

**Florida A&M University National Alumni Association
National Meeting Teleconference Call on Customer Service
September 4, 2013 ~ 8:00 P.M.**

**Call-In #: (712) 432-3066, Conference Code: 184299
*There were 144 Unique Callers on the Call***

Executive Summary

The gist of the discussion was:

- Improving Customer Service at FAMU.
- Requiring “Customer Satisfaction” Surveys to be offered to the customers of all front-line areas at FAMU and actually using that response information.
- Receiving credentials timely after payment of dues.
- Getting information about fellow alumni in an area without a chapter in order to start a chapter.
- Getting information about FAMU Students from Chapters areas so that the Chapter can financially support that FAMU Student.
- Communicating more often and directly with members.
- Communicating clearly the goals, objectives and vision of the FAMU NAA directly to members and potential members.
- Involving more “Young Alumni”.
- Placing all suggestions for improvement in writing, setting a timeline for response, and awaiting a response.

PRESENTATIONS

@ 00:15 – National President Tommy Mitchell:

Meeting called to order by NAA President Tommy Mitchell at 8:09 p.m. President Mitchell explained this was an open call for all alumni, dues and non-dues paying members to participate in a discussion to move forward by increasing membership in the Alumni Association and hear other suggested strategies to improve customer service in the Association and also at FAMU. The first part of the discussion will be with Interim President of the University Dr. Larry Robinson.

@ 05:16 Interim President Dr. Larry Robinson:

Informed alumni of events that took place in Orlando this past weekend to include:

- MEAC Kick-Off
- Visit to Orlando Sentinel to discuss the types of measures being planned at the University, such as the return of the Marching 100. Strategies being implemented concerning the band: The band shall consist of FAMU students only; there are guidelines being followed to ensure this is taking place. Stated that he is aware of the concerns surrounding the band, however, the university’s focus is on quality. Stated there were academic requirements in place that the students are able to meet. Dr. Robinson also stated that there were more band members that did not attend this weekend’s game.

- SAC will be at the University in 3 weeks.

QUESTIONS / DISCUSSION

- **@ 13:30 - JRE Lee Chapter (Name not provided) - *Where does the university stand on our accreditation?***
 - **Response:** Dr. Larry Robinson stated a report was submitted the last week of August; the next step will be an onsite visit where SAC will spend a couple of days to see where we are with the compliance questions. A report will be made to the by the Commission on November 15, 2013 and a decision will be made at their December 2013 meeting in Atlanta.
 - To prepare for SAC visits, mock visits are being conducted by fellow consultants, both last month and a scheduled mock visit next week. A half day meeting is also planned with all parties to prepare for this mock site visit to make everyone aware of what is expected and to ensure that everyone is ready.
- **@16:27 - Agnes Rolle Morton – Life Member and Miami Dade Chapter Member – *She never knows when the end of the fiscal year occurs so that she can renew her dues. Have not received identification pin from NAA office for 4 years, how can she receive membership packet.***
 - **Response:** President Mitchell stated the NAA is presently working on web page to better communicate with alumni. He will make sure she gets all the things that she is entitled to as a Life Member and Chapter member. Also Brandon Hill will let everyone know of other ways of communication. Address given for research. (1454 NW 43rd. Street, Miami, Florida 33142).
- **@ 21:12 - Henrietta Gray – Pooler, Georgia (Outside of Savannah, GA) - *What safe guards are in place to prevent the reoccurrence of non-FAMU students being part of the band? A second question of how can she connect with or start a chapter in the Savannah area.***
 - **Response:** Dr. Larry Robinson stated the safeguards included:
 - ❖ Music Department Compliance Officer who was hired to oversee band members' eligibility to participate and she has the final word. She will verify that they are full time students with all academic requirements met. She will also certify who is authorized to travel.
 - **Response:** President Mitchell responded that he recently visited the Savannah area and measures are being put in place to start a Chapter in that area.
- **@25:06 Cedrick Crawford, Life Member living in Dallas, Texas area – *Customer Service should start for students coming in as freshman. What is the university currently doing to address its “Horrible” customer service?***
 - **Response:** Dr. Larry Robinson stated 11,000 students have come to the university. The first part of customer service discussion is with the staff, reminding them that

these students could have gone to another university. Last year we went beyond the 50% mark with student enrollment. This first part of improving customer service is to help the staff understand the awesome task of helping to gain the confidence of the next generation, and help them to truly appreciate their experience at FAMU.

