

Rust College International Alumni Association (RCIAA)  
2019 Fall Meeting  
November 8, 2019

- Meeting called to order at 3:06 p.m. by Larry Anderson, RCIAA President.
- Percy Bruce, RCIAA Chaplain, offered the opening prayer.
- Gail James, RCIAA Recording Secretary, called the roll. Clubs present:
  - Atlanta
  - Chicago
  - Dallas/Fort Worth
  - Desoto Metro
  - Kentucky
  - Coldwater
  - Holly Springs-Marshall-Benton County
  - Memphis
  - Milwaukee
  - Springfield, IL
  - Oxford/Lafayette County
  - Panola County
  - Tupelo
  - Jackson-Hinds
  - Starkville
  - Tate County
  - Cyber Rust Club
  - North Carolina (newest RCIAA Club)
- Larry asked that everyone be respectful when asking questions and not to record the meeting.
- JoAnn Scott, Director for the Office of Alumni Development spoke on the role of her department as it relates to the RCIAA.
  - When it is time for an election the Office of Alumni Development send ballots to all Life Members and alumni that were active prior to the year of the current election. Ballots have to be mailed out 90 days prior to the election. Voting individuals must sign and return the ballot to the Office of Alumni Development. The ballots are opened and counted by the Election Committee appointed by the RCIAA president.
  - The election is typically held in February of an odd year.
  - During a recent conference call with the local club presidents a decision was made to allow the current administration to serve out the remainder 2019-2020 year since voting was missed this year.
  - If the alumni choose to move the election to an even year the Office of Development will need to send out ballots reflecting such a vote.
- Leroy Frazier clarified per Article 9.A.1, executive committee has power to make recommendations to the body but they cannot make the final decision.
  - JoAnn clarified that is what meant, that the presidents were recommending not decided that the current office serve out through 06/30/20.
- Leslie McLemore asked Pres. Anderson why no election was held this year.
  - Pres. Anderson replied it was an oversight on his part.

- Lauren Horton asked if there was a way we can move to have a temporary board. Is there a way to elect a new president or does this change our Constitution? Will there be an election?  
What's going to happen next?
  - Larry asked the Body what they will like to do.
  - Leroy Frazier pointed out that per the Constitution the office terms have already expired, therefore there is a need for the alumni Body to consider holding an election outside of the odd year.
  - Larry asked if he was proposing or just making a comment.
  - Frazier motioned for the RCIAA, per Article VII, election be held in 2020 rather than waiting for 2021.
  - McLemore further suggested that an election committee be appointed now and also allow more time to alumni to pay their dues to be included in the vote.
  - Motioned carried.

Awaiting the arrival of Dr. Beckley and Chairman Swinton the meeting paused for break for approx. 15-20 minutes.

- Meeting resumed by Larry Anderson, RCIAA President,
- McLemore: Amendment to Dr. Frazier immediately appoint nominating committee and hold an election in the Spring/April.
  - Larry: Is this interim election:
  - McLemore: These elected officers will serve until the next election in 2021.
  - Larry: Called for the vote, motion passed.
  - Lauren: I moved for a roll call of all active/financial members be taken.
  - Barbara Redditt: The question is out of protocol per Robert Rules of Order because vote has already been taken.
- Larry: Executive Committee meet during the break and created a nominating committee. The following alumni were asked to serve:
  - Fannie Lampley, Victor Ingram, Barbara Tillman, Lisa Ester Burton, Lynnez English all accepted. William Scott was also nominated but was not present to accept.
  - Larry: Called for a motion to accept the appointed nominating committee. The recommendation was moved, second and accepted.
- Frazier: Emphasized the importance of the nominating committee having a slate of officers ready by February 2020.
- McLemore asked if alumni will be given additional time to pay dues so they can vote.
  - JoAnn Scott stated that Life Members and those who have between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2019 paid dues are eligible to vote. Anyone with questions about whether they paid can check with RCIAA recording secretary.
  - McLemore stated that this is a special election, there maybe a few people that have not paid their dues. He further moved that we need to give those who have not paid and would like to vote, we should give them the opportunity to pay their dues by January 1, 2020. It was second and motion carried.
- Larry: Opened the floor for concerns
  - Armstead: Is the Alumni office prepared to take dues now?
  - Larry: The Alumni office is prepared.

