



Our Mission: We disrupt generational poverty by supporting, preparing, and empowering young people at distinct stages of life to break down barriers on their path to success in adulthood.

**Northwestern University Settlement Association
Board of Directors Regular Meeting**

**1400 W. Augusta Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60642
Guild Hall**

In-Person Meeting – Mask Wearing Optional

Present:

Tracy Heilman
Sarah Shumway
Andrew Stevens
Sydney Browning
Amy O'Donnell
Alice Schaff
Kurt Mueller
Hollis Sunshine
Lieke Hakkenberg
Virginia Burstine
William Welnhofer
Christine Jacobek

Staff:

Carole Wood
Danielle Lapointe
Edison Ureña
Jamie Merchant
Jason Smith

Amy O'Donnell states that quorum has been reached and calls the meeting to order

1. Public Comment

Amy O'Donnell

Amy calls for public comment. None addressed.

2. Board Chair Report

Amy O'Donnell

a. Feedback regarding separate annual meeting in April 2024

Amy thanked Jason and staff for a good start to the school year. Amy updated the members that Bill and Jean Rowe came for separate site visits to both schools, they were both impressed. Both were happy to rebuild that relationship, renewing their support, and were both very pleased. Amy stated that we will continue to build that relationship.

Amy reported on the CEO review process and expressed satisfaction that Carole will be returning for another year. She invited questions or discussions about the process.



Amy praised the success of the Better Futures Luncheon, acknowledging Lakesha, Hailey, Danielle, the committee with Ginny, Jasmine, and Jamie for their contributions. She mentioned the need for an NSF foundation meeting, pending Bob Best's return from Australia. Amy thanked board members who purchased tables and attended the luncheon.

The discussion shifted to the annual meeting for 2024. Amy raised the question of whether a separate annual meeting in April would be desirable, and 12 hands were raised in favor. The location was undecided, but Carole suggested inviting auxiliary boards, guests, donors, and potential donors. She proposed having a ticketed event, possibly reaching out to Northwestern. Kurt Mueller noted the historical emphasis on the social aspect of the meeting.

Carole suggested holding the event up north, and Amy handed over the floor to Carole for her report.

3. CEO's Report

Carole Wood

a. Rowe Update

Jason Smith & Staff

b. GLAS Program Intro

i. Guest Speaker: Kate Meredith, President - Geneva Lake Astrophysics STEAMS & Staff

c. [CEO's Report](#)

i. KPI progress

ii. Data system update

Bryan Heidel

iii. Updated Organization chart

Carole informed the members about the availability of a first draft of an institutional dashboard designed to provide a snapshot of the organization's performance across all programs. She noted that it currently excludes financial data but will incorporate financials in the future. Carole expressed gratitude to Danielle for assembling the dashboard and encouraged feedback from the team.

Moving on to the agenda, Carole highlighted the development section, emphasizing an ambitious goal of \$3 million for FY 24. She mentioned that one million has already been secured and that development is actively pursuing a significant grant to support out-of-school time activities. Carole thanked those who have contributed and opened the floor for any questions related to the CEO report. She then introduced Kate Meredith to discuss GLAS Education and its integration into the Settlement's work. Carole concluded by mentioning that Jason would provide an update on Rowe after Kate's presentation.

Kate Meredith greeted the Board and stated that her history goes back to teaching. Kate continued to explain that her background passion was biology, but when she saw how astronomy can get students motivated about math, she was hooked. She managed to make this transition to the GLAS



project right when the University of Chicago decided to close the center. They just had their 5th anniversary on Oct 1. Happy to find an organization to merge with and align our mission on service and making the world a better place through science and STEM education. Experience reinforces that astronomy is a gateway science, and can be used for promoting mental health. Very confident that our small org can make a big contribution to what you're doing here.