- ❖ Other factors the staff is being made aware of is that students today are now demanding a higher quality of customer service because they understand that they are paying the bill.

- **@ 29:49 - Carolyn Collins, Past National President, Life Member and Tampa Chapter Member - *What is happening at the university in the Department of Education in reference to the common CORE which is covering 2/3 of the universities?***

➤ **Response:** Dr. Larry Robinson stated two weeks ago he attended a Region meeting in the Northeast and Midwest. Discussion was

- ❖ There are two levels to get student's ready for FAMU, parents, guardian and all concerned with students must understand that they cannot leave the K-12 school system not be ready for FAMU.
- ❖ We must have individuals in place to start planning for these young people from the beginning with the right college track, at the middle school level.
- ❖ Also, a lot of families are struggling and it is more difficult for students to get dollars. Today "Need Base Grants" are more difficult to qualify for. The Pell Grant is only kept now beyond the first year based on academic progression. Today a student can get up to a year and that is the end.
- ❖ Beyond getting them academically prepared we have to learn how to finance our children education. Florida Bright Future recommendations are so high now that only 12% African Americans are qualified for these types of awards.

- **@ 36:57 Carolyn Collins, Past National President, Life Member and Tampa Chapter Member – *How has customer service or efficiencies impacted all of the school and how are we being held accountable? Are we looking at other schools as a model?***

➤ **Response:** Dr. Larry Robinson stated the entire faculty has had input into the customer service concerns. The strategy is to:

- ❖ First identify the problem, understand the impact and then select who needs to be on the team. Once the root of the problem has been established, appropriate measures are implemented to fix them. For example, an audit: All areas are identified, researched and a validation ledger is established, an individual set of eyes may also be bought in.

- **@ 40:55 - Attorney Reginald Mitchell – National General Counsel and Orlando Chapter Member – *I have a question about Customer Service. Often times I am on campus and I am happy with the service that I receive. Some folks say, however, that I get the Royal Treatment because of who I am or who I am related to. How can we sort of champion Customer Service from the top down to require evaluations like Comcast***

or AT&T that its required to have evaluations of the customers of service so that you constantly get feedback as to which areas that need improvement of customer service interpretation so these areas can get feedback because I think that the Presidents, Vice Presidents and Directors want it, but it's not always implemented?

- **Response:** Dr. Larry Robinson responded that when he goes through performance evaluations of his direct reports and asks them: “How do we know the customers are satisfied with them?” He gave additional examples of how companies (Avis Car Rental) send surveys to Customers to evaluate their satisfaction. He also mentioned that student surveys are already required for every instructor. Also at the law schools peer professors evaluate each other. He thinks what we need to do the same in all cases where these customer interfaces exist (IT, Financial Aid, Athletics) to gage how they feel about the customer service being provided and then use that information, don't just collect it and say that they didn't understand something, but use that for improvement.
- **@ 43:27 - James Green, Tampa Florida Chapter – *How is the student enrollment and if down how can we help?***
 - **Response:** Dr. Larry Robinson stated the final numbers are still coming in, but it looks like 11,000, this number is lower than last year by about 1000 students. This number also includes less than 200 Profile Students, the smallest number of admits for the last 5-6 years. The Board actually wanted it be less than 500. Also what has affected incoming students is financial aid and probation. Some students are not able to come back due to funds running out. Recruiting efforts are being moved to earlier in the year. The Presidential Tour will be in the fall and not for the next enrollment. We are shifting recruiting to the next year along with planting seeds for the middle schools.
- **@ 47:34 Doris Hicks - Polk County Chapter – *Is it possible to put in place a method of getting names of students from the Chapter area if they get in financial trouble who needs financial assistance to the Chapters so that the Chapters can help keep the student in school.***
 - **Response:** Dr. Larry Robinson stated the university attempt to assist students, but names cannot be released due to FERPA. Through their own effort, however, if the students share their private information then it is possible. So the University has to be careful, but if the Vice President for Student Affairs were in the room they can come up with an idea to make that happen.
 - **Response:** President Tommy Mitchell stated all chapters are made aware that scholarship monies must come to the university on behalf of the student and to be given directly to the student.
- **@ 50:31 - Eric Roundtree - Houston, Texas – *He specializes in Customer Service and suggested the University use surveys already in place for customer service such as 1) Voice of the Customer, 2) Gallop Surveys, or 3) Net Promoter Scores. These surveys***

maybe used for each department to hold the department and/individual accountable. He also was dissatisfied that he did not get membership pins and cards over a year ago.

