The 2nd CUAA Council meeting for the 2017/2018 school year was held on November 16, 2017 in room 215 in the Foundation Building. 24 CUAA Council members, 20 guests and 2 members of the CU staff were present.

The evening began at 6:15 PM with a presentation by DeVonn Francis A’15.  DeVonn is the owner of a catering company and he brought sandwiches for the audience made with freshly baked nan bread and flavored with Jamaican curry.  DeVonn explained how he uses food to express his cultural identity, to bring people together, to teach people how food is grown, and to improve lives.  He is improving the lives of people traditionally discriminated against including those of color, women, and gays.  Following the lecture, the council meeting was held.

CUAA President Paul Nikulin CE’06 opened the meeting.  Ed Palacio EE’75 made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2017 Council Meeting. Lynn Landers ChE’60 seconded the motion, and the motion passed with an oral vote.

Annual Fund Chair, Carol Wolf A’84 and CU Director of Gift Planning Peter Congleton gave an explanation of the Irma Weiss Challenge.  Some highlights of the challenge include that it is a 100% match for that donated by any donor who did not give last year, and a 100% match of any increase over what a donor gave last year for repeat donors.  The match funds go into a scholarship endowment fund.  So far, this year, 300 alumni donations have been matched.

Nomination Committee Chair, Susan Shaw A’72 reported that the nominating committee has met once so far.  She said that so far, the number of nominations received is small and she encourages everyone to nominate alumni for council seats and officer positions.  The deadline for nominations is December 1. Susan Shaw also mentioned that the nominating committee would like to hear alumni thoughts on what qualities they feel are important for alumni trustees to have.  Send your thoughts to contact@cooperalumni.org with the subject, Trustee Qualities.

Paul Nikulin mentioned a new CUAA /Student Council project.  It is an easy to use webpage for connecting students with alumni for career networking.  He envisions a page where a student or alumni could enter the field, company or location that they would like to learn more about.  Then an alumni volunteer on the CUAA membership committee will match them with an appropriate alum.  We will use LinkedIn as a tool for this matching.  The CUAA LinkedIn Group is now linked to The Cooper Union LinkedIn page. Paul Nikulin made a plea for people to begin working on the 2018 Block Party.  Claudia Giordano Lasky A’76 suggested partnering with the JSC for this event.

Paul Nikulin also made a plea for volunteers to work on the communications committee.  There is an urgent need for people to help with the A/V equipment during council meetings.

Upcoming events were announced by VP Alumni Affairs, Kelly Occhiuzzo Zack A’90. They include serving pie at the student harvest Feast dinner on 11/21/17, a Meet the Trustees event on 12/12/17, and a Holiday Party on 12/14/17.  Kelly asked alumni to suggest more casual events. Devora Najjar ChE’16 asked what the process is for hosting a casual event, and Kelly answered, that the process begins with contacting her. Christina Aguirre-Ross AR’81 suggested a trip to see the Glass House.  She volunteered to organize this.

Chair of the Awards Committee, Laura Spinner A’89, announced that the Founder’s Day Award winners will be announced on February 8th, 2018.  She is looking for volunteers to design the announcement and help with publicity.  Kierston Mercado A’19 announced that the Art Student Council and the Archive & Exhibition Club will be screening The Ivory Tower on December 8th, in Rose Auditorium at 6:30 PM.  Alumni are invited.

For new business, Barry Drogin EE’83 asked if the on-line alumni directory will be updated soon.  David Minder, Director of Alumni Engagement, said that this is being discussed. There are some privacy concerns that need resolving.  Barry Drogin also had a suggestion for the 2018 Block Party.  He would like to see more of the booths focus on the community, in addition to students.  The meeting ended at 8:17 PM.  The next Council meeting will be held on January 9, 2018.

Minutes prepared by: Mary Lynch, CUAA Secretary