Kate added that there is a solar eclipse in April, and she and her colleagues want to get to know the organization through that event. Her team is working with staff down here to make sure that is aligned with what's needed down here and to ignite student engagement in STEM, and to see a pathway to really cool careers. Kate was a House in the Wood counselor in the 80s, and it's fun to see how the organization has changed and grown. She stated that on the upcoming Saturday GLAS would attend the Southside Science Festival, to visit and engage with the community. They are looking at resources they can bring in to help. Kate ended by stating that there were lots of things happening at the Settlement and that they are looking forward to doing more.

Amy stated that we are so fortunate to have an opportunity for this enrichment, their location in WI has cutting edge technology. Staff are grad students, former faculty, etc. Being able to bring all those resources to the scholars down here can be a key differentiator for us, especially heading into charter renewal.

Kate stated that the teen program students are going to be using a green screen to make content interesting to them and develop media & content creation skills.

Carole interjected that when she saw how they're using all this technology to engage young people, it made her really excited about the resources GLAS can bring to the NUSH fold.

Holly Sunshine asked if most of GLAS's work has been with high school age students?

Kate responded that between COVID, leaving the building, and not having space to do the programs for young kids, they had not been able to restart those yet, but they have a lot of experience and knowledge of working with these age ranges and adapting to their needs, and to developmental and scientific skills at each age level. We're ready for them.

Holly stated that Kate mentioned a merger, and asked: what's the difference between collaboration and a merger?

Amy elaborated that the CEO can hire three people, she can hire people without board approval as she does all the time. Kate's salary is covered by a NSF grant, so that's paid for. We're dealing with Wisconsin nonprofit status, so as she's not a lawyer she wouldn't call it a merger, but financial due diligence has been worked out.

Carole pointed out that when Rowe was first founded it was all about STEM, so we need to bring that back. This seems like the perfect way to do that. We want to make GLAS Education a program



of NUSH, allowing us to embed it across everything we do. We've done due diligence on the financial side, just need to cover the legal side.

Kate added that she has two years left on the NSF project, it covers 20% of her salary. She stressed the importance of not losing the international network they've built up; the potential here is to build up student interest, and start identifying and training mentors, and stick with them as they go on to pursue their career. Persisting through college is a cliff for our kids, but with these international connections we know who can be good mentors, who can help lead these kids.

Virginia Burnstine stated that the program sounds inspiring, then asked Kate to talk about the connection between the GLAS curriculum and the testing standards our students have to take?

Kate answered that it overlaps with the kinds of things they'd learn in the solar eclipse activity, and with sixth and eighth grade curriculum. Research is clear that students internalize standards and pay attention if they're accountable not to a test, but to their community. If the astronomy events are something they watch and participate in building, and worked on, and publicized, they will be much more engaged. It increases their chances of doing well on tests, and STEM identity and self-efficacy. These traits are just as important as content: a sense of belonging, a sense of ownership. Practical experience gives them the "I can," which is so important.

Carole added that the old school "drill and kill" approach to get up to speed on STEM doesn't really work anymore. Students are disinterested, but adding something exciting and different can really make the difference.

Virginia agreed that this makes kids feel safe in their environment, but also excited and motivated, which is huge.

Sarah Schumway stated that her understanding is that it's not quite a merger, but it's an exclusive relationship between NUSH and GLAS. Then asked if there is any potential in the future to export this to other schools?

Kate answered that potentially, there could be opportunities on the speaking circuit which brings in money. She will be at the American Astronomical Society meeting, representing NUSH at this conference will let us recruit high-quality partners, etc.

Carole mentioned that it's worth thinking about how to embed Family Cares in other parts of the community, like that, how do we spread these beyond our immediate community?

Holly asked what does the international outreach mean?

Kate responded that international outreach is the sonification lab world chat, the workshop in the Netherlands for example. We contract with unis for students with disabilities. As far as students go, we have capacity to serve so many more students than we are. Science organizations, including



astronomy, are very concerned with DEI issues, so it's a good combination.

Amy added that their local connections and donors in Lake Geneva will help us too. It's an exciting opportunity for us.

