

**The Forum on Education Abroad  
Annual Business Meeting Minutes  
Peachtree Ballroom  
Peach Tree Westin Hotel, Atlanta, GA  
Friday, April 8, 2016**

**Welcome Remarks: Mary Anne Grant, Chair of the Board**

Board Chair Mary Anne Grant called the Annual Business Meeting to order at 8:04AM.

Grant welcomed all of the attendees to the Annual Conference and thanked them for participating in this unique and important education abroad gathering. She thanked Conference Chair, Lee Sternberger and the Conference Committee for their excellent work, and also thanked the Host Institutions, Sponsors, Exhibitors, Volunteers, Staff, and all who have worked to plan the conference.

Next, she thanked the Forum Board for their diligent work in overseeing The Forum, and the Council representing the needs of the membership and working with staff to develop resources to serve member institutions and the field. She asked all Board and Council members present to stand to be recognized by those in attendance and told attendees that they should seek out Board and Council members if they wish to engage them in conversation about The Forum.

Grant explained that this is an exciting time for The Forum as it continues to grow and mature as a professional association. She explained that a strategic planning process is underway that will result in a plan that will guide The Forum over the next 3-5 years. Member input to this process is essential, Grant noted, and members will have multiple opportunities to provide input, including here at the conference during a session with the Strategic Planning Team. The goal is to have the new strategic plan in place in 2017.

**Report on The Forum: Brian Whalen, President and CEO**

Whalen began by thanking and praising Lee Sternberger and the Conference Committee for doing such a great job in developing the conference theme and selecting the sessions that have focused our attention on the cultures of education abroad.

HE reported that this year The Forum has given out 8 Conference Grant Awards to make it possible for colleagues to attend the conference. He noted that Paige Butler from Middlebury's Institute of International Studies at Monterrey is this year's Ron Koehn Conference Grant Award Winner. The Ron Koehn Conference Grant Award is named in honor of Ron Koehn, who is not attending the Conference this year. Ron is a long-time education abroad innovator, who has played a significant role in advancing the education abroad field, especially through his contributions to innovations in program design.

Whalen reported that this 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference with 1,375 attendees marks the largest Forum Conference ever, and is a remarkable achievement for an organization that began in 2001. The

Forum is now a flourishing association of over 750 member institutions from around the world. Since July 1<sup>st</sup> of last year nearly 100 new member institutions have been welcomed as members. Forum membership is as strong as ever with an increasingly diverse range of institutions and organizations that have joined The Forum to take advantage of the many membership benefits and services.

This annual conference is the first of two conferences this year; the second will be The Forum's 3rd European Conference to be held in Athens, Greece, October 5-7, and hosted by CYA. The theme of this conference is an important one, "Living Change: Education Abroad in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Europe. Whalen thanked the conference committee members, led by their Chair, Alexis Phylactopoulos, for their outstanding work in choosing such a timely and compelling theme.

Next, Whalen noted that it has been a productive year and provided an update on a few initiatives. First, the Forum's Professional Certification Program that was launched last year continues to grow. There are now 120 colleagues enrolled in this program, and a list of those who have already achieved Certification appears on page 88 of the conference program. The participants in the Certification Program have diverse backgrounds, and various levels of experience and educational levels, demonstrating that Certification is for everyone. Whalen said that we can be proud that we have come together as an association to help to ensure that the future of education abroad will be as professional and of high quality as it can be. He stated, "Certification of individuals demonstrates the seriousness with which we carry out our work and signals that we as a field have advanced to a high level of professionalism. Certification helps to raise the bar of both professionalism and the quality of education abroad offered by our institutions and organizations, and ultimately benefits the students who participate in our programs."

Whalen reported on a second initiative, the Quality Improvement Program (QUIP), which is critical to how The Forum implements the Standards to benefit its members, the field, and students. This year is the most active year ever for QUIP reviews. There are currently 12 Forum member organizations that are participating in QUIP reviews. 6 of these are being funded by a special opportunity that The Forum announced in the fall. The Forum Board approved utilizing part of last year's surplus to fund 6 diverse Forum member institutions to participate in QUIP, institutions that would otherwise not be able to afford the cost of doing so. He then pointed out that on page 84 of the Conference program there is a list and description of the institutions and organizations that have successfully completed QUIP and are recognized for meeting the field's *Standards of Good Practice*.

Whalen then reported on a third important initiative: receiving a grant from the U.S. Embassy in Quito to conduct training for 25 Ecuadorian universities in Cuenca in November. These universities were trained to use the Standards of Good Practice as a basis for developing their capacity to host U.S. students at their universities. The training was led by Certified Professional and Forum Trained Facilitator Mark Odenwelder, and showed once again how the *Standards* are relevant and applicable in different national and cultural contexts. Whalen noted that The Forum has over the past several years received grants to conduct these types of trainings in a range of countries, including Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, India, and Turkey, often working in conjunction with IIE, Fulbright offices, U.S. embassies and Education USA, all efforts to enhance capacity for high quality education abroad around the world.

A fourth initiative that Whalen reported on involves the work of a team of a dozen workshop facilitators who have conducted over 50 workshops that have enrolled over 800 participants across the U.S. and around the world so far this year. In the next few weeks The Forum will be announcing a call for institutional members to host workshops next year. When an institution hosts a workshop it brings The Forum to its staff and faculty, and receives complimentary workshop registrations, making it convenient and efficient to participate in the training that will help to advance the institution's education abroad goals.

