

**Merrill Society Meeting**  
Merrill Provost House  
University of California, Santa Cruz  
September 27, 2015  
9:30 AM – 3:30 PM

**Overview of 2015-2016 Programs**

**Breakout Session 1 – Merrill Society Goals and 2015-2016 Initiatives**

- 1.) *Mentorship* –
  - a. Mentorship can be both formal and informal, and long-term or short-term.
  - b. Engagement between alumni and students as part of a core can lead to mentorship and access to support resources.
- 2.) *Engagement with Latino Alumni* –
  - a. This can lead to support for current Latino students.
  - b. There are already several resources at Merrill currently that could be partnered with: Latin American and Latino Studies, Dreamweavers, Dream Act students.
- 3.) *Field Study* – Alumni can have a greater involvement in field placements, or in internships or mentorships.
- 4.) *Social Media* – Do we need a social media presence?
  - a. Meaningful engagement does not necessarily come from social media, so how do we create meaningful involvement?
  - b. Building an oral history database will build a network of connections that would be more in-depth than the database information that is already available through University Relations.
- 5.) The place to start is to validate and value alumni for where they are in their lives now.

**Breakout Session 2 – Specific Goals of Each Merrill Society Program**

- 1.) *Careers in Public Service 2-Unit Course*
  - a. This may be the first time that many students think about the goals after college. This also may be the first time many students are introduced to the idea of alumni, making this a key moment to change the perception of alumni from only sources of money to people with experiences that are of value to students and to the whole Merrill community. This course is a place where that experience can connect with students and make things happen.

- b. By asking, “what was Merrill/college like?” students get validation of their own experience, as well as inspiration, motivation and direction. It can also alleviate stress for students to see that different paths in life will work out, as they worry about financial stresses and job insecurity as students.
- c. For alumni, mentoring should be value added to their lives. This course can build a multi-generational body, a community, built on the commonality of life pursuits. Ideally, this will generate a connection, an identity that will add energy and ties to the Merrill community. This may be a new role that alumni have not experienced elsewhere where students are actively and eagerly seeking the experience and knowledge out from alumni.

## 2.) Merrill On the Road

- a. Engaging Alumni – This needs to be done on a level other than giving, perhaps by asking alumni ‘what would they get out of the rekindled relationship with Merrill?’.
- b. “Back to School Night” – These could be social events of alumni and students, specifically students who will be starting at UCSC in the fall, that can take place regionally as a social engagement opportunity. This would introduce students to Merrill College, and could be a more social Merrill On the Road to draw alumni in.
- c. Alumni Led Discussions – MOTRs can be facilitated by alumni rather than only by faculty, so that there do not need to be concerns of transporting faculty to each MOTR event.

## 3.) Focus on Africa

- a. There are opportunities to strengthen a two-way connection with the places that this program will touch like planning or offering mixers or conferences to open the community. It would also be beneficial to host opportunities for connecting across generations informally, more often, and consistently.
- b. The group should work to identify ways for alumni to contribute to building and focusing efforts in other places: expanding in the future to Latin America, or more locally Oakland, or another area in China.
- c. There should be work towards building an endowment to support the program in the future.
- d. The focus should be on the study, investigative, and experiential side, on the impact.
- e. Finally, continue to show people why the program matters.

## Mini Merrill On the Road

## **Merrill Society and Alumni Role in Financial Support of the College**

- 1.) Existing Programs – “If we build it they will come.”
  - a.) *Field Study*
  - b.) *Classroom Connection* – The costs for this program are shared with the Pescadero school district, and involve transportation costs to send kids to and from Pescadero every day.
  - c.) *Merrill Undergraduate Research Mentorships* – It would cost \$800.00 for one student Research Mentorship.
  - d.) *Challenge Program* – Programs like this one show how the college system makes a difference for academic life.
- 2.) New Programs – The Merrill Society’s stretch goal can be to support these programs so the money to fund these programs does not come from existing programs.
  - a.) *Merrill On the Road* – This has so far been funded from within the committee.
  - b.) *Careers in Public Service*
  - c.) *Focus on Africa* – The model for focus on Africa is based on making sure that the opportunities were available to all students.
- 3.) What and How to Support
  - a.) The Merrill Society will need to prioritize what will be supported, but it is important to keep options for what people want to give to.
  - b.) Is there a way to keep the funds as flexible as possible?
    - i. The programs could be listed as examples rather than being steadfast categories to give to.
    - ii. The sticking point will be to give people a peace of mind that the money is going to where they have intended it to go to.
  - c.) Accounting to the Society
    - i. It should be as transparent as possible so people will know the status, progress, and truth.
    - ii. Letters, pictures, updates, personal stories, and the like, may go further than an accounting ship.

## **Wrap Up and Next Steps**

- 1.) What We Need – Time, Treasure, Talent
  - a.) It could be beneficial to create a needs statement so that alumni know what they can contribute to support the college today.
  - b.) *Education* – As people become educated they become interested, and once they are interested they can become a champion for the cause and bring in new people to educate.
  - c.) *Documentation* – Once there is proof that the programs are working then new donations have an opportunity to flow in. This documentation can be available on the Merrill Society webpage once it is up.

d.) *A Central Location* – A Merrill Society page linked to the Merrill College page is easy to make and do, but the key will be sustainability. If a certain content scheme is set up, it will need to be something that can be maintained, or else a webpage or other forms of communication will not achieve what it is supposed to.

2.) What We Can Do

- a. *Noel King Lecture Series* – Three lectures have happened with different themes and setups so an important part of this will be to make sure that it can continue, as having a one time only event may do more harm than good. As the Merrill Society this event should be a cause for us to champion only if it involves both alumni and students, but if there are no alumni in the event then perhaps the Merrill Society should not champion it. The Merrill Society in partnership with Laurie and Zoey King could sponsor this event, with editorial control going to Laurie. With a small amount of money we can fill a lecture hall, and Alumni weekend is potentially a good time to do this.
- b. *Focus On Africa* – Given the DNA of Merrill we should look at extending this program to other parts of the world, and to the United States. Additionally, funding for this program cannot be obtained from the same place that it was for this past year. There is time, however, to figure this funding out, it will not be needed until next December (2016).
- c. *Look for a foundation or a grant?* – This would take a grant writer, and may still be a one-time commitment, when the goal is to find sustainable funding.
- d. *Set up a funding mechanism* – Having a mechanism in place for the “Merrill Society” will be beneficial in the long run. If people have a desire to give to specific programs we should be able to accommodate this, but also be able to keep funds general enough to be maximally effective in the college.
- e. *Find ways to engage alumni!* We can find ways to get alumni engaged in whatever way they choose!

**The Next Merrill Society Event**

**Merrill on the Road**

Discussion Leader: David Sweet

Saturday, November 14, 2:00 PM

2481 Heritage Park Lane

Sacramento, CA