

REPORT OF THE ALUMNAE TRUSTEES  
TO THE 2013 ANNUAL MEETING  
OF THE ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION OF MILLS COLLEGE

Introduction

After the historic strike in 1990 whereby Mills College committed itself to remain a women's college for undergraduate women, it was agreed that the AAMC would elect three representatives to the Board of Trustees to ensure alumnae representation consistent with that commitment to the board. Three alumnae trustees serve concurrent three year terms as full voting member of both the Mills College Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors of AAMC. These Alumnae Trustees attend each of the group's board meetings in order to represent the view of alumnae. Alumnae Trustees also represent the AAMC board to the leadership of the college. Alumnae Trustees participate fully on the Board of Trustees, serving on committees and task forces. They also convey the voice of alumnae and the AAMC in board discussions. While Alumnae Trustees act as individuals and not as specific representatives of the AAMC, they report to the AAMC on the work and activities of the Board of Trustees. With the execution of the Memorandum of Understanding between the College and the AAMC in 2005, it was agreed that in addition to the three elected Alumnae Trustees, the AAMC President would serve as a member of the college Board of Trustees during her three year term as President.

During the 2012-2013 academic year, the three Alumnae Trustees provided the following service on the Board of Trustees:

**Gayle Rothrock '68** from Vancouver, Washington, was first elected in 2007 and re-elected in 2010. Gayle traveled to all of the Board of Trustee meetings which occurred in October, February and May. As an extraordinary alumna volunteer and ambassador to the college, Gayle utilized her trusteeship to help re-establish the Western Oregon and Southwest Washington alumnae branches. While making several appearances in Portland and Seattle, including where the college president was a guest and presenter, Gayle often made reports on the state of the college and importance of charitable giving. Gayle worked with the Office of Admissions toward recruitment and yield events in Portland and Seattle speaking on the merits of a Mills education and college status. This year Gayle served formally on the Education Policies and Personnel Committee and the Campus Planning Committee. Gayle previously chaired the now retired Ad Hoc Committee on Alumnae Relations for several years which made tremendous strides in ensuring a healthy relationship between the college and AAMC.

**Diana Odermatt '60** is from Berkeley, California, and is our newest Alumnae Trustee having been elected in 2012. Since Diana is the most local of the Alumnae Trustees and lives closest to campus, most of her extensive volunteer work revolves around AAMC committees including the Executive Committee, Nominating Committee, Resource Development Committee, Retreat Committee and Alumnae Relations Advisory Committee which is a joint committee with the college. Diana is able to assist in retention of students by attending as many student centered activities as possible. With respect to the Board of Trustees, Diana served formally on the Advancement Committee, Enrollment and Financial Aid Committee and serves as Vice Chair of the Student Life Committee.

**Julia Almanzan '92** resides in Los Angeles, California. Julia was first elected in 2009 and re-elected in 2012. Julia has established herself as a regional leader in Southern California since graduation. Julia re-established the Orange County Mills College Alumnae branch where she has acted as President since 2007. Julia also sits on the board of the Los Angeles alumnae branch. As past Regional Governor for Southern California, Julia acted as liaison between those two branches and the Santa Barbara/Ventura and San Diego branches. Julia currently serves with Diana on the Alumnae Relations Advisory Committee which is a joint committee between the AAMC and college. Julia served formally on the Governance Task Force which made recommendations to the Board on all Committees including their purpose, inclusion and bylaw revisions. Julia also served on the Educational Policies Committee and Student Life Committee where she previously served as Vice Chair.

**Linda Jaquez-Fissori '92** of San Anselmo, California, was elected as AAMC President in 2010. Linda's exemplary leadership of the AAMC is far too much to document in this brief report. However, Linda has served formally this year on the Advancement Committee and Student Life Committee. In her work on the Advancement Committee, Linda worked closely with Senior Director of Alumnae Relations Laura Gobbi and her team to overhaul Mills' approach to alumnae relations. This included leveraging events on campus to engage alumnae and students

such as career networking which has been a positive attraction for alumnae both on and off campus. Linda has also continued to make appearances around the Bay Area and when possible outside the Bay Area in representation of the AAMC including joint appearances with the president of the college at ongoing introductory alumnae events.

Many alumnae have had opportunity to meet the president in group and individual settings since she was elected and arrived on campus in July 2011. Over the past year President DeCoudreaux participated in more than 16 alumnae events including events on campus and in Sacramento, Palo Alto, Marin, San Diego, Oakland, North Bay, Seattle, Portland, Washington D.C., Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, Hong Kong, and San Francisco. Alumnae and the Mills community at large appreciate that President DeCoudreaux has been as transparent as possible providing frequent updates about the strategic planning process and the status of the college's financial health.

