

MILLS

July 17, 2007

Dear Alumnae and Friends:

On behalf of the Board of Governors of the Alumnae Association of Mills College (AAMC) and Mills College, we are writing to share breaking news about a significant transition in the relationship between the AAMC and the College.

At the request of the College, representatives from the AAMC Board of Governors and the College held several meetings to discuss the AAMC-College relationship. After a special meeting on June 27, the Board of Governors voted to revise its Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Mills College so that:

- The AAMC can gain a stronger role in the leadership of the College, and
- Functional responsibilities for alumnae relations can be transferred from the AAMC to the College, allowing for a broader and more cohesive alumnae relations program.

Together, these changes will strengthen the AAMC's ability to fulfill its mission "to promote the interests of the College," which include serving as a world leader in women's education, and "to maintain among its graduates a spirit of fellowship and service."

As the voice of Mills alumnae since its founding in 1879, the AAMC has made defining contributions in the life and history of the College. A vital AAMC is an irreplaceable partner for the College, and the revised MOA reaffirms this relationship.

According to the terms of the MOA as restated on July 1, 2007, the AAMC will retain its current status as a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation independent from Mills College, and will continue to elect alumnae to its own Board of Governors. In addition:

- The President of the AAMC Board of Governors will now serve as a regular voting member of the Mills College Board of Trustees, and will be the AAMC's primary spokesperson on the College's board.
- Alumnae Trustees, elected by the AAMC membership, will continue to serve jointly on the Mills College Board of Trustees and the AAMC Board of Governors. Your current Alumnae Trustees are Sharon Tatai '80, Susan Penrod '71, and Gayle Rothrock '68.
- In consultation with the AAMC, the College will include alumnae on all major campus committees and task forces. These alumnae will provide direction and guidance to Mills administrators and Trustees.
- The AAMC will retain its ability to use Reinhardt Alumnae House as a gathering place for alumnae.
- The AAMC will retain its endowment account and will be able to accept gifts to the AAMC endowment.

Furthermore, the restated MOA expresses the agreement between the College and the AAMC Board of Governors to transfer the staffing of alumnae outreach and event activities to the Office of Institutional Advancement (OIA) at the College. By drawing upon the College's infrastructure, this transition will result in more comprehensive support of our global alumnae network. The College will carry out all day-to-day aspects of alumnae relations, including publication of the *Mills Quarterly*, management of annual Reunion activities, and organizing alumnae events throughout the country and the world. Two new staff positions will be created within OIA: the Director of Alumnae Relations and the Alumnae Relations Program Coordinator. The AAMC will play a leadership role in alumnae relations activities, through alumnae representatives whom the AAMC will appoint to an editorial board for the *Quarterly* and to a Reunion Committee.

The new MOA replaces one signed in 2005, which, in keeping with best practices in higher education, transferred the AAMC-operated annual fund to the College. This has, as intended, resulted in a much stronger Mills College Annual Fund (with \$2.1 million raised in the 2005-06 fiscal year, 68 percent more than in the preceding year). Ultimately, this means greater support for Mills students, faculty, and the beautiful campus we all treasure.

This new direction for alumnae relations was a joint effort, the result of several weeks of discussion and planning among representatives from the AAMC, the Mills College Board of Trustees, and the College's administrative staff, who formed a working group to lead this effort. The members of the group included: Clare Harding Springs '66, Lifetime Member of the Mills Board of Trustees; James Fowler, Mills Trustee; Anita Bowers '63, AAMC President; Elizabeth Burwell, former Mills Vice President and Treasurer; Sheryl Bize Boutte '73, former AAMC Executive Director; Sharon Tatai '80, Alumna Trustee; Toni Renee Vierra '98, Mills Trustee; and Thomasina Woida '80, outgoing AAMC President. Former College Chief Counsel Robin Isenberg, Anita Bowers, Elizabeth Burwell, and Sheryl Bize Boutte developed the jointly restated MOA.

For some AAMC staff and volunteers, the transition will be bittersweet, as it represents a significant departure from the association's traditional structure and staffing. Yet we hope that all alumnae will work with us to seize this opportunity to make the AAMC a stronger presence than ever in the life of the College. If you would like to read the full terms of the restated MOA, please call 510.430.2112 to request a copy.

The College and the AAMC are now working to establish a transition committee and a plan for implementing the new MOA. Please look for further announcements about our progress and ways to get involved.

Sincerely,

Anita Aragon Bowers '63
President
Alumnae Association of Mills College

Vivian M. Stephenson
Chair
Mills College Board of Trustees