- **Response:** The President asked Mr. Roundtree to e-mail him the information at larry.robinson@famuedu
- **54:00 Cheryl Harris, FAMU Industry Cluster Chair** – *Allstate mentioned that they were on campus a year ago providing customer service training. She echoed Mr. Roundtree’s sentiment. Suggested instead of spending additional dollars, the university has a wealth of knowledge via industry cluster and could possibly get pro bono service.*
 - **Response:** The president appreciates that effort very much and looks forward to expanding that effort. He will see her soon in 2 weeks.
- **@ 55:45 – Rondrea Mathis, Tampa Chapter Vice President** – **What is in place at FAMU for maintaining a beacon of hope for the students who don’t meet admission criteria?**
 - **Response:** Dr. Larry Robinson stated there is a point where you have to have the right balance, and give students a realistic chance of finishing. FAMU will not close its doors to students who were refused admittance elsewhere, there are programs available to bring them in and get them ready. It does no one any good to bring in students who do not have a realistic chance of succeeding. The major component of our strategies is to expose these individuals to the pre- college track.
 - President Tommy Mitchell stated this is something also to the university has to answer to the board of governors, we as university need to fight some of these battles the university get from the board of governors instructions. We have to come up with ways to enhance student development.
 - Dr. Larry Robinson stated the university is moving toward formal base funding and a matrix which involves academic progression, cost associated with degrees, etc., method of funding schools from the past are gone. We have to work on the type of matrix that FAMU has that will involve the type of students we have at our institution. We have to pay attention to the external factors and what is being applied right now.
- **@ 1:03:21 – Julian McDaniels - St. Lucie County Chapter - Customer Service** – *has there been any consideration given to upgrading FAMU Booster Leadership? Example: Providing a more professional model so it does not manipulate the university, for example parking.*
 - **Response:** Dr. Larry Robinson stated he met with the Boosters, Athletic, etc. as part of an assessment, and based on the conversation there were solid suggestions that were made. Looking at things comprehensibly not just a piece to support athletes. Recommendations will be taken and new approaches will be implemented.

(9:11 P.M.) Dr. Robinson off call

INTERNAL FAMU NAA CUSTOMER SERVICE DISCUSSION

- **@ 1:08:02 - Tracy Jackson, Miami Dade Chapter – *A member since last year, and has not received membership packet materials. Suggested also engaging alumni better. Strategies need to be established to give welcome packages. Alumni that she recruits ask the question: “What is the process of joining and what do we get in return?”***
 - **Response:** President Mitchell informed to continue to contact OAA if questions about packets or materials. Presidents were also invited to participate on conference call quarterly to report concerns such as this. There is no reason why anyone should not get their pins. One of the problems is that we have had problems with Chapters sending their money in on time. Members should call the Office of Alumni Affairs if there is any problem getting their pins. There are also Quarterly meetings with Chapters and that is a time again to mention any problems that Chapters are having with Customer Service or any issues. But that is no excuse. She was absolutely right, if people think that they are not going to get the credentials that they are entitled to then they will be reluctant.
- **@ 1:13:31 Derris King - Grand- Rapids - *Is there something in place where we can give chapters a head up when we have new students on campus and let the chapters know alumni recently moved into their location? How can alumni in areas find out who are the other members that live in Grand Rapids so that they can form Chapters?***
 - **Response:** President Tommy Mitchell mentioned that recent graduates don't always contact chapters in the area. He stated that during rehearsal he speaks with the graduates to encourage involvement in the NAA. The student alumni association on campus is also encouraging involvement into the NAA before they leave. Life time email addresses are being sought prior graduates leaving the area. They are planning to look at the larger cities where alumni live to help them become aware which alumni live there and encourage the formation of Chapters. He also encourages members that live in areas where there are not a lot of alumni members to participate in Inter-Alumni Councils.
- **@ 1:20:09- Henrietta Gray – Pooler, Georgia (Outside of Savannah, GA) - President Tommy Mitchell obtained contact information to speak with after the meeting in reference to activities for graduates in the area. (912) 748-7762. He shared his information at (850) 212-1189.**
- **@ 1:21:41 - Princess Walls - Hampton Rhodes, Virginia – *She lives in Williamsburg and would like to get in touch with alumni in the area.***
 - **Response:** President Mitchell stated there is an alumni directory, facebook, webpage and other methods that are now being used by the NAA. Atty. Reginald Mitchell stated gave Hampton Rhodes contact information at

