

MUAA National Board of Directors - Overview

MUAA National Board of Directors background:

The Marquette University Alumni Association has existed formally since 1893. For most of the time since, the National Board of Directors has guided the MUAA activities. Naturally, the organization and shape of the board has evolved over time, but it has consistently involved alumni volunteers dedicated to giving back to a university that made them who they are, and gave them the knowledge and talents to shape their and the greater world. As recently as September, 2009, the board revisited and restated its role, and articulated its directors' job responsibilities (job description attached).

Focus of MUAA National Board directors:

The job of our directors is to focus at the 10,000 foot level to keep sight of the broader reach of MUAA programs and services. And while our directors' affiliation with particular college or interest-based alumni boards or regions of the country makes up part of who they are and contributes to their perspective, we don't want directors to restrict their thinking to what things mean to only a segment of the alumni community. We want to focus board directors on high-level thinking, and get their direction on issues that reach across all segments.

Roles of MUAA National Board directors:

Advisor -- The MUAA National Board of Directors is an advisory body. Its long history has seen many roles come and go, but its purpose has never shifted off the foundation that alumni advice and input is crucial to our success in engaging our alumni. It is a corps of talented, dedicated stakeholders to help us make our efforts the most targeted, the most effective, they can be. Through their own academic experience and professional expertise, our directors can make our MUAA plans better. Their feedback is actively sought.

Advocate – Every great organization needs leaders and champions. Marquette is no different and we look at our National Board directors as such. Marquette Alumni Engagement staff likes to think that their word counts heavily in vouching for Marquette programs. However, staff gets paid to advocate on behalf of MU. Volunteers don't!

Ambassador – When volunteers step up to advocate for MU, or speak on behalf of a university program, they do what staff cannot. We count on our directors to be door openers, in their local communities and their professional circles, and with their friends and others. When Marquette is able to enlist volunteers onto the host committee for a CIRCLES event, for instance, we are attracting more people, and showing the importance alumni have in the Marquette community. Volunteers are opening doors for Marquette. And in this way, volunteers bring a dimension to our work that gives Marquette a distinct advantage.

Visionary – While together we can devise and execute plans to engage our alumni, directors can and should be drawing on their expertise to guide us into the future, helping us always to be ahead of the curve, providing us a competitive advantage over all the other organizations and causes that vie for our constituents' attention.

Alumni conscience -- A key role is keeping us all honest and accountable to the purpose, guiding principles, goals, and the agreed-upon strategic initiatives. Large boards can drift off target of what is most important. As our conscience, this group – each individual director – is charged with keeping us on target.