary Mauldin**

**Guests preset: Colleen Glenney,**

1. **Approval of minutes:**

* Diane and JP

2. **President’s report**:

 -Welcome back, hope all had a great summer and we are getting close to seeing each other at the WIVC!

 -Mary had a healthy baby, Colleen sent her a gift basket from the AAC. She hasn’t done a formal announcement yet though.

3. **Committee Reports:**

***Events and Chapters Committee:*** Mickey, Dianne, JP Mickey is chair.

 Update on Funky Buda Brewery (adult) and Everglades excursion (family) events.

 Vendors/Companies to help support?

* Waiting on sponsors for both events.
* Funky Buda planned for second week of October.
* Everglades planned for early December.
* Alumni reception at WIVC planned for Monday night, 214 RSVP so far. Money to go towards rewards/scholarships.

***Leadership Committee:*** Mark, Alex, Kim Alex is chair.

 Colleen to report on data from corporate mentorship survey.

 Ross mentor program went live, how was response?

***Engagement and Awards Committee:*** Nejla, Brian, Nisha Nisha is chair

 Award scholarship Winners to be picked by 10/1 and will be invited to attend WIVC:

As per Colleen, Alumni award nominations had a poor response, deadline was 8/26. There were about 10 that started the application and never completed, so they were deleted. One alum had her family recommend her and the association had removed the need for alumni only to nominate in order to get more nominations, but the nominee still needed to be a veterinary professional. (see attached list)

* Alumni council to review and get to Nejla within next week 3 top choices.
* Awards winners to go to WIVC.

 Empower virtual 5k run update. 24th and 25th of September

* Donations to go to Alumni scholarships/Empower
* Nisha is looking for pics from events.

 Weekly/monthly posts for social media (web site and FB posts)

4. **New Business:**

 -WIVC update, attendees, sponsors and speakers.

 As of 8/29/22 WIVC full, but we were able to accommodate those who reached out who had already booked travel. Current numbers are 372 for CE, 558 for total conference (that includes 72 sponsor reps – some of whom are getting CE). 35 sponsors. Enrolment closed down 8/29/22 at noon.

* WIVC originally planned to accommodate 500. 73 people waitlisted.
* All events/CE full except for Ortho lab.

 -E-mail survey went out through the alumni Newsletter to get some information on involvement with WIVC for future conferences. Results?

* WIVC moving to every other year starting 2024.
* New app for conference.

 -Mentor program (RUSVM Connect) invites went out to ambassadors, council (mentors)and clinical students (mentees) 8/29/22. There will be approximately 2 weeks to complete the form and then matches will begin shortly after Labor Day.

* Shinespire platform to be used for program.
* More mentor volunteers than mentees.
* Mentor/Mentee matches to occur by weeks end.
* Program will begin as 6 months in length then reevaluate and adjust as necessary.

 -Ross sponsoring a table at the Lanse Fox Foundation fundraiser in September in Cotulla, TX. Proceeds go to Empower Fund scholarship and a few other causes. Will be inviting local alumni to join us.

* September 17th. Susan Rasmus to attend

 -Borrowers defense action for Federal loan reimbursement. Colleen, do you have any info?

 NYS VMA sent the following in an e-mail, I also forwarded it to everyone:

*Attention Ross Graduates:*

*Applying for Borrower Defense*

*Blog: 3-26-2020*

*Michael Sabatino, Sabadoodle*

*NYSVMS partner for our Financial Wellbeing program*

*In June, attorneys representing the Department of Education and a class of student loan borrowers announced they had reached a settlement agreement in the lawsuit, Sweet v Cardona. The settlement agreement still needs to be approved by the court.*

*Upon approval, the agreement would make borrowers who attended over 150 covered institutions (including Ross University Veterinary School) eligible to receive a discharge of some or all of their federal student loans if they submitted a Borrower Defense application prior to June 22, 2022.*

*Under the proposed agreement, applications submitted after June 22, 2022, but before the date of the final settlement approval, would require the Department of Education to render a decision on the application within 36 months, or the borrower’s loans would be discharged.*

