Questions and Answers  
Thursday, April 23, 2020  
5:00pm (EDT)

Q1  
The pandemic has caused many leaders in business to re-focus, re-strategize and re-think how to conduct day-to-day operations. What are some key takeaways the Institution has identified with COVID-19 (Sondra Brooks CC’81; AU’85)

ANSWER

PRESIDENT FRENCH RESPONSE

Q2  
How do we ramp up for 2021 so that we recover lost donations and move towards strategic goals you have identified? How do we move alumni to assist in this recoup, restore, recover plan? (Sondra Brooks CC’81; AU’85)

Answer:

• Thanks for the question Sonia Brooks, as you can imagine theses are challenging fundraising times for the university.

• This pandemic has cause CAU and universities across the nation to re-examine overall strategies. How do we meet our $8million by June 30th? We have met our goals for the past 2 years; however, this year is going to be challenging.

• As alumni you play a vital role in the sustainability of the university I am making an appeal tonight for your support. We have a goal this year to reach $1M in alumni giving and 15% alumni participation….in FY19 we ended the year $776K (8%) in Alumni giving…year to date we are a little less than $711K in alumni donations.

• As we ramp up for the next fiscal year we are developing plans in this new-normal fundraising environment which are strategic, creative and alumni are an intricate part of the equation.
We are very excited about new initiatives developed this year which will have 2021 financial implications. We have hired of seasoned grant writer who is focusing on larger foundation ask, a robust Divine Nine Campaign through our “Everyday Hero” platform and thanks to alumnus Al Reid who recommended and funded an initiative to assist the university with focusing on increasing alumni support with the utilization of predictive analytics and to acquire better alumni data to gain a more holistic view of CAU alumni giving potential. This investment will show dividends for years to come.

(Toss to Dr. French About the Capital Campaign)

Q3

We had several questions about Homecoming 2020. Will it take place this year? During this unprecedented time, flights are lower than normal and some of us and some of us may want to take advantage of the pricing and receive information on tent rental/tailgating. What plans and/or contingency plans are being made for Homecoming 2020 since we don’t know how long social distancing may be needed? I’ll ask our Dean of Student Services and Campus Life, Dr. Omar Torres to give us an update on where we are with plans for homecoming.

ANSWER:

DEAN OF STUDENT SERVICES & CAMPUS LIFE, DR. OMAR TORRES RESPONSE

As we prepare to assemble a planning committee, we have begun to discuss a variety considerations related to Covid-19 that may influence our plans. There are still so many unknowns. Alumni President White and Sr. Director Jasho will engage with the committee because it is important to include the alumni leadership in the process as well as other alums who always provide valuable input that enables us to maintain rich traditions. While we don’t have a confirmed plan, know this. A celebration WILL take place, with activities October 7 – 11 within the safety and health guidelines related to Covid19.

Follow up questions: There are rumors circulating that football season may be canceled this year due to COVID-19. Is there any truth to this? Are there any updates on the Basketball coach vacancy?

PRESIDENT FRENCH RESPONSE: (See Town Hall Video)
Q4

Young alumni might not have financial stability at this time, how can they begin to give back to their Alma Mater? (CAUAA Memphis Chapter)

ANSWER:

SR. DIRECTOR GATEWOOD-JASHO RESPONSE – Our young Alumni are key individuals who can give back to CAU in many ways. We would love to see them serving as mentors, especially during these difficult times. Their connectivity and guidance amongst each other and to the Class of 2020 is valuable since they have experiences in their professional roles and are still at the beginning stages of their careers. Another significant role they can play is to connect with young people in their local communities. There is no better ambassador for CAU than our Alumni and sharing your experiences with prospective students may be just the right influence to help high school students make the decision to join Panther Nation. We need to remember that our Young Alumni will not stay in this category forever. Engagement during each stage of life in terms of moving from young alumni to the sandwich community to seasoned alumni makes us all connected.

Q7

For some of us celebrating our reunion this year can we designate our gifts to the multiple initiatives occurring at the university,

ANSWER:

• Thank you to the reunion classes. We continue to receive calls and emails regarding this question and the answer is {YES} you can designate your gift to a specific initiative or to a school or program of your choice. I have some exciting new about a current initiative you can support… the Emergency Student Fund.