- Larry acknowledged the establishment of the North Carolina Alumni Club with Chris Walker as President.
- Someone asked if Chapter reports be read. Larry stated that the Club presidents previously decided that they would not be read and reports should be emailed to the Recording Secretary.
- Larry asked if we should adjourn since Dr. Beckley neither Chair. Swinton had yet arrived.
  - Frazier stated that we should not adjourn but let the President and Trustee president know we are waiting. Further, the Constitution needs to be review and amended to reflect changes that have occurred since the latest version. RCIAA needs to go to higher level of conducting business; ex. we need to develop our own budget.
- Larry: The RCIAA officer positions that are open are president, vice-president, chaplain and parliamentarian.
- McLemore: We have 21 clubs but 21 representatives were not present so we need to set-up a task force to development chapters. Delighted to see so many young alumni present.
- Larry: My aim was to get 3-6 chapters started. He has been talking with Keith Glass and Joel Harrell on ways to get more alumni involved. Larry has asked people to get involved but it's been difficult. McLemore was asked if he was willing to chair, he agreed, but later conceded to co-chair because Keith Glass is already work. Club Underdevelopment is the name of the club. It is appointed by the President so no vote is needed. Larry asked for volunteers. The following volunteered.
  - Keithney Glass
  - Equana Cooper
  - Clarence Smith
  - Tommiea Jackson
  - MeShonya Coleman
  - Regina Hood
  - Yolanda Sheggog
  - Candice Curry Robinson
  - Barry Williams
  - Leslie McLemore
- MeShonya Coleman: Chapter Development Task Force should be in the name because it is a task force.
- Marlon Williams: Can you elaborate on what the task force will do?
  - Larry: Since we just came up with the task force everything has not been flushed out yet but their primary function is to strengthen Rust College Alumni Clubs.
  - MeShonya stated in order to be part of this Task Force you need to be already part of a club and financially active.
  - Someone else stated hopefully the Task Force will strengthen and developing new Clubs.
- McLemore stated we should use the Alcorn State University model and create a club in a State/area where there are at least 2 Rust Alumni, rather than 6. Let's try to identify Rustites wherever they are across the Country. If we can ever upgrade the technology we can pull in more. We are waiting for the report from Dr. Beckley and Mr. Swinton.
- A lengthy exchange initiated by Marlon Williams about alumni giving.
  - Dr. Chapman commented that if Rust is a non-profit we made have to abide by certain rules as it pertains with alumni donations.
  - Larry: One of our goals was to get 150 alumni to give \$1000 per year for the next 10 years. We are at 50.

- Upon the arrival of the Chair of the Board of Trustees and Pres. Beckley Larry gave the floor to Chairman Swinton.
- Chair. Swinton thanked the Body for waiting then proceeded with highlights from the Board's meetings;
  - Many alumni have questioned why there is not more communication coming from the Board. The reason it appears communication is limited is because they only meet twice per year however this year it was 3 times because of the retreat. Trustees can really only speak about issues when the Board has met and made decisions.
  - The Board decided not to increase student fees, housing or tuition over the next year.
  - The presidential search for the next president has started. The search firm is out of Washington, D.C., and is headed by 2 former university presidents. Two alumni will be included on the search team.
  - Ten alumni are including on the Board, one alumni, Larry Anderson as RCIAA president has full voting rights.
- Leslie McLemore asked a general question to the Body, "how many have seen the Chair of Trustees previously?" Some members of the Body acknowledged with the raising of hands. McLemore further stated this was historical for a Chair of Trustees to be present at an alumni meeting. McLemore asked Swinton what is going to be the size of the search committee and why just 2 alumni to serve on the search team.
  - Swinton responded: The Board has not made a final decision on the size but it may have something to do with the number of trustees who are available but most likely it will be somewhere between 14-16 don't want to go over 20 and certainly not under 10. They will be sure that all are represented; students, faculty, staff and alumni. At least half will be trustees.
  - McLemore suggested that an advisory committee be created to help increase the pool for participants, particularly alumni, in the search. Only having 2 alumni on the search team does not seem to be adequate representation.
- Leroy Frazier: Encouraged the Board, College Administration and alumni to find ways to communicate better among themselves. Frazier elaborated on one of the accrediting requirements, "Integrity" and stated that the letters written since July 1, 2019, by Chair. Swinton, Pres. Beckley, Dr. McLemore, and others are now part of the pool that could be evaluated upon accreditation. Frazier further stated, "there are entities that are not part of the Board of Trustees, who have the power, if they are not being heard, can find other avenues to communicate with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. Regardless of our position at Rust; student, alumni staff, board or faculty we should be mindful and timely of how we communicate with one another. Even though we have a good financial state we don't want the proliferation of a large number of documents to become a matter of integrity."
- Chair Swinton followed up stating that it is important to have communication structures in place. The president of the university has the primary responsibility for implementing/executing vision and goals. The Board of Trustees has responsibility of setting the goals, overall structure and securing the resources to meet those goals.
- Marlon Williams asked what level of communication the Board has with alumni association or individual alumni in general.
  - Swinton responded that the chairman can speak on behalf of the board. Other members of the board must be careful how and what they speak to. It is always appropriate for a board member to listen but they may not respond to any and all inquiries. Going forward the