*If you graduated from Ross, and haven’t already applied for borrower defense, we suggest that you review the Department of Education Borrower Defense to Repayment Application.*

*The most common types of conduct that might make a borrower eligible for loan relief through borrower defense to repayment discharge are misrepresentations of the truth made by the school or its representatives during their efforts to recruit you to enroll at the school or to continue your enrollment at the school.*

*Make it a priority to complete the application if you believe you are eligible for borrower defense to repayment relief.*

*A risk we’ve been hearing from some student loan advocates is the possibility that Ross, and other covered institutions, might withhold a borrower’s transcript if the borrower defense claim is granted. The likelihood of transcript withholding is unclear. As a precautionary measure, we recommend Ross graduates that complete the borrower defense application also request a hard-copy, mailed transcript.*

**RUSVM Fall Admissions/Alumni Ambassador Events coming up:**

Saturday Sept 24 Chicago, IL 2 pm Location TBD 1 signed up

Saturday Oct 1 New York, NY 11 am Location TBD 2 signed up

Saturday Oct 1 Calgary, AB 2 pm Location TBD 1 signed up

Saturday Oct 8 Miami/Ft Lauderdale, FL 11 am Location TBD 2 signed up

Saturday Oct 15 San Antonio, TX 2 pm Location TBD 0 signed up

Saturday Oct 22 San Francisco, CA 11 am Location TBD 2 signed up

Saturday Oct 22 Toronto, ON 2 pm Location TBD 0 signed up

Saturday Nov 5 San Juan, PR 11 am Location TBD 0 signed up

* Alex to check with fellow alumni to attend in PR.

For each of these events, 2-3 Alumni Ambassadors are needed.

An email went out to the entire Alumni Association.

* Alumni Reception Fundraiser at WIVC: Empower QR code Fund Raiser, yeti cooler, entry to next WIVC and restaurant gift certificate are all ideas for a raffle prize. Susan Rasmus to be consulted with.

5. **Old business:**

 - Distinguished Alumni Award to be presented to Moses in one way or another.

* Will get award made and personally given to Moses by Dianne and another AAC member

 -Colleen had meeting agendas and minutes added to the web site.

 -AVMA Convention in Philadelphia July 29-August 2, how did it go and who attended?

* Alex hosted Alumni reception with Dr. Ed Ortiz. Very good turn out with attendance. Suggest we add to venue for future events.
* Need better room decorations

 -Ross Facebook admin to have continued contact by the AAC, once Mary is back from maternity leave to be reinstated and no longer be banned.

 Admin group: Harvey Atherton, Christine Bunner-thomas, Scott Gaydos,

 Lori Arrison-mathews and Gary Rider

 Mark Salemi was asked to write an intro to the 40th Anniversary Book and submitted the following:

*“I hope to make people realize how totally helpless animals are, how dependent on us, trusting as a child that we will be kind and take care of their needs.” -James Herriot*

*A quote an English veterinarian once said that is the reason and what all veterinarians strive to achieve in becoming a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine as stated in our Veterinary Oath.*

*Forty years ago, a school of a different pedigree and humble beginnings appeared on the horizon of the small Caribbean Island nation of Dominica in search of people that had a dream of helping animals. Ross University was born and soon after moved to the Island nation of St. Kitts and Nevis where it thrives today.*

*Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine was born with its small class sizes, pioneer veterinary students and professors willing to take that leap of faith along with this new school as it struggled through its growing pains. Regardless of public opinion in the beginning, not knowing of the school and where it was located, Ross eventually grew to what it is today, a school that is well entrenched on the Veterinary map as a highly recognized successful institution.*

*So here we are today fellow Rossies, a celebration of 40 years of excellence with a school that continues moving into the future, one that alumni are proud of as an institution that everyone will look at and say “Wow”!*

6. For Next Meeting:

 Next Alumni meeting

* Setting a call to discuss alumni raffle at WIVC.
* Donations QR code and/or cash?
* Next meeting 10/10/22

7. Adjournment: 9:15 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Alexandra Quarti

Secretary