

Fellow Alumni,

Same song, second verse. With the ongoing Corona Virus (COVID-19) situation remaining unpredictable at best as we entered the new year it was determined that the Alumni Advisory Board (AAB) should revisit the decision to hold or postpone the Yankton College All-Class Reunion 2021 prior to their regularly scheduled April meeting. There have been positive trends in the decreasing number of cases, hospitalizations and deaths, and with the introduction of multiple vaccines there was increasing hope that the end of the pandemic was imminent.

Unfortunately, there are places in the world and our country where the trends have gone the wrong direction with new and more contagious variants being identified. It was with cautious optimism that AAB Chair **Peter O'Toole '71** directed the office to send a two-question survey to all alumni via the February newsletter to gauge the support for travel and gathering this summer. The hope for a reunion based on trends and increasing vaccination rates unfortunately did not translate to support for a gathering this year, as the majority of the respondents would not travel, even if trends showed continued improvements in the next few months. Therefore, the AAB voted that the All-Class Reunion scheduled for July 2021 should be postponed to 2022 and sent this recommendation to the Board of Trustees (BOT) for final action.

As Chair of the BOT, I immediately forwarded the AAB recommendation to the Board of Trustee members who voted unanimously to accept via email. Again, these were not easy decisions that both groups have made, but in light of the ongoing threats that COVID-19 presents, with more contagious and serious variants and continued recommendations for caution surrounding gatherings, travel and safety protocols, it is a reasonable course of action.

As a group we continue to be in an extremely high-risk category and I believe that we all share the sentiment that we do not want to place folks in any possible position of risk. As one Board member said, "My head says we could do this, but my heart says we shouldn't".

These actions were taken now to allow alumni, the AAB and office staff the time to change plans as needed to postpone the 2021 Reunion activities and begin the process of moving them forward to the summer of 2022. We thank the AAB and Trustees for their time and thoughtful contemplations in this matter and their ultimate decision to put the health and safety of all ahead of any other considerations during these uncertain times.

Stay tuned for the dates and details of the 2022 All-Class Reunion in the next e-newsletter.

**Lee Gass '80**