Virginia stated that Kate's background as a teacher is great and very valuable too, that background is crucial.

Holly asked what would happen to other things GLAS does?

Kate responded that some of those are winding down already, the responsibilities in Wisconsin. Tito's philanthropic giving funds us for the dark skies program, we might need to discontinue that. We've plotted out the things that get dropped, cut back high school office hours etc. We have a good relationship with University of Chicago interns.

Jason began his report by stating that Rowe is in the 5th week of school. There's a great crop of new teachers who are bringing a lot of positive energy to the school, a lot of open-mindedness. The leadership team is working hard and doing a great job. Enrollment was lower than anticipated, so having conversations about how to rightsize that. Jason continued to state that giving teachers a voice to develop their toolkit, and also hiring has been very strong from a DEI perspective. Relatively few teachers with little experience straight out of college. They have recruited a good number of teacher candidates of color who are bringing an extremely valuable perspective that wasn't there last year. Fall sports have started, boys soccer is killing it, girls volleyball is competing. Overall, it has been a good start for the year.

Sydney asked if at the next board meeting, Jason could share how well the new teachers are doing, like a progress update? How big was the difference that was made? Jason responded that they can certainly do that.

Amy asked how Rowe stacked up against CPS test scores. Jason responded that we have work to do, some areas we're close to CPS, other areas there's still work to do. One hindrance is the turnover of teachers, so if we can hang on to teachers the consistency makes a huge difference. In comparison to area schools, we're in the ballpark but there's a lot more to be done.

Carole added that Rowe did better than a number of local schools. Some schools have a large Latino population, a similar population to ours. But we are outperforming Saban, a magnet school, which is a big deal.

Kurt asked how often is this test taken? Jason answered that the test is given once in spring. We track a number of indicators throughout the year with different assessments. The spring test is sort of post facto, more used for Fall planning. But with the different assessments + MAP and IR data, our teachers take that data and can adjust as necessary. MAP gives the teachers detailed reports about how the kids are doing, but also what areas of curriculum to focus on and adjust if needed.



Sydney stated that she's curious to know which staff have the longest tenure. Students do better when they see the same teachers for a long amount of time.

Hollis asked if recruitment for next year was going to start in the fall? And if Jason could describe what the engagement coordinator is doing?

Jason responded that Dama, the recruitment and engagement coordinator wasn't here at the start of last year, but now she is, so she's hitting the ground running in preparation for next year. She's well ahead of schedule compared to last year in terms of outreach efforts. Working on advertising, communications out to recruitment areas, site visits. But earlier family engagement is going to help us get the words out to the parents, and also reaching out to pre-K programs in the area. Since Kindergarten enrollment was lower than we thought it would be, we're focusing on that range intensively. Carole added that Dama is also spending time with ECE families, making sure those kids are kindergarten eligible as they enter Rowe.

Hollis stated that the story isn't different, we're just getting started earlier. Jason responded that more time means a more concerted and focused strategy. Digital marketing is a huge piece helping us to get our name out there. Tabling at events is also happening, it happened in summer and will in the fall too. More time should make a huge difference.

Sarah stated that they mentioned rightsizing, this was a topic last year too. Then asked, how much does that affect your thinking on recruitment? Jason responded that the idea is a better sense of our enrollment sweet spot, we chase enrollment to an extent. Rightsizing is about balancing between enrollment size and quality of services we can deliver.

Tracy Heilman asked if recruitment still happens after school has started? Jason responded that there is not much recruitment done after school has started. We will probably hover around 700 students throughout the year. Kurt added that just to maintain current enrollment will take a lot of work.

Christine stated to Jason that he came to Rowe not long ago, and it's remarkable what collaboration has been accomplished so far. Jason has great ability and results, forward thinking, it makes me feel inspired and hopeful. Christine then asked Jason more about his background.