### Strategic Planning

The strategic planning process began in Fall 2012 to chart the College's future. The process included the broad Mills community by way of surveys and open forums. To that end, the president was successful in envisioning Mills in 2027 at its 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The president identified strategic imperatives for the next 3-5 years and identified the actions needed to address each of those imperatives. She maintains a commitment to financial sustainability of the college during that time period so that those imperatives can be attained. All strategic imperatives will consider three main factors. One factor is recruitment and retention of new first year, transfer and graduate students. The second is developing a balanced budget. The third is developing a student-centered culture wherein administrators, staff and faculty would make possible the student's academic success and overall satisfaction with their Mills experience. A multitude of working groups were created to investigate relevant topics and more inclusive groups assisted in narrowing down ideas such that the president and her cabinet can formalize a strategic plan proposal.

The president welcomed three new cabinet members this year which will impact the strategic plan. Soon after **Vice President for Finance and Administration and Treasurer Tammi Jackson** arrived in October 2012, she began to work with the president on developing a five year plan for balancing the budget. The plan is to be developed and grounded in best financial practices. Some of the many goals, for example, are to reduce the college's endowment payout to five percent, estimate new revenues from added programs, and increase the utilization of the college's real estate assets such as renting residential space and so forth. Vice President Jackson came to Mills from North Carolina Central University School of Law where she worked as associate dean of finance and administration. President DeCoudreaux described Vice President Jackson as "a campus leader and key member of the Dean's Administrative Cabinet, overseeing budget and finance, human resources and technology." Vice President Jackson's work history includes various other administrative positions at law schools and universities. She holds several titles including EdD, JD and MBA.

The new **Vice President for Enrollment Management, Brian O'Rourke**, began his work with the college in August 2012. Vice President O'Rourke came to Mills from Holy Names University where he was responsible for reversing a ten year enrollment decline and growing their student body to the largest in their history. President DeCoudreaux states "He brings to Mills demonstrated success in building and managing systems for undergraduate and graduate recruitment, retention, and financial aid leveraging to maximize enrollment while simultaneously creating a positive student experience to support retention and persistence to graduation. Vice President O'Rourke is off to a great start evaluating data, strategically thinking about enrollment projections, and getting to know his staff." Vice President O'Rourke explains a strong Spring 2013 enrollment due to increased faculty involvement, the new Division of Student Life approach to student concerns, and the implementation of best practice for improving student financial literacy. The Fall to Spring retention rate was 97%, a 20 year high. Fall 2013 enrollment is minimally expected to match last year's Fall enrollment. Of no surprise is the student's attraction to the college during visits as 80% of students who visit campus end up enrolling. The goal is to increase enrollment by 28% in the next 5 years and continue to succeed in increasing retention. Vice President O'Rourke seems to be off to a great start and we look forward to watching Mills grow in size with his assistance and direction.

**Dr. Eloise Stiglitz, the new Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students**, arrived in February 2013. Introductions were made at the February 2013 board meeting. President DeCoudreaux states "She brings to Mills experience and interests that make her an excellent addition to our community. Her backgrounds blends years of leadership in student services, experience as a licensed clinical psychologist and a passion for women's leadership and community development...her publications and presentations include relevant topics such as student life, civic engagement, feminism, diversity and psychotherapy. Given her depth and breadth of knowledge, I am confident Eloise will be a valuable member of the President's Cabinet and that she will provide strong leadership for the

Division of Student Life and the Mills Community." Vice President Stiglitz holds a BA, MS and PhD and has over 25 years of student affairs experience at various universities and graduate schools. The Dean will be implemental in engaging students and enforcing the student centered culture that is so integral to the strategic plan process. We can see that the college is moving in this direction already. For example, this year a new Career Service Center opened. The Center is "high tech and high touch" with the ability to Skype, participate in webinars and has an active social media component. The Center laid out a 5 year plan to connect with every undergraduate student on campus.

The search is narrowing for Provost and Dean of the Faculty. After said appointment, the president's cabinet will be complete.

### Current Status of the College-Students and Faculty

Mills is now just one of approximately 47 women's colleges in existence yet Mills continues to thrive and remain committed as an undergraduate school for women only and graduate school for men and women. The total current faculty is 211, about half of which are full time faculty. The student faculty ratio is 10 to 1. The average class size is 16 students and 76 percent of classes have fewer than 20 students. Mills alumnae comprise 22,433 in 60 countries. The total students enrolled are 1,546 representing 42 states and 14 countries. There are currently 949 undergraduate students and 597 graduate students. The average high school GPA is 3.59. The top 3 undergraduate majors are English, Psychology and PLEA. The top 3 graduate programs are Education, MBA and Pre-Med. The cost of undergraduate tuition including room and board is \$55,420 and the cost of graduate tuition including room and board is \$45,152. Financial aid is provided to 95% of undergraduate students with Mills funding \$17 million and provided to 89% of graduate students with Mills funding \$5 million.

### Campus Planning

Two major highlights for the Campus Planning Committee this year included renovation on the biology research labs and the sustainability project.