Whalen then outlined some of The Forum's advocacy efforts at both the federal and state levels. There have been federal and state efforts to pass legislation related to the safety of students during education abroad, and throughout this process The Forum has been active in advocating for the best interests of its members. Draft legislation is now being discussed in both New York and Virginia, and The Forum has alerted its members in these states and advocated on their behalf. In addition, at the federal level there is continued discussion about whether to introduce a bill to regulate aspects of education abroad health and safety.

Whalen explained that in response to these legislative efforts, The Forum has advocated for its members and the field by working in close collaboration with NAFSA and the [Alliance for International Exchange](#). These associations have worked together to send a unified message to legislators that emphasizes that the best way to ensure student safety is by promoting best practices rather than by mandating collection of data that will not enlighten our understanding. Whalen also noted that The Forum has also been able to produce resources and data that assist with this effort, such as the Insurance Claims Report and the Advocating for Students Abroad resource, both of which attendees received in their conference bags. Whalen said that The Forum will continue to be actively engaged in monitoring and responding to calls for legislation of the education abroad field to ensure that our members' goals and interests are effectively represented.

Next, Whalen explained that in the next two months The Forum will continue to serve its members in a number of ways, and mentioned three in particular:

- A webinar to discuss the draft Title IX guidelines that were discussed here at the conference;
- The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Standards of Good Practice Institute focusing on Health, Safety, Security and Risk Management at Northwestern University on June 23;
- And finally, the Professional Certification Accelerated Residency Program in Carlisle, June 13-15.

He then stressed that if an institution or organization is not currently a Forum member, this is an excellent time to join in order to benefit from these and other services and benefits. The Forum is currently in its complimentary membership period, where institutions can join and try out membership on a complimentary basis until the end of the fiscal year.

Whalen noted that The Forum remains a nimble association that is in close touch with its membership. Its priorities are determined and shaped by all of its members in order to serve its member institutions.

Whalen then thanked Kelly McLaughlin, Council Chair, and the Forum Council colleagues who effectively represent these member needs and collaborate to develop the member services and resources that all members need, many of which are visible at the conference such as the important State of the Field Survey that provides important information about trends and issues in the field, or the Inclusive Excellence initiative that will provide essential guidance and resources to the membership and the field.

Finally, Whalen urged attendees to find out more by reading The Forum's Annual Report, and to keep up with the latest news by reading the weekly electronic Forum News. He noted that The Forum prides itself on its transparency, openness, and inclusiveness and reports out all of its activities and information about the association. He concluded by stating, "Our association is stronger today than ever before, and it is due to the active participation of our members that results in meaningful, high quality resources that continue to improve the field of education abroad.

### **Financial Report: Mary Anne Grant**

Grant outlined the strong financial position of The Forum, noting its reserve fund of over \$1.5 million, the in-kind support provided by Dickinson College, and the outstanding financial management provided by the staff. The Forum once generated a surplus for the ninth consecutive year and had a successful, clean audit. The Annual Audit Report and IRS 990 form are available on the web site; additional financial information is contained in The Forum's Annual Report, also available on the web site.

### **Council Report: Kelly McLaughlin, Council Chair**

McLaughlin noted that five Council members have completed their 3-year terms. He ask those in attendance to thank the following for their service to The Forum:

- Brett Berquist, Director International at the University of Auckland;
- Laurie Black, Dean for External Relations and Strategic Enrollment, SIT;
- Nick Gozik, Dir. of the Office of Int'l Programs and the McGillycuddy-Logue Center for Undergraduate Global Studies, Boston College;
- Anne Haberkern, Director of Curriculum, Portland Community College; and
- Mark Lenhart, Executive Director, CET Academic Programs

McLaughlin then reported on the Council and its five content committees and the following highlights:

- The Advocacy Committee, chaired by Heather Barclay-Hamir, developed an on-line Advocacy Clearing House, which brings to one place a great range of resources that help to make the case for education abroad.

- The Curriculum Committee, chaired by Andrea Custodi, revisited its charge and is reinvigorating its focus on academic study, which, to borrow the committee's own phrase, is at "The Heart of What We Do."
- The Data Committee, chaired by Kristen Mallory, delivered another great State of the Field Survey, providing data-driven insights that impact so many aspects of what we do.
- The Outcomes Assessment and Research Committee, chaired by Nick Gozik, continued to build upon its excellent on-line Outcomes Assessment Toolbox and to make important updates to The Forum's Undergraduate Research Awards process.
- The Standards Committee, having worked on the 5<sup>th</sup> Edition of The Forum *Standards* last year, took up the topic of Inclusive Excellence and is helping to shape conversations around that vitally important issue.
- In addition, the Strategic Communication for Health and Safety Working Group, chaired by Christina Carroll, developed advocacy materials that are focused on study safety abroad, concerns about which thread through every decision we make as education abroad professionals.
- McLaughlin then thanked Sarah Spencer of The University of Saint Thomas for serving as Council Vice Chair, and for playing a pivotal role in ensuring a great year for the Council.

McLaughlin then asked everyone present who served on The Forum Council and/or on a Council Committee or Working Group to stand to be recognized.

Chair Mary Anne Grant adjourned the Business Meeting at 8:35AM.