Board is going to release notes after every meeting available to alumni. They also plan to have a website built to share news about the presidential search.

- Tommiea Jackson asked if any board members retiring this year or others being added to the board this year and how do alumni suggest or recommend someone to the board.
  - Swinton responded that 1 is coming back on and 3 are rotated off. The Committee on Trustees receives nominations most often from current board members. The Board may consider added the explanation of the process to the newly created website.
- Meshoyna Coleman asked the qualifications to become a Board member. qualifications:
  - Swinton responded have a strong commitment to the mission of Rust College and be a strong leader in their field.
- Sonya Hayes asked if the Board ever open their meetings to current students to hear what the current issues are.
  - Swinton responded there is opportunity for students to share concerns. The SGA president attends first meeting and other student class officers are involved with Board committees. Students are often quiet and it is up to the trustees to draw out.
- Dr. Beckley took to the podium, welcomed alumni home and thanked those that participated in the annual Alumni Mentorship Day on the day before.
  - He proceeded with adding to the previous question that Rust has a Student Leaders Forum called 4H Students. These students are invited to have dinner with the trustees and engage in open table talk. There are six standing committees and students are represented on each committed except the Committee on Trustees.
  - Members of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary class need to come to the green room and pick up your robe for the ceremony.
  - 25 year class will be recognized at the banquet tonight.
  - Enrollment for 2<sup>nd</sup> semester closed with 757 students, since then there have been 16 withdrawals and/or suspensions and so we're down from 802 this time last year. Tougaloo, LeMoyne Owen among other school enrollments are down as well.
  - We balanced budget for this year and the Board voted to make adjustments without increasing costs and cuts to students, faculty and programs.
  - 56% of the faculty hold terminal degrees in their respective areas; all areas meet the criteria established by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission and our Accreditation in State of Mississippi is on point.
  - Bus Status: In regards to concerns about the bus not being safe. The bus is over 20 years but we have had only 1 breakdown in 23 years and the repair cost less than <\$800. The bus just passed a DOT inspection 2 weeks ago. A new bus fund is up and going and we hope to replace it before the school year ends. Rust is looking at MCI buses; a new bus with all the bells and whistles cost \$672k; 4-5 year old bus 330k-365k. Alumni have donated approx. \$34k toward the bus fund. We have submitted paperwork for financing to MCI; \$5100/mo. for 72 months for 5yr old bus, \$5300/mo. for a 4 year old bus. We will continue to use the bus we have until a new one is purchased.
  - Residence halls are safe, clean and serviceable. Thanks to the Jackson-Hinds Club for the assistance with updating dorm rooms. Exterior work currently being down on Wiff Hall. Next Gross Hall and the Science building. Renovations are coming out of the reserve funds. Wiff Hall scheduled to be completed in December. In Spring Gross Hall.
  - Technology: \$1million/year is spent on technology, we've finished phase 1 which was to upgrade the Wi-Fi in the residence hall, academic and library buildings. Next phase is to go to Administration side hope to have finished in the next week to 10 days.