• The abrupt chance from an on-ground learning environment to a remote learning experience presented a huge challenge financial challenge to our students. Through the generosity of donors including many on the call tonight, you have enabled us to provide our scholars with much needed support. Let’s take a look at Student Emergency Fund,

• You can also support the University during special drive… Giving Tuesday NOW, May 5th, a global day of giving where organizations across the world will be soliciting the support as we continue to thrive during these unprecedented times.
• If you have questions or would like to establish and endowment or support other initiatives, please contact the following:

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Q8

Several questions were submitted that reflect our concerns about protocols for students in Fall 2020. Questions included: How will the university address the safety and health concerns; How will classrooms, resident halls, dining facilities, and gathering spots, be cleaned; and When will this information be disseminated to the students? (CAUAA North Carolina Chapter) Mr. Anderson, as our Associate Vice President for Facilities and Project Management, can you share what is being done to ensure that our facilities are clean and to plan for a safe re-opening of our campus?

ANSWER:

In general, the onboarding of students coming back on to campus will be managed by a collaborative effort between our Facilities Management team, Auxiliary Services, Public Safety, Residence Life, and several other key departments that directly support our students in a physical capacity. Right now, there is currently a plan in place that addresses the employees who are currently accessing campus. Under this plan, buildings, offices, and common spaces are being cleaned and disinfected in accordance to the guidance provided by the CDC and World Health Organization. A modified version of this plan is being developed to support the larger body of faculty, staff and students that will return to campus, once the university believes it is a safe and manageable time to do so. In that plan, we envision enhanced precautions – such as enhancing the number of sanitizer stations throughout campus, controlling access points on campus, limiting the number of users per building, in classrooms
and other gathering areas.... adhering to the six feet rule, and wearing Personal Protective Equipment such as face mask and coverings. **PRESIDENT FRENCH – MR. ANDERSON, DIDN'T WE HAVE A VIDEO OF YOUR TEAM AT WORK?**

In addition to our efforts to maintain and sanitize all campus spaces, there may also be some physical modifications to seating areas and class schedules *across campus to ensure the practice of social distancing*. An example of these modifications may entail the use of larger classrooms or lecture halls instead of smaller sized rooms, or creating at least six feet of dispersion in some classrooms that have mobile seating, such as in Haven Warren Hall. We take the safety of our students and all of the CAU community very seriously, and our priority is to **build a functional plan as we remain cognizant of the challenges we face with combating COVID-19**.

**Q9**

*How can I communicate directly with staff of the Office of Alumni Relations while they are off campus?*

**ANSWER:**

**SR. DIRECTOR GATEWOOD-JASHO RESPONSE** – We want to assure you that, while we are not on campus, we ARE teleWORKING. You may reach us via email or call our offices as we are still fully operational and available to serve you. In addition, you can view many of our initiatives via social media. **NEED SLIDE WITH CONTACT IMAGES AND SOCIAL MEDIA HANDLES, AND HASHTAGS TO ENCOURAGE USE.**

**Q10**

Will the Alumni Association having any virtual meetings and/or conference calls since the spring meeting will not be in person?

**ANSWER:**

**ALUMNI PRESIDENT WHITE**

- The Clark Atlanta University Alumni Association will have our scheduled May Weekend meeting in June 2020.
- Discuss other virtual initiatives and encouragement for alumni joining association
Understanding that Commencement 2020 is postponed for May, as alumni, what can we do to embrace the Class of 2020?

ANSWER:

SR. DIRECTOR GATEWOOD-JASHO RESPONSE – The Office of Alumni Relations under their signature event From Paws to Claws, has created the 2020 Vision Series Edition especially for this class. As Alumni, you may adopt a member of the Class. And during the month of June, four unique seminars will be offered to assist the class with becoming alumni and receive professional guidance from alumni. Please watch your email for more information which will be disbursed on Friday, May 1st. Dean Torres, would you like to share some additional information?

DEAN OF STUDENT SERVICES & CAMPUS LIFE, DR. OMAR TORRES RESPONSE – CAU staff have discussed potential dates for the May 2020 graduation in depth with the presidents of the graduate and undergraduate Student Government Associations and the president of the 2020 senior class. We identified multiple potential dates and are continuing to consider multiple factors as we move toward a decision.

• Possible dates include:
  • Friday, September 25, 2000 – Combined Convocation and Commencement (Entering Freshmen and 2020 graduates).
  • Friday, October 9, 2020 – Homecoming week and Graduation
  • Monday, Dec. 21, 2020
  • Monday, May 17, 2021 – Combined Graduation for Classes of 2020 and 2021

We are challenging ourselves to think flexibly as we seek to find a way or make one, and even discussed a 5th option for some type of virtual celebration to mark our students’ accomplishments. We will keep everyone posted as we are able to narrow down our decision.
Q12

Are there any resources at this time to help alumni with professional development as many of us are in a paradigm shift during this unprecedented time?

ANSWER:

ALUMNI PRESIDENT WHITE

- The Clark Atlanta Alumni Association will provide professional development virtual meetings via zoom the near future. Many alumni in their perspective professions have volunteered their services to be a resource for the alumni community. Engagement with university departments – continuing education and career services.