

The George Washington University Band Alumni & Friends  
Summary of Actions by the Board of Directors  
July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

This document serves as the annual summary of actions taken by The George Washington University Band Alumni & Friends as mandated by Section 5.06b of the Bylaws of the organization. The scope of this summary spans from June 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, comprising the first year of the two-year term held by the Board of Directors. Any questions relating to this document should be directed to the Secretary at [secretary@gwubaf.org](mailto:secretary@gwubaf.org).

**Board of Directors**

President:	Patricia Simione, B.B.A '12
Vice President:	Scott Backer, B.A. '12
Treasurer:	Abby Bergren, B.A. '13 (July 1, 2020 - March 1, 2021) Daniel Israelsson, B.A. '20 (March 1, 2021 - Present)
Secretary:	Simon Lazev, B.S. '19
Members At-Large:	Alex Greene, B.A. '18 Blake Kraus, B.A. '17, M.A. '19
Immediate Past President:	Melissa Kincaid, B.A. '07, M.B.A '11

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

On July 7, 2020, GW Bands and GWUBAF hosted a joint Town Hall with members of both organizations to discuss issues relating to the diversity, equity, and inclusion of the organizations. The GWUBAF Board listened to the concerns of the students and alumni relating to various practices and a culture that may not be welcoming for all members, future members, and friends. To address these concerns and improve our organization, the Board crafted an [Anti-Racism Action Plan](#).

Below are some actions that the Board has taken as a part of our Anti-Racism efforts:

- Began an in-depth review of the organizational Bylaws. Directors formed a committee to review and propose amendments to the Bylaws. After initial reviews, it was clear that the Bylaws review process will take several months. In order to ensure that this review is done diligently, the initial deadline of February 2021 was deemed not achievable.
- Launched the [Staff Picks](#) monthly newsletter. Each month, a Director wrote a newsletter highlighting a piece about racial inequity in music and music education. Eight of these newsletters were distributed during the traditional academic year.
- Launched a [Bias Incident Reporting Form](#) on our website.
- Created organizational email addresses for each Director for more direct and individual communication
- Began monthly open office hours with individual Directors
- Began quarterly open comment sessions with the full Board
- Allocated \$300 for GW Bands to use for undergraduate-led anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. These funds have not yet been used but remain allocated for this purpose.
- Continued to regularly meet with members of the GW Bands Student Officer Corps to receive feedback and suggestions on GWUBAF initiatives.

Many of these actions are ongoing. The Board continually discusses ways to improve the organization, and is consistently ensuring its actions are not in conflict with its diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

## **Dr. Benno P. Fritz Spirit Award Fund**

Since Dr. Fritz's passing in 2016, the Board has been pursuing the establishment of a financial award to be given to GW Bands students in his honor. Throughout this year, Directors continued to work with the university to officially establish this award. These discussions involved the GW Office of Development of Alumni relations and Professor Michael Schmitz, Director of Bands. For input on the award criteria and purpose, the Board consulted alumni, current students, and the family of Dr. Fritz.

The award fund was officially established in April 2021 as the "Dr. Benno P. Fritz Spirit Award Fund". This set up the fund as part of GW's endowment and allowed for the collection of funds through the [GW Giving website](#). Directors worked with GWUBAF members on the Fundraising Committee to determine a fundraising strategy. In June, the establishment of the fund was announced to our members and fundraising efforts will begin in July. [More information on the award](#) was posted to the GWUBAF website.

GWUBAF ran a Giving Tuesday fundraiser for the Award in November 2020. Fundraising surpassed the goal of \$1,000.

## **Alumni Weekend 2021**

GWUBAF and GW Bands hosted the annual Alumni Weekend from February 26-27, 2021. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel, capacity, and gathering restrictions, Alumni Weekend was held completely virtually. Events included a networking session, a trivia night, a basketball game watch party, and a social "happy hour". Professor Schmitz and GW Bands students joined videos of alumni and students playing pep band songs into videos that were played throughout the weekend.

During Alumni Weekend, GWUBAF held its annual membership meeting. This meeting featured updates from the GW Bands Student Officers as well as discussions concerning the establishment of the Dr. Benno P. Fritz Spirit Award Fund.

## **Organizational Management**

During the past year, the Board has taken various steps to improve the efficiency of the Board and the organization. These actions include:

- The establishment of a non-profit Google Workspace, including individual @gwubaf.org email addresses and accounts for each director. This improves the ease of sharing files and hosting virtual meetings.
- Held monthly meetings with the GW Bands Student Officers to improve communication between the two organizations
- Improved the membership and dues payment tracking process
- Established new forms of communication with alumni and students, including a new email address, suggestion form, P.O. Box, phone number, and a bias incident reporting form.
- Made significant improvements to the website to improve usability and information accessibility.
- Created an Instagram account to increase social media presence and outreach
- Verified non-profit status and filed all paperwork as required by law
- Attended meetings and webinars hosted by the National Association of Alumni Bands to learn more about the operations of other band alumni organizations