

# Summit Report

## March 19, 2022

Summit I, held on February 26, 2022

**Participants:** Suzy Jane Amy Edward '21 Alice Hewitt '15, Rachel Cefalu '14, Judy Greenwood Jones '60, Benita Harris '74, Gwen Foster' 67, Laurel Burden '68, Kellidee Little '90, Sharon Anita Coleman '68, Debra Connick '85, Katherine Mahood Swartzenberg '93, Claudia Mercado '06, Leah Zippert '90, Thu Ha Tran '11, Susan Penrod '71, Kieran Turan '90, Vicki Luibrand '75  
Kristen Caven '88, Kathy Roskos' 80, Cynthia Mahood Levin' 95, Viji Nakka-Cammauf '82, Sabrina Qwist '11 '17,

**Observers:** Debby Dittman '68 (notetaker), Alexa Pagonas '91

This summit was facilitated by [Jim Langley](#), who facilitated the summit of 2015.

Key elements discussed and recommendations made regarding:

- Whether those who graduate from Northeastern should qualify as members of AAMC
- If AAMC should engage and align with, offer support to, Northeastern
- What it will mean to be Mills alumnae in the future, how we define "alumnae" in the future, and how to advance our purposes

Time was spent discussing how participants benefited from a Mills education, what aspects of a Mills education participants would like to pass to the next generation.

Responses included how Mills has provided a safe haven with incredible curriculum and professors, and how Mills empowers women and fosters loyalty and lifelong friendships.

Additionally, participants sought to respect our history, campus beauty, and keep Mills a safe environment. Also discussed was the fight for the value of a liberal arts education, justice, and equality for all students, especially equal opportunity for first generation students, students of color, and LGBTQ students.

When discussion turned to if and how to engage with Northeastern, there were issues raised about trust and a lack of information about what the merger/acquisition actually entails.

Discussions occurred about AAMC's claim to Reinhardt. Under the Memorandum Of Collaboration, we have unconditional use of RAH, however, once Mills is absorbed, those rules no longer apply. Even under the existing agreement, were no changes made in the ownership of Mills, the College can move alumnae headquarters, or return building costs and take control of the building. According to one of our Alumnae Trustees, Debi Wood, Northeastern negotiations have shown support for alumnae rights to Reinhardt Alumnae House. (NOTE: Debi Wood was not present)

As to membership in the AAMC, a recommendation was made stating: "The current bylaws, as written, stand with one amendment added to the student membership by-law", which reads: "Each undergraduate student who completes the equivalent of one full-time semester at Mills College shall become a member of the Association upon the graduation of her class." The amendment recommended is: *"or by the end of May 2022, if Mills College ceases to exist as an entity."*

The group decided to hold a second summit to continue the work on the AAMC mission and to further discussion. Suggestions for the AAMC mission/purpose became the "Guiding Principles" put forth as the foundation for the second summit

Summit II, held on March 12, 2022.

**Participants:** Kellidee Little '90, Joyce Yee '90, Kristen Caven '88, Susan Penrod '71, Cynthia Mahood Levin '95, Gwen Foster '67, Claudia Mercado '06, Kieran Turan '90, Wendy Ng '79, Alexa Pagonas '91, Suzy Jane Edwards '21, Jennifer Moxley '93, Katherine Mahood Swartzenberg '93, Ashlin Mahood '00, Kathleen Roskos '80

**Observer:** Viji Nakka-Cammauf '82

This summit was facilitated by [Debra Connick](#), Class of '85.

Guiding Principles, foundational for any future iterations of AAMC Mission statement:

- Advocate for continued fellowship.
- Promote increasing the endowment fund for AAMC and discuss how to use our fundraising ability.
- Foster respect and preservation of the legacy of a Mills education.
- Advocate for the support of Mills' liberal arts programs of historical importance, while emphasizing the value of women's education.
- Promote the value of safe space at Mills, and offer continued safe spaces for all in the AAMC, particularly marginalized populations.
- Foster respect for the living legacy of Mills as recorded and shared by alums.
- Advocate for inclusiveness and diversity in the AAMC membership, including people of color, first generation students, LGBTQ, nonbinary, resuming, and nontraditional aged students.
- Foster feminism.
- Promote the value of liberal arts, a broad education and other historical departments.
- Promote democracy.

While Mills College is comprised of students, staff, faculty, and alumnae, the AAMC is comprised of alumnae of Mills College. It was noted that alumnae are quite supportive of students, faculty, and staff.

There are a number of alumnae who support Mills College at Northeastern, and the Institute. There are also a number of alumnae who do not.

While this meeting was to focus on the AAMC's future, a great deal of time was spent on the merger and ways to save Mills

A recommendation was made for AAMC to provide balanced, truthful financial data on our website, including data from the College's financial audit of 2021, and to do this while maintaining a neutral posture.

Members of SaveMills Coalition presented much information countering the argument that Mills' financial problems required the acquisition. A participant requested Save Mills leadership in attendance condense and synthesize their

information into bullet points for clarity and simplicity, then provide it to AAMC to consider sharing with all alumnae.

Another request was made to have AAMC share the Matthew Hendricks consolidated information on our website.

Request was made for AAMC to get information out to our constituency about efforts to engage activists, as well as efforts to determine what AAMC would look like should the merger/acquisition be completed.

Additionally, the recommendation was made for AAMC to continue to fundraise from and engage with the entire alumnae community.

A draft letter was read by one participant, written by alums, the purpose of which is to shine a light on details of the Northeastern deal that were previously unknown. The letter, once complete, will first be sent to the Board of Trustees for their action and awareness, and then to the Department of Education for further investigation.

Near the end of the meeting, many sought to form working sub-groups to take action. Those groups include, those who wish to:

- (1) Further work on the future state of the AAMC
- (2) Have another summit
- (3) Focus on helping current students (already being led by alumnae)
- (4) Contribute to and shepherd the draft letter mentioned above (already being led by author of the letter)

Report submitted by Debra Connick, Class of '85