

Alums Helping Students (AHS)

An ad-hoc sub-committee of the Student Relations Committee
Report prepared for the AAMC Annual Meeting, May 14, 2022

Committee Co-Chairs:

Kellidee Little

Stacy Boales Varner

Angela Adams DeMoss

Committee Members:

Lynda Campfield, Joyce Yee, Jen Moxley, Rachel Harding, Ari Wolf, Lisa Bach, Hannah Bluhm, Thea Orozco, Hatzune Aguilar, and several more members off-and-on over the past many months

Mission and Founding:

This group was originally formed in Spring 2021 by Kellidee Little and Stacy Boales Varner as a “grassroots” effort with the mission to provide extra support to current Mills students who were suddenly faced with great uncertainty and added stress after the College’s announcement of closure.

The AHS ad-hoc committee was officially formed in the summer of 2021 as part of the AAMC’s Student Relations Committee to enable us to be more effective in our efforts and to utilize the resources of the formal AAMC.

Major Accomplishments:

- Finals Care Packages: Coordinated three semesters (Spring 2021, Fall 2021, and Spring 2022) to match hundreds of alums and students, whereby an alum created personalized care package (at their own expense) for an individual student.
 - Total participation in the Final Care Packages:
 - 610 student care packages created by 453 alums
 - Spring 2021: 315 care packages (approx. \$11,000 in value gifted, based on average of \$35 each)
 - Fall 2021: 182 care packages (approx. \$6400)
 - Spring 2022: 113 care packages (approx. \$4000)
- Spearheaded the “We Care” mid-terms care packages, to show extra support to students earlier this Spring 2022 semester after the college announced the loss of many of their degree programs. The costs for this were underwritten by the AOCC and ASR committees.
- Assisted several students with housing needs by advertising to the greater alum network (via Facebook posts and word of mouth).
- Assisted several students with emergency financial needs via those same communication methods.

- Supported professors' requests to supply books for their students.
- Coordinated donations to the Mills Food Pantry—produce delivery, and other food and non-perishable items—by working with the pantry manager to identify needs and then advertising those needs to the alum community, with value of donations estimated around \$1000.
- Various other “one-time” needs met for students, such as:
 - Finding an alum to provide a ride for a student to get to San Francisco for a critical medical appointment.
 - Provided a hotel and transportation to a student arriving last summer from out of state who had no place to stay for their first day/night in Oakland.
 - Helping students move out of Ethel Moore at the end of the Fall 2021 semester when they all had to move out for repairs.
 - Connected a student in need of academic support with an alum to help edit and fine-tune a thesis.
 - Alums supported students' attendance to a conference in their field of study.
 - Connected a student doing a summer project in Mexico with Mills alums in Mexico City so she could contact them while she is there.
 - Champagne donation (Angela Adams DeMoss) for Reunion Weekend reception.
 - Assisted three students in finding job leads and mentors to help them move into the workforce upon graduation.
 - Amplified several students' personal GoFundMe campaigns.
 - And many other “small asks” that students made via email requests to AHS or through professors asking on their behalf.

Total dollars spent in support of or given directly to students via various AHS “asks” and initiatives is well over \$10,000 (our best estimate, but since many of the gifts were personal and directly from alum to student, we do not all of what has been given). With the Finals Care Packages added in, the total comes to \$31,000 at the very minimum.

The Future of AHS:

This is a question that we cannot answer at this time, as it is unclear the mission and role of the AAMC after the merger with Northeastern and it is unclear how we can best continue to serve and support our current Mills students going forward. We will continue to assess and discuss options over the summer. In the meantime, we will monitor and respond to any and all student requests that come to us, just as we have been for the past year-plus.

Respectfully submitted by Stacy Boales Varner and Kellidee Little, AHS Co-Founders