Jason responded, he couldn't do this job as a first-year principal, but as a seventeen-year principal with a fantastic team Rowe is a great place to work. Not easy by any stretch, but rewarding. They are good kids, they need guidance and so on, but it's great.

Amy gives a shout-out to the students and the parent, Chantel, who spoke at the Luncheon. She seconds the appreciation for Jason's work.



a. Financials

- iv. [NUSA Consolidated Board Budget Report as of August 2023](#)
- v. [NUSA Balance Sheet as of August 31, 2023](#)
- vi. Endowment Reports
 - 1. [Evanston Board Endowment and Family Funds Summary Report as of August 2023 \(Chicago Partners\)](#)
 - 2. [NUSA Main Endowment Report as of August 2023 \(William Blair\)](#)

Bill discussed the overall financial position of the Settlement, noting that the balance sheet, besides debt refinancing, is strong. The endowment managed by William Blair and a smaller endowment through Chicago Partners experienced setbacks in 2022 but are recovering. The budgeted enrollment of 794 students fell short with 710 actual students, leading to a revenue shortfall of around \$330K. Carole and Jason's team identified cost savings to address this, resulting in a negative adjustment of about \$72,889. The ESSR grant will help maintain a surplus for this year, despite the enrollment shortfall.

Sarah inquired about the long-term position if Rowe is right-sized. Bill mentioned that there's minimal room for budget cuts, and if enrollment drops below 710, significant reductions may be necessary. Jason emphasized the importance of stabilizing enrollment between 600-700 students.

Concerns were raised about the impact of COVID aftereffects, especially on younger students. Jason noted ongoing challenges, particularly with socialization issues for five-year-olds.

A discussion about the drop in enrollment revealed citywide factors such as demographic shifts, low birth rates, and Rowe losing tier 1 status. The settlement's location and discipline issues also contributed to attrition. The board explored strategic planning to address potential further drops in enrollment.

The GLAS partnership was discussed, with details about costs, employee location, and the benefits of absorbing the entity. A request was made for a cost-benefit analysis, and Carole mentioned the potential positive impact on securing STEM grants for Rowe.

The meeting concluded with updates on the FY23 audit and plans to refinance an \$8 million debt in July 2024. The next meeting is scheduled for December.

4. Consent Agenda

Amy O'Donnell

- a. Approval of Board of Directors meeting minutes
 - i. [Board of Directors meeting minutes June 26, 2023](#)



- b. Executive Committee Report
 - i. [Minutes August 7, 2023](#)
- c. Head Start Report
 - i. June Monthly Narrative Report
 - ii. July Monthly Narrative Report

Amy called for a motion to approve all items in the consent agenda in omnibus. Alice seconded the motion. All in favor.

Note: With the unanimous consent of the Board, the Consent Agenda shall be acted upon by a single omnibus vote. Any Board member may request that any item on the Consent Agenda be removed and not included in that vote.

5. Committee Reports

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| a. Governance Committee Report | Kathy Elliott |
| i. Election of Board Members | |
| b. Education Committee Report | Alice Schaff |
| c. Program Integration Committee Report | Tracy Heilman |

Amy informed the board that the governance committee couldn't be present due to COVID. She called for a motion to elect Tracy Rayner as the new ECE representative for a term of 1 year. Bill moved the motion, and Hollis seconded it. All in favor, none against.

Alice reported on the recent Education Committee, highlighting that the committee had comprehensive discussions covering various updates on education-related matters. The committee extensively reviewed the charter renewal plan during the meeting. Key discussion points included metrics tracked by the school and their objectives in preparation for the renewal. Noteworthy items in the plan were identified, such as the emphasis on enhancing staff development to improve curriculum delivery.

The Education committee discussed the importance of using data more effectively to inform educational decisions. This initiative aims to enhance the overall educational strategy by leveraging relevant data and analytics. Another significant aspect Alice touched upon in the was the need to improve school culture and discipline. The goal is to create a more attractive environment for both families and parents.