- Textbooks: We have over 3,000 textbooks and only 49 of those are over 15 years and those are used as references.
- Gift shop-It was a part of the warehouse but is now redesigned to be in the front. Online shopping is now or will be available soon.
- Modular schedule: Was started in 1967. In 1993 the question was asked among faculty and staff should we continue response was yes. The question was recently raised again. Dr. Lampley's component is currently reviewing.
- Endowment Fund Manager is now at \$48,398,000 up from \$13,879 in 1993.
  - Alumni need to know that we can only spend the earnings as directed by the Board. Currently the draw down rate is 4% on the annual return to be used for current operations.
- Alumni has gone up a few thousand dollars over the past few months.
- In the process of renovating some of the MI property to use as dormitories.
- Leroy Frazier clarified the modular system started in 1974, the change in textbook use occurred in 1967.
- Meshoyna Coleman asked Dr. Beckley to explain why the money being raised for the MI property can't be used to repair buildings on Rust campus.
  - The MI renovations are paid from historical preservation fund. We do have a plan to improve Rust campus.
  - McLemore asked the Body how many have heard of RustCollege Connect. Then asked Dr. Beckley to have all the board members present stand. McLemore then said he was told the bus broke down going to Tupelo. Dr. Beckley asked Mr. Hyman to explain. Mr. Hyman said the bus did not breakdown going to Tupelo. He said the only thing that happened was a contract driver did not operate the bus accurately causing the bus to not operate correctly. The Band Director (didn't catch his name) also spoke stating the bus was used to transport non-Rust students to Memphis. The pictures were taken that put out a false narrative about the conditions of the bus.
    - Dr. Williams spoke about a trip to Nashville where a new driver did not understand how to use the bus and the accompanying instructor did not feel comfortable coming back on the bus. Dr. Williams rented vans to get the students back. Mr. Hyman further explained another contract driver cut the bus off and left all the lights off and the bus would not start. Mr. Hyman went the next day to Nashville and had the bus jump started.
    - McLemore more stated with more than 1 stoppage, a bus without a toilet, Wi-Fi and just the optics of the bus we need to replace it. He further stated to Dr. Beckley, that as the chief fundraiser, we need a new bus. McLemore said if Rust finances the bus he will complete his pledge and will encourage other to do the same. We should not be debating this issue in 2020 using a 23 year old bus.
    - McLemore stated that the Board of Trustees should at least raise the % of the money from the endowment earnings to pay faculty & staff. Faculty and staff are grossly underpaid and they have to get 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> jobs to live decently. We don't want to violate the endowment but we need to do so. We don't want to violate the endowment but need to do something to raise salaries.
    - McLemore stated the module system was designed by Dr. McMillan for financial reasons more than academic. If you read at letters from 2 faculty we should change from the module system back to semesters. We need to spend some spend to compete with our peers we will farther and farther behind. Looking at the board of contributions

by the board of trustees, we need a 21<sup>st</sup> century board of trustees. We need to take some of the preachers off and add some businessmen.

- Dr. Beckley responded that we are not making excuses as far as the bus we plan to have it upgraded in time for the choir's annual spring tour; as far as trustees I don't elect or appoint trustees. The module system is an academic issue and it is currently being reviewed.
- Marlon Williams – questioned it is he is understanding that Dr. Beckley can take 1/3 of the endowment to go the operation of the school. HBCU presidents with Pres. Trump what was discussed and Dr. Beckley's purpose for attending given this
  - Dr. Beckley began with a response that the Endowment fund is not designed for day-to-day operations. Chairman Swinton intervened and finished addressing the question stating the reason we've been operating with the 4% is to be reasonably sure it will retain generational equity. The Board did just vote to go to 5% for 1 year.
  - Dr. Beckley resumed with answering the question about his visit to the White House. He went to discuss HBCU matters. When President Trump heard they were there he summoned for them to finish the meeting in the white House. The presidents were not aware they would be asked to come to the White House.
- Lauren Horton asked if Rust has thought about offering online courses and added that enrollment can be increased while paying lower faculty salary.
  - Beckley responded that Rust experimented with online courses this summer.
  - Lauren then asked how online courses are being marketed. (Secretary was unable to capture Dr. Beckley's response)
- An individual spoke about how she really wanted to finish at Rust has not been able to because of life situations but really wants to finish at Rust and if the online course were offered she'd be able to do so.
- Barry Williams, has worked for a lot of U.S. presidents. The president of our school should visit with any president that wants to give our school money. President Trump has stated he is going to give \$538,000,000 and we have to do what we can to be in the position to receive some of that money.
- Mr. Hyman stated that he is a certified mechanic and he is committed to ensure the bus is safe to protect our children/students.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:02pm with the singing of the School Song led by Gail James.