The Joseph & Vera Long Foundation provided a generous grant of 2.5 million to renovate the biology research labs. The project was to begin in July 2011 and extend over a 5 year period. The project was completed this year, on time, and under budget. Work included renovating existing labs and increasing the usable area, adding new equipment, new finishes, mechanical and electrical upgrades, providing full accessibility, new lighting and window coverings, temperature control and upgraded life safety features. As a result of the renovation, Mills' ability to educate women in the natural sciences has been enhanced.

In 2012, the Sustainability Committee recommitted to make Mills one of the most sustainable campuses in the nation. Mills continues to receive high rankings from the Princeton Review and the Sustainable Endowments Institute for our success in recycling composting and energy use reduction. The Princeton Review's *Guide to 322 Green Colleges* has recognized Mills as one of the nation's greenest colleges based on the school's performance as an environmentally aware and responsible institution. Mills received a Green Rating of 97 out of a possible 99. As part of the American College and University President's Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) challenge, Mills agreed to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 15% by 2015. The ACUPCC expanded its requirement and requested a pledge from Mills for when Mills will be climate neutral. The Committee explored the launch of a campus farm, reducing energy use and improving energy efficiency via partnership, and resurrecting HeyDay PlayDay. Three formal subcommittees were formed including Campus Farm, Energy Conservation and Transportation. As of February 2013 a 3.7 % overall reduction and 9.2% reduction in natural gas below 2011 usage has been made. The Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) awarded Mills a Silver rating. Students are interested and involved in these efforts. For example, a Creek Care Day was held in September. With 30 volunteers showing up, there was significant progress made in the clearing of invasive elms at the Post Road/Kapiolani site. There were several more sessions planned throughout the school year. The sustainability website (<http://www.mills.edu/green/>) was upgraded and launched in October 2012. The site contains updated and expanded information reflective of the broad scope of work on campus including information on the campus eco system, sustainable building design, bicycle coalition, zero waste initiatives, etc.

## Educational Policies

One significant implementation made in early 2012 and is of great interest is that Latin Honors was instituted at Mills College as of May 2012. Undergraduates graduating in the top 15 percent of their division are awarded Summa Cum Laude (top 1% of each division), Magna Cum Laude (top 5% of each division), or Cum Laude (remainder of students within top 15% of their division) honors. Latin Honors provides greater recognition of highly achieving students as well as renders them more competitive in their future pursuits. It also positions Mills among other prestigious institutions of higher learning as a college that grants this recognition.

A major theme discussed throughout the year was the integration of theory and practice (learning through knowing and doing) The intent is to enhance the educational experience with practical experience that compliments academic work and prepares them for graduate school or professional careers after Mills. Some area overviews included undergraduate research, study abroad/internalization/globalization, service learning and internships for academic credit.

## The Annual Fund

The Office of Institutional Advancement manages the Annual Fund which conducts a successful Telephone Outreach Program staffed by student workers. Every charitable gift enhances the education of Mills students. The fiscal year is not over, but thus far \$5,332,540 was raised with an undergraduate participation rate of 21.4% . The participation goal is 27% so there is some ways to go. Please do consider giving to Mills today if you have not yet done so to help raise the participation rate and help the college meet their goal of 27%! The Class of 2013 achieved a 51% participation in giving to their class gift this year. It would be wonderful if alumnae could reach the same rate of giving as members of the senior class!

A few noteworthy points to bring to your attention about the impact of your giving and elevating the participation rate are as follows:

\*Contributions help keep Mills strong by enabling Mills to afford top faculty and to equip students to make a difference in the world, both of which are essential for Mills to maintain its reputation.

\*When decision makers at charitable foundations consider making a grant to Mills, they look at the percentage of alumnae who give to the College to see if our closest stakeholders think Mills is a good investment.

\*Alumnae giving affects the College's ranking by U.S. News & World Report, a source many prospective students and their parents use to learn about different colleges. For this publication, the percentage of alumnae who give serves as a proxy for how satisfied students are with a college.

With respect to alumnae, the Advancement Committee, and through them the Office of Institutional Advancement, have moved to engage alumnae in a meaningful way and thank them for their service to Mills. For example, you may have opened your e-mail this December to find the recipe for Mills heirloom chocolate chip cookies. Many of us would bring them home as gifts or simply enjoy them while sitting around in the student union or common dorm areas conversing with classmates. Alumnae Relations has also updated their system for collecting and managing alumnae data including the online alumnae community. If you have not set up your account yet, please do so!

## Conclusion

Alumnae Trustees are involved in the work of the board in steering Mills forward. We encourage all alumnae to support the college not just financially but in whatever manner fits your lifestyle at the present time whether through a direct connect with current students on campus, a local branch activity or something in between. We all share an affection for our alma mater Mills and can impact its success as we envision a successful Mills at our 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2027.

Thank you for your attendance at the AAMC's Annual Meeting and for your commitment and dedication to our alma mater Mills College.