# OFFICE of FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

### WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

### PARENTS' COUNCIL FALL MEETING MINUTES

#### Select Highlights:

 Parents' Council chairs Stacie and Dylan Lissette (P'18) presided at the meeting. New members of the Council attended an orientation session on Thursday, October 26. The full meeting of the Council was Friday, October 27. Save the date: Parents' Council Winter Meeting will be held February 23-24, 2018. The Council meeting will begin early afternoon on Friday, February 23 and will conclude around noon on Saturday, February 24. Additional details to come.

- The Council was welcomed by President Nathan Hatch, who shared an update on the University:
  - Wake Forest is riding a wave of significant momentum.
  - We've fully opened Wake Downtown and added an engineering major; 40% of the students are female, as opposed to the national average of 26%.
  - Reynolds Gym opened this fall and 3,400 undergrads used it in the first month.
    Half of the funds to renovate the gym came from parents, many of whom are on the Parents' Council.
  - We also had the grand opening of our Wake Washington program. The facility is at One Dupont Circle and will feature semester-long programs of courses plus internships for our students.
  - There are 17 first-year students in Copenhagen for the year; this is the first time we have done this program, but the program looks very promising.
  - Multiple building renovations are taking place: residence halls on the Quad, the remainder of Reynolds Gym will open next March.
  - Wake Will Lead, our capital campaign, has \$780 million in gifts and commitments towards a \$1 billion goal. Parents are a huge part of the success of the campaign.
  - The OPCD is expanding its efforts. Lee Svete has come from Notre Dame to join
    Andy Chan's team, and the OPCD is expanding services for young alumni.
  - Leadership and character remain an important focus. Our faculty member Michael Lamb is doing great work here, and we have a series of leadership speakers who will come to campus throughout the year; Chris Paul, our basketball star, was just here for the first in the series.



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- Dr. Hatch has commissioned a study on the First Year Experience, so we can examine the ways in which we can take an already good system and make it great. He then introduced Penny Rue, co-chair of this effort, to share more.
- Penny Rue, Vice President for Campus Life, said the average GPA of first-year students is a 3.33 and the average rate of first-years who transfer was 5.8%. Like all colleges, alcohol use is a concern. Some data from Wake Forest shows that we attract higher numbers of drinkers than the national average, and that after two months, the heavy drinkers drink even heavier. This is obviously a concern to be addressed. Penny shared attrition data of where we lose students after the first year, and then provided student actors who read composite vignettes of some first-year students' experiences that are not so positive (merit scholarship who was a serious student disillusioned by the amount of Greek life and drinking; first-generation student who felt she and her parents had a severe knowledge gap about how college works; a pre-med student who struggled in organic chemistry and almost derailed his major; a middle-class students; and a student-athlete who felt he could not compete in the classroom and felt devalued as a student). The commission has only just started, but will look into all aspects of the first-year experience and will make recommendations for improvements.
- Provost Rogan Kersh ('86) gave a mini-lecture on behavioral economics and why we act as we do. Examples: choice paralysis (when we have too many consumer choices as options, it actually lowers sales because people are overwhelmed); anchoring (in a situation where you don't know a numerical answer, you guess using a number you are very familiar with or were just told a few minutes earlier); bandwagon effect (if you think most people are doing something, you are more likely to do it too); default inclination (if you have to opt out of organ donation instead of opting in, the numbers of organ donors skyrocket). All of these behaviors subtly can guide us in ways in which we may not even be aware.
- Andy Chan, Vice-President for Innovation and Career Development, talked about job prospects for students. This is the hottest job market in 20 years, but that said it is still really

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hard to get a job. Parents can help students put and keep that into perspective. Andy then interviewed several of his staff to talk about major OPCD initiatives:

- Mercy Eyadiel of Employer Relations said that companies are moving recruiting earlier and are also doing virtual recruiting vs. onsite. She encouraged Council members to think about how their companies can recruit WF students, and to help prepare them for interviews.
- Lee Svete came from Notre Dame to work on the Career Development side. He encouraged Council members to urge their students to use Handshake, our career platform that leverages student interests with available opportunities and events. The more data the students enter, the better the system will be at sending them valuable offerings.
- Lauren Beam works with Alumni Personal and Career Development. Their goal is to work with alumni and support them in their first five years after Wake. Allison McWilliams ('98), Director of the Mentoring Resource Center, just wrote a book called Five for your First Five, about the things young alumni ought to be doing to be intentional in developing in their careers and lives,
- During our lunch program, we heard from WF Hall of Fame basketball player Skip Brown ('77, MBA '86, P'14), now an Assistant Athletic Director at Wake. Skip was recruited at every major basketball program but only wanted to play for Wake because of what he knew Wake would do to teach him inside the class and outside. Post-NBA career he went into banking and was able to quickly raise the funds to start a bank based on the network of Wake Foresters he had built. He remains so proud to be a Deac and happy to be back at his alma mater. We also heard from Elwyn Murray ('89, MBA 94, P'18, '20) of the Parents' Council. Like many of our current students Elwyn came to Wake having had a lot of success both athletically, academically, and socially. At Wake, he suddenly discovered he was not the best at anything, and had a couple of 'freshmen failures'. What Wake taught him was to dig deep and a pattern emerged: fail, figure it out, then flourish. An outline of Elwyn's remarks are attached for those who wish to read them.

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- Mary and Gary Pinkus (P'20, '22), Parents' Campaign Chairs, gave a Parents' Campaign report.
  - The Pinkuses thanked the Parents' Council members for their participation in the Parents' Campaign last year, and recognized the leadership of last year's chairs, Stacie and Dylan Lissette (P'18). Last year through the guidance of the Lissettes we broke 2 records: —the Parents' Campaign total itself and also giving from Council members.
  - The Wake Forest Fund as a whole raised over \$10 million, of which \$3.5 million came from parents; \$2.1 million of the \$3.5 came from Parents' Council members.
  - About 50% of the Parents' Council has either already made a contribution to the Parents' Campaign or have a multi-year pledge already recorded. For those who have not made a Parents' Campaign commitment for this year, please do so before the end of the calendar year.
  - Our goal is to be able to announce 100% participation at the February meeting leading toward another record breaking year.
  - Council members Wendy and Elwyn Murray will be working with our alumni parent population in securing their support of the Parents' Campaign; and Betsy and Mike Greene will coordinate efforts to secure support from our past parents.
  - The business meeting was adjourned by Stacie and Dylan Lissette in early-afternoon so families could attend optional sessions. The Parents' Campaign Reception was held late in the afternoon; the reception honored donors to the 2016-17 Parents' Campaign.
  - Save the date for the winter meeting of the Parents' Council, February 23-24, 2018. The Council meeting will begin early afternoon on Friday, February 23 and will conclude around noon on Saturday, February 24. Families who wish to attend the WFU-Notre Dame basketball game at 3 pm on Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup> can contact the Ticket Office at 888-758-DEAC. Hotel information is below (please use the links to reserve with that hotel)

Courtyard Marriott - University Blvd.



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**Doubletree Hotel** 

For any questions, please contact: Betsy Chapman ('92, MA '94) Executive Director of Family Communications and Volunteer Management <u>chapmaea@wfu.edu</u> or 336.758.4845