Tracy began the Program Integration Committee report by stating that the program integration committee has absorbed mental health committee. Bryan will serve as co-chair,



and we have a new charter. The committee will identify new programs for integration, forming subcommittees to support wherever needed in the Settlement. Plans are for the committee to meet in two weeks to determine where we want to work on etc. We are like the SWAT team committee, whatever NUSH needs we can jump in and work on it.

Sydney provided an update on the Emerging Leaders Board's recent activities. The board is gearing up for its first fundraiser of FY23, scheduled for October 12. The event will feature a panel discussion on the experiences of young professionals joining a board. The discussion will highlight the importance of board participation, the dynamics involved, and will include sponsorship from local businesses in the neighborhood. The event will take place at NUSH.

Another event is planned for December 7, offering a more relaxed environment, possibly themed as an ugly sweater fundraiser. Sydney mentioned that there are currently up to 15 board members, and interest from potential members continues to grow.

In response to Tracy's inquiry about the ideal number of attendees, Sydney explained that the focus is more on building brand awareness for the Settlement, and there isn't a specific target number. Carole shared that Collins Engineering has expressed interest in partnering with the Emerging Leaders Board, and she offered to facilitate the connection.

Amy commended Sydney for successfully establishing a board from scratch and expressed appreciation for her efforts. Sydney mentioned that they are already exploring venues for the next annual pickleball fundraiser.

6. Auxiliary Board Updates

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|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| d. Emerging Leaders Chicago Board | Sydney Browning |
| e. Evanston Woman's Board | Hollis Sunshine |
| f. North Shore Board | Gina Gooden |
| g. Winnetka Board | Lieke Hakkenberg |

Hollis began her update on the Evanston Women's Board's recent activities by stating the board is actively seeking new members after a hiatus during COVID. Hollis mentioned that they have gained one new member and had one prospective member attend their recent meeting.

The Dollar Letter Campaign is currently underway, with full efforts set to begin in mid-October. The campaign, which originated in 1909 by requesting friends for a one-dollar contribution, still maintains its historical name. Hollis shared that the fundraising requirements have been expanded to accommodate individual fundraising efforts, personal contributions, and other avenues to attract new members.

The board has developed an elevator pitch for fundraising purposes, aiming to concisely convey their mission and goals. Additionally, a brochure has been created to provide an



overview of NUSH programs, enhancing their fundraising materials.

Hollis concluded the update, emphasizing the ongoing efforts to grow the Evanston Women's Board and their commitment to supporting NUSH through various fundraising initiatives.

Lieke reported that the Winnetka Board is in the process of expanding, with new members joining. This reflects a growing and dynamic team working towards common goals. Lieke continued to explain that fundraising activities are in full swing, with the members actively working towards financial goals and objectives. This aligns with the broader efforts to support the organization's initiatives. Lieke mentioned that the Winnetka Board's 100th Anniversary Celebration: A Night of Winning, was planned for Friday October 13. The board members are gearing up for a fun and memorable celebration, showcasing their dedication to the cause.

Lieka shared the date for the wine tasting event scheduled for April 14th, 2024 adding that this event would also be repeated in 2025. These events will serve both as fundraisers and opportunities for community engagement. Lieke concluded the report by expressing enthusiasm for the team's growth, ongoing events, and the exciting prospect of celebrating the 100th anniversary. The commitment to fundraising and community involvement remains a key focus for the Winnetka Board members.

8. Questions/Other

Amy O'Donnell

- a. Next Meeting: Board of Directors Meeting Monday, December 18, Noon | In-person | Guild Hall

Amy opened the floor for questions and comments. Sydney inquired about a coordinated calendar for events across boards. Carole confirmed willingness to work with auxiliary boards to create a coordinated calendar.

Amy announced the next meeting on December 18th and called for a motion to adjourn. Alice motioned, Bill seconded. The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Jamie Merchant

The public is welcome to attend the meeting.

Discrimination based on disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, marital status, or need for special education services is prohibited.