

**THE M.D. ANDERSON ALUMNI AND FACULTY ASSOCIATION**  
**MINUTES of STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Thursday, November 8, 2007**  
**Clark Clinic Building, 11th Floor, Wiess Conference Room**  
**11:00 a.m.**

**PRESENT:**

Dr. Bloom  
Dr. Deavers  
Melanie Dujka  
Dr. Fanning  
Dr. Haynie  
Alma Hernandez (ex-officio)  
Dr. Freireich  
Dr. Matney  
Jakmica McKinney (ex-officio)  
Sharon Pepper  
Jennifer Price (ex-officio)  
Lorraine Reitzel  
Dr. Strong  
Dr. Tomasovic (ex-officio)  
Dr. Ueno  
Dr. Walter

**ABSENT:**

Yvonne Bazunu (ex-officio)  
Anne Bettinger  
Ivone Bruno  
Dr. Candelari (ex-officio)  
Dr. Chandra  
Jennifer Collins (ex-officio)  
Dr. Freedman (ex-officio)  
Dr. Gallick  
Dr. Handy  
Dr. Kanojia  
Dr. Kumar  
Dr. Rios

- A. Review and approval of Minutes of previous meeting**
- B. New Business**

Alumni Dues vs. Major Gifts – Dr. Elizabeth Bloom

One of the Directors from the Development Office had suggested that we not solicit annual dues from our membership as the solicitation detracts from larger gift giving efforts. Sharon Pepper explained that she had received results of a survey in which many other institutions had raised the same question and came to the same conclusion about conflicting solicitations. Sharon also mentioned (in support of discontinuing dues) that funds received by the alumni association must be spent and that it causes problems at the end of the budget year when expenses do not match what was budgeted. After a brief discussion, a vote was taken and approved in favor of discontinuing solicitation of annual membership dues.

#### Proposal for new venue for our Community Seminar Series – Dr. Thomas Matney

Dr. Matney, who had solicited input from Drs. Rios and Kanojia prior to the steering committee meeting, proposed that we consider hosting the next Community Seminar Series at another location, to possibly boost attendance. He mentioned a similar event hosted by the Physicians Educational Resources Group at a local restaurant. He also suggested that if this company is doing this type of presentation for community physicians and doing it well, then perhaps we should discuss discontinuing our series. One member suggested that for the success of our series, we invite very high-level speakers who would be more likely to be a 'draw'. Another member suggested that the low attendance that we have experienced could have been related to the topics presented. A discussion followed on why we began offering this program to community physicians and the history of success and failures in producing it over the last 3 seminars. The point was made that we began the series as a way to improve our relationship with the community physicians and perhaps this series is not the avenue for meeting that objective. Discussion was favorable for discontinuing the seminar series, but one concern was raised over whether we had already received a commitment from a speaker for the next topic, Complementary and Integrative Medicine. Sharon Pepper said she would review the E-mail communication surrounding Dr. Moshe Frenkel's invitation to speak and follow-up with the Committee in the next meeting.

#### **C. Old Business**

##### Post-event comments on the Houston Anderson Alumni Dinner – Dr. Elizabeth Bloom

After a brief discussion about the dinner, it was agreed that the speakers were very well received, but we need to ensure that future speakers understand they are limited to 15 minutes and their talks should be finished before dinner is served. Many comments were made that the music was too loud and that next year we should invite a band that plays music that will also allow for conversation. The choice of charity, The Houston Food Bank, was a good choice and their silent auction was a nice addition to the evening. We will vote on pairing up with a different charity for the next dinner and Dr. Bloom mentioned that Dr. Rios, chair of that subcommittee, had some particular charities in mind. Further discussion about the 2008 alumni dinner was postponed until Dr. Rios could be present.

Dr. Tomasovic asked for the Committee's opinion about possibly changing the format of the alumni dinner to be held in conjunction with a scientific meeting, such as the annual cancer symposium. This idea had been suggested to Dr. Mendelsohn by faculty member, Dr. Victor Prieto at the alumni dinner. Dr. Mendelsohn pursued the idea as a possible way to increase attendance at the annual cancer symposium. Although some Committee members agreed this was a good idea, others raised the following objections. 1) The symposia topic may inadvertently reduce attendance at the dinner because of its focus. 2) The symposia may reduce attendance because spouses would be less willing to attend. 3) Pairing the dinner with a medical/scientific meeting changes the purpose of the dinner that was originally designed to be a completely social event. Dr. Tomasovic stated that if there was not a compelling reason to pair the two events, then we will not change the format of the dinner.

### Distinguished Alumnus Award and Lecture – Dr. Elizabeth Bloom

Dr. Bloom's comments about the Distinguished Alumnus Award Lecture centered on a statement about what is developing into a culture of bad manners by our trainees during seminars...not just at this lecture, but in general. It was particularly embarrassing during this lecture, in which we were honoring a distinguished guest, to hear cell phones and pagers, to hear individuals answering their phones during the seminar, and attendees leaving in the middle of the speaker's talk. Many suggestions were made on how some departments have addressed this issue and it was agreed that a subtle approach be made to possibly change this behavior. Dr. Tomasovic said that an E-mail message should be sent from Trainee and Alumni Affairs to post doctoral fellows to remind them of institutional etiquette during lectures and seminars.

Dr. Bloom announced that the request for nominations for the 2008 Distinguished Alumnus Awards would be distributed in December.

### Events, activities updates – Sharon Pepper

As time would not permit the updates, this agenda item was postponed until the next steering committee meeting.

#### **D. Other**

Dr. Bloom announced that a Mike Hogg Award 2009 nomination had been submitted by Dr. Liz Travis for Dr. Christiane Nusslein-Volhard, the 1995 Nobel winner in Physiology or Medicine.

Sharon Pepper informed the Committee that a presentation following the steering committee meeting to the subcommittee on Trainee Excellence Awards was open to everyone. The meeting was for subcommittee members to view a demonstration of the new online application submission process that had been designed by APEP.

Sharon Pepper also mentioned that a second meeting following the steering committee meeting was going to be held with the Development Office to discuss fund raising for the Education Fund.

#### **E. Adjourn**

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.