

Lawsuit with College Settled

Board Sets New Direction for Association

Published in The ECHO, Winter 2005

We are pleased to report that, upon the acceptance of our new name by the Massachusetts Secretary of State, Framingham State College has agreed to drop all outstanding claims in its lawsuit against our independent Alumni Association. At its September meeting, your Executive Board voted unanimously to drop the Association's outstanding counterclaims, thus bringing an end to a two-year legal struggle.

While all of us who were involved in that difficult and unfortunate episode are relieved to see it end, we are immediately aware of the many new challenges before us. The end of the lawsuit does not change many of the conditions between the Association and the College that had brought it about. The Association is still not recognized by the College, which supports its own Framingham State College Alumni Association. We still maintain two separate and un-reconciled alumni databases. We sponsor and run separate but similar alumni activity programs. We produce separate alumni publications, each with incomplete Class News. We have fundraising campaigns that are difficult to tell apart and cause divided loyalties and hard feelings. It has become evident that an ongoing competition between the College's alumni activities and our independent Alumni Association is not in the best interest of the Alumni, the Association, or the College.

As we take a fresh look at our mission in the light of recent developments, it is heartening to note that the College's Development and Alumni Relations Office has made impressive strides in the year since Mr. Alan Quebec has taken charge. The office is now well staffed and well funded as well as extending its outreach to alumni with new innovations.

Your Executive Board has looked very closely at all these factors. It has come to the conclusion that the best way to eliminate the confusion and stress of the past few years, and to begin a healing process that will lead to a new and cooperative relationship with our College, would be to realign our mission around those functions that do not duplicate or otherwise conflict with the College's alumni-related activities. These functions are primarily concerned with the maintenance and administration of approximately thirty scholarship, student loan, and alumni benevolence funds. All other functions would be either discontinued or merged with the Development and Alumni Relations Office. While this would be a major revision of the purpose and goals of our 130-year-old Association, it appears to be the only way we can reestablish a productive relationship with our College, a primary reason for our founding back in 1874.

There are many details to be worked out, not the least of which will be to obtain membership approval of corresponding bylaw changes. Discussions with the College to work out these details have already begun. The Bylaws Committee is working on a restructuring of the bylaws to be submitted for membership ratification at our 2005 Annual Meeting.