- **@ 1:25:09 Cheryl Harris, FAMU Industry Cluster Chair – *How can we create a strategy on what will be our touch points with the alumni? How do we convert contacts and inquiries from alumni into members? What is that process?***
 - Response: President Tommy Mitchell stated our biggest challenge is that graduates don't send their address back to the university. He agrees that for every alumnus that we have an address, we should contact them and keep them engaged. We are trying to establish our own database so that we don't have to rely on the University. They can always contact the office of Alumni Affairs, but we are also working on the webpage and trying to make information available on the website that answers such questions.
- **@1:25:09 Lawrence Brown Northwest Fla. Chapter (Mariana) – *Once an alumni is on board, what is the platform being used for membership and what is the vision or platform that we are using for our membership of the NAA? Please share the platform, provide better communication, more transparency.***
 - Response: President Mitchell explained
 - ❖ Platform major focus is image building, advocating for the university, scholarship, fundraising, and governmental relations. One of the things we have been doing is having quarterly meetings with chapters, but president and chapter members don't call in. Ex. Hazing incident, more information was distributed during this time than ever before. Only 3,000 graduates give monies back to the university when we have over 40,000 graduates.
- **@ 1:25:09 Lawrence Brown Northwest Fla. Chapter (Mariana) *stated all these ideas are not being laid out even at the chapter level. Also stated that platform being painted is not getting to the chapters, suggested we slow it down so individuals will hear and understand the message to find out what is being required.***
 - Response: President Tommy Mitchell stated some chapters are not doing it. Stated that out of over 60 chapters, only about 20 participate by coming to the National Alumni Association meeting.
- **@ 1:42:52 Seabon Dixon – NAA Membership Chairperson and Immediate Past Florida Region Vice President – increase membership cannot be done by magic. The Qualification of the alumni chapter is to lend support to the university and represent the university. There are 64 Chapters, 32 are in compliance and only about 35 or 37 are functional. They wear orange and green but do not do what a chapter should do. Membership will focus on:**
 - Retention
 - Establishing Chapters in areas where there are alumni with 10 willing alumni

President Tommy Mitchell informed all callers that he welcomed their concerns and comments and will try to respond. He also invited alumni to attend the 2014 Annual Meeting May 16-18 in Louisville, Kentucky. President Mitchell also reviewed the cost of membership levels.

Meeting adjourned at 10:02. President Mitchell remained on phone to discuss the following concerns.

POST ADJOURNMENT DISCUSSION

- **@ 2:00:03 - Rondrea Mathis, Tampa Chapter Vice President** – *Suggested the NAA consider establishing a Young Alumni Spotlight at graduation to involve and engage new graduates in the NAA. Suggested having a Young Alumnus as an officer in the NAA.*
 - Response: President Mitchell appointed a young alumnus to a NAA office, but they did not communicate or participate so he appointed another one, which also did not participate. Young alumni had also been invited to the NAA National meeting and they did not want to pay registration, NAA agreed, and allowed their attendance without registration and they still did not show up. President Mitchell stated he was available to have a forum to discuss if young alumni were interested and he welcomes suggestions in reference to activities for young alumni.
- **@ 2:06:00 - Ephraim Wiggins, JRE Lee Chapter President** - stated he has a new graduate committee to research and find new graduates to bring into the chapter.
- **@ 2:09:22 & 0:00 of 2nd Recording file - Princess Walls - Hampton Rhodes, Virginia** - Presently in Williamsburg Virginia – *Why is it so difficult to get information about the Association or location of Chapters in the area?*
 - **Response:** President Tommy Mitchell stated Ms. Wall could pay National and Region dues. General Roy Bell gave his phone number and informed Ms. Wall there was an active Chapter in Hampton Rhodes which will be hosting a round up activity November 1, 2013. Asked her to contact him and he will give her all the information she needed.
- **@ (Not recorded) Natalie Crawford – Life Member, Non Active member of the Dallas Chapter** – *She has not gotten information from the NAA for a long time. Suggested all recommendations should be put in writing stating exactly what is desired without offending anyone, enclose a timeline for the answer and wait for a response. Suggested alumni stop making excuses. Andrew Lawyer to call back in reference to updating contact information.*

Post Meeting discussion adjourned 10:30 p.m.