

**Program on the Environmental Alumni
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes – Session 6**

July 20, 2006
6:30 – 8:30 P.M.
Mary Gates 258

Present: Fatima Oswald, Linda Lyshall, Allison Leighton, Josh Reese, Kirsten Anderson, Michelle Hall, Trina Sterry, Victor Yagi, Aly Vander Steop, Kyle Funakoshi

Absent: Arece Hampton, Emily Morris, Jackie White

1) Introductions—

Kyle Funakoshi is the Senior Manager of Volunteer Programs at the UW Alumni Association. He is interested in creating a partnership with the PoE Alumni Board because of our environmental, social justice, and community focus. The Alumni Association can provide support with marketing events (i.e. E-Blasts), newsletter design, registration (if an event has fees), and fiscal agency services. In return, the Alumni Association is looking to expand membership, find more partners, and connect to other groups.

The UW Alumni Association has four signature events that we can possibly partner with: Homecoming, Career Discovery Week, Washington Weekend, and Husky Summer Celebration.

Michelle introduced Victor Yagi, the new Graduate Program Coordinator, and suggested we might want to talk about involving graduate alumni on the board.

2) PoE Update – Michelle

Executive Steering Committee has been meeting and would like to involve alumni again in the future.

The 3rd Annual PoE Graduation Celebration had an alumni presence for the first time (Josh and Arece attended the event). It was held in the Mary Gates Commons and had a national speaker from WWF.

Michelle confirmed her leave from the middle of August until March 1st. Trina will be the board's PoE staff contact, and Kristin, the Program Assistant, will provide support as well.

Pictures from the summer event will be posted on the website soon.

3) Events Committee – Kirsten

The events committee decided that the summer picnic was a ton of fun, but the turnout was not as high as expected. In general, people liked the mix of educational and social time. There were more people at the event this year than last year, and we still have a very new board.

Lessons learned and / or suggestions for events in the future:

- 1) We should have a visual aid that identifies us as the UW PoE Alumni.
- 2) We should plan ahead more and get the word out sooner (probably the most important factor).
- 3) It would be helpful to talk up the event more to our alumni and current student contacts.
- 4) Make the seating arrangement more conversational; provide folding chairs and more blankets in a circular arrangement.
- 5) Consider the location carefully. We may want to plan events closer to UW.
- 6) We should work on connections with UW students before they graduate so they will feel more comfortable coming to events.
- 7) Summer events can be difficult because people are on vacation. An evening in the spring might yield a higher turnout.
- 8) In the future, it would be great to add current students to the board and have more social events throughout the year. We can create stronger relationships with the new graduates while they still are in close contact with PoE and their classmates.
- 9) We now have an updated tracking database, so it should be easier to get information out to alumni.

4) Mentoring Committee – Fatima and Linda

Fatima and Linda have been researching other mentoring programs and connecting to the UW Mentor Power for Success program. The contact at the UW mentoring program is Linda Ando, EOP Counselor and OMA/UWAA Mentor Program, and she has given many good suggestions.

We discussed the PoE program criteria and guidelines which will be outlined in handbooks for mentors and mentees created by Fatima and Linda.

The general criteria are as follows:

- 1) Mentors should be a PoE graduate of any year, and they don't need to be working in an environmentally related field, but students should be asked if they would prefer to be matched up with someone in the environmental field. Mentors should make the initial contact.
- 2) Mentees should make a commitment to the program.
- 3) The relationship will last 1 year, with the opportunity to have the same mentor for a second year.
- 4) The program should be open to juniors and seniors first.
- 5) They should meet at least once a quarter and interact two other times during the quarter.

- 6) There will be a PoE staff contact for the program (Michelle and/or Trina).
- 7) There will be a few events throughout the year (maybe a kick-off, middle of the year or panel discussion event, and a close-out celebration).
- 8) We could have an online registration or email registration.
- 9) We can match all year but have a primary matching in the fall.

The Program Steps are:

- 1) Linda and Fatima design Mentor Program
- 2) Get PoE Alumni Board feedback & incorporate suggestions
- 3) Create Mentor and Student Applications
- 4) Create Mentor/Student Handbook
- 5) Create Webpage Content
- 6) Recruit Mentors (Aug-Sept)
- 7) Recruit Mentees/Students (Sept-Oct)
- 8) Match and Kickoff Breakfast event (before or just after midterms)
- 9) Ongoing maintenance, matching, and occasional events (check-in via email)

Additional things to think about:

- 1) Ask mentors if they are comfortable mentoring more than one student.
- 2) Program parameters, structure, and guidelines are important.
- 3) Have someone to contact if the relationship is not working out, and work hard not to leave a sour taste in anyone's mouth.
- 4) There should be a training for mentors, maybe an orientation in addition to the handbook and other materials. We could do an orientation for both mentees and mentors before an event.
- 5) We should define our goals for the program (may not be in the number of pairs, but the quality of the relationships built).
- 6) The goals increase over the year (first quarter focus on academics, second quarter focus on resume writing, third quarter focus on job search/interview skills.)
- 7) Mentors and students can be flaky, so we may want to develop a protocol—try once, try twice, and then contact troubleshooter.
- 8) How many mentors can we get before the beginning of the school year? The number of mentees we will have depends on available mentors.

The board decided to have a pilot year starting in October 2006, and offer the program only to the Capstone 490 class. This pilot year will give time for detailed feedback and recruiting more mentors for next year. The mentoring committee could give a talk in the Capstone class during the first week of school and then may be able to review the program at the end of the school year in the Capstone 492 class. Michelle will recommend some alumni that might be good mentors, and Fatima and Linda will try to recruit as many mentors as possible.

5) Development Committee—Josh, Allison, and Aly

The PoE alumni tracking database has been updated. There are 95 listed alumni with their preferred mailing addresses in Seattle.

Aly suggested sending out a census to all of the alumni, and she brought a sample census sent out to all UW Alumni in 2002. We could ask almost any questions we want. We can also include: would you like to be a mentor, can we create a profile for you on the website, and a gentle ask for money (in maybe a P.S.). Allison is going to draft the PoE census.

The census can be sent out from and mailed back to PoE, and it can include a letter from Dave. The letter can update alumni on exciting things happening in PoE and give information about the Alumni Board. Aly and Josh will work on drafting the Director's Letter. They will be coming up with the outline for Dave.

Josh suggested that we have a Director's Reception in the fall or winter and invite all the alumni who responded to the census.

6) Closing Discussion

We spoke to Victor and Michelle about exploring the idea of incorporating members from the Graduate Program, with the Alumni Board. However, Michelle and Victor want to discuss this with other graduate program members before we look into acting on this.