

**School of Earth, Environment and Sustainability
SEES Alumni Board**

Meeting Notes

October 10, 2025

via Zoom and 135 Trowbridge Hall

(Action Items in italics and underlined)

Melissa Evans called the meeting order at 9:10 a.m.

9:00 – 9:10 Roll Call, Agenda Overview (Evans)

Members Present: Jim Eagan, Melissa Evans (Chair), Travis Foss (Center for Advancement), Katie Goff, Meg Raatz, Bill Raatz, Amy Sullivan, Eric Small, Asa Strong, Tim Stroope, Emily Finzel (DEO).

Visiting department staff: Brad Cramer, Jessica Meyer, Ali Geraets, Matt Wortel

Via Zoom: Mike Burkart, Brian Hartman, Luan Heywood, Eric Smith,

Members not in attendance: Secretary Ben Howard, Fund Raising Committee Chair Noah Stern, Mentoring Committee Chair Aaron Suzuki, Matt Bureson

Review October 2024 Minutes and Actions (Howard) – Not done, but minutes are posted at alumni website.

9:10 – 9:35 Introductions (see bios at alumni website)

With 5 new board members all introduced themselves.

9:35 – 10:00 Department Updates (Finzel)

Emily reviewed the building updates and the new faculty onboarding (Mandy Duffy, Hang Chen, Adam Pollock, Daniel Fobi, Matt Tibbits).

Next the hiring plan was reviewed

2025: Population ecologists, solid earth geologist and geographic information scientist

2026: Earth Surface, human geographer, GIS with focus on sustainability

The 5-year hiring plan was reviewed

The investment strategy was summarized. \$7.95 million committed to date with 2 additional TA lines

Note: Trowbridge Hall Facilities Fund is set up and able to receive contributions

Headcount:

EES 250 students

GES 70 students

EPPL 90 students

GIS and Sustainability Certificate – approx., 100 students.

25 Faculty, 8 staff, 52 graduate students

Emily also reviewed the undergraduate and graduate degrees offered by SEES.

10:15 – 10:30 Nominating Committee Update (Sullivan)

Amy reviewed via a slide summary the current board terms. The board membership total is 17, the maximum per the bylaws.

The members of the nominating committee are Katie Goff and Luan Heywood. In October 2026 there will be 2 openings for new members and the intent is to focus on “geography” candidates. Of course, all candidates will be considered. Melissa Evans and Noah Stern will be finishing their second term in October 2026.

New members include: Matt Burreson, Katie Goff, Bill Raatz, Meg Raatz, Eric Small, Erik Smith and Asa Strong

Second term starting for members: Luan Heywood, Tim Stroope, Brian Hartman

Several candidates have been submitted. The nominating committee will be meeting virtually ahead of the spring meeting to make recommendations.

10:30 – 10:50 Alumni Outreach Committee

Amy Sullivan covered the past Distinguished Alumni Awardees and the criteria for their selection.

Amy then reviewed a list of potential DAA candidates

Action Item: Updating the DAA criteria to fit with the SEES (Amy)

Action Item: Brian Hartman has agreed to a second term and will continue as Alumni Outreach Chair.

Action Item: Form an ad hoc recognition committee especially for fund raising but any time alumni contribute in some form to SEES. Recommendation by Meg Raatz.

Melissa moved this action and Bill Raatz and Jim Eagan seconded.

Action Item: Travis Foss will serve on the Alumni Outreach Committee

Action Item: Jim Eagan will move from Mentoring to Alumni Outreach too.

10:50 – 11:10 Fund Raising Initiatives (Stern, Finzel, Foss)

Travis provided an overview of giving to SEES and Together Hawkeye Campaign. The Together Hawkeye Campaign is only tracked at the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) level. SEES giving is lower over the past couple of years.

Leon and Vicki Aden established the Trowbridge Hall Renovation Fund and anyone may contribute to it.

Action Item: Bill Raatz will serve on the Fund Raising Committee

11:10 – 11:30 Mentoring Committee (Suzuki)

Although Aaron was not present there was active discussion. Emily brought up the “Mentoring at Iowa” which is in the Division of Student Life.

Asa recommended adding profiles to the page – and this may be more effective at the SEES site rather than the Division of Student Life

Meg recommended that mentoring should be required in a class. The example discussed was a student should contact a member of the alumni board.

Later in the breakout session a LinkedIn link was set up.....

Travis discussed that the Political Science department has a 2-day alumni meeting and they always hold a seminar and speed mentorship program. The speed mentoring is a 2 hours / 20 students). He can provide more info for us.

11:30 – 11:40 EES, EPPL, GES Executive Officers

The bylaws were reviewed for the responsibilities of the Executive Officers. The officers will represent the SEES majors. Three very willing members agreed!

Executive Officers are:

- Eric Small - EPPL
- Bill Raatz – EES
- Asa Strong – GES

Meg Raatz has agreed to serve as Chair-Elect until October 2026 and then Chair for the next two years of her term (2026-2028). Melissa will become Past-Chair for one year starting in October 2026.

11:40 – 11:50 Other Business

- Kate Tierney will be recognized for her many years as Faculty Liaison with a flower bouquet (Amy to do)

- Spring Meeting will be on Friday, April 10, 2026 via ZOOM
- Rhawn Dennison, 2025 DAA winner, will be the seminar speaker on April 9, 2026

Meeting Adjourned at 12:00 pm

1:15 – 2:00 Committee Breakout Sessions

Committees had breakout sessions to discuss how to be most effective going forward. With the new school and changes to the board and bylaws, now is the time for fresh ideas.