

Our Antioch University

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

SEPTEMBER 2018

RICH PREYER

New Board of Governors member



Rich Preyer joined the Antioch University Board of Governors in June 2018. He is in his first term and currently serves on the Board's Academic Affairs and the Institutional Advancement Committees. Rich graduated from AUNE's MS in Environmental Studies in 2016. We interviewed Rich in August for this issue of Common Thread.

AU: What about Antioch University do you find most compelling and intriguing?

RP: Since its inception, Antioch has not only set the academic gold standard for students by providing them powerful, transformative learning experiences inside and outside of the classroom, but perhaps more importantly, Antioch gives students the tools to make a positive difference in their homes, communities, and world. I feel fortunate to have learned from faculty that advocate for people whose voices have been excluded from the public debate. I think it is uncommon to find an institution of higher learning that to its core encourages students, faculty, and alumni

to participate and be global citizens in all aspects of their lives. I am proud to be a part of this remarkable community.

AU: I am sure you have many responsibilities currently in your life. What has drawn you to serve on the Board of Governors of Antioch University?

RP: I hate to offer the cliché response of "I want to make a difference and give back" but that adage holds true for me. I want to reinvest some of the knowledge, resources, and energy that Antioch so generously showed and gave to me during my time there. I graduated from Antioch New England in 2016 and have assimilated back into old friend groups and communities in Asheville, North Carolina like nothing has changed. With that said, I still miss the unbridled energy and thoughtful action that students, faculty, and staff brought to my life on a daily basis. I am excited to re-engage in that dynamic as a Board member.

AU: What contributions do you hope to bring as a Board member to leading Antioch University?

RP: I join the Board with a big, fat slice of humble pie in hand. This is my first time on a board and I recognize that my lack of experience might be a liability in the eyes of some people. I agree that I haven't put the time in serving on committees, reading balance sheets, or raising funds for the greater good of the University, but I do hope I am still in touch with the Antioch student perspective. It still feels like yesterday that I was sweating through orientation with my cohort in Keene.

Despite my lack of experience, I bring a love of learning and loads of enthusiasm that will hopefully provide a spark for the Boardroom and beyond. I think those attributes pair naturally with the non-competitive and collaborative learning environment that Antioch cultivates across all of their campuses.

AU: What do you hope to learn as a Board member about leading universities in today's complicated environment?

RP: To answer that question as succinctly as possible – as much as I possibly can. That is a cop out response but I am ready to be a sponge and soak up everything that fellow board members, students, and faculty are willing to share with me. There are classes, semesters, and even PhD programs (including at Antioch) dedicated

to the study of leadership. I believe in the tenet that listening to all of the voices in the room is more valuable than one individual perspective.

Along with listening closely to all the voices in the room, I hope to become a more intentional thinker and problem solver. To quote from my "Leadership for Change" course, I agree with George et al. that (2011) "... authentic leaders demonstrate a passion for their purpose, practice their values consistently, and lead with their hearts as well as their heads." I know I can lead with my heart, I just need to keep my ears and mind open too.

AU: If I were to do this interview with you 5 years from now, what would you like to be able to say about...

a. the University?

RP: That all of the Antioch University campuses and programs are thriving, students and faculty are engaged and happy, and that our mission to empower people to fight social, economic, and environmental injustices is still at the forefront of all of our thoughts and actions. That may be too unrealistic or optimistic of a response but I am a glass half full kind of guy.

b. your experience on the Board?

RP: That I no longer feel like a deer in the headlights while reading financial statements. Just kidding but seriously, I hope to have a better sense of what it means to be a responsible and effective Board member and leader. I also want to be able to look back and know that Antioch is in a better position to serve its students, faculty, and alumni than before I arrived on the Board.

AU: What would you like our readers to know about you that they might not know from your brief bio statement?

RP: That I am really good at the "Two Truths and a Lie" game. For example, I have three hamstrings, I hiked the entire Appalachian Trail, and I performed on stage with Celine Dion in middle school. Y'all tell me, which one is a lie. Best of luck!

Works Cited:

George, B., Sims, P., McClean, A., Mayer, D. (2011). "Discovering your Authentic Leadership." HBR's 10 Must Reads on Leadership (p. 163-178). Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation

Bio:

Rich Preyer III, M.S., currently works at The North Carolina Arboretum (TNCA) as the Conservation and Environmental Education Specialist. He is an educator, curriculum designer, and program evaluator. He recently co-authored Project OWL, a statewide curriculum initiative to help teachers become more comfortable using their school's outdoor spaces to teach science.

He has served as an Evaluation Consultant for Maine Outdoor School (MOS), recently founded by two Antioch alums, and leads evaluation workshops for AmeriCorps Project Conserve, a service program designed to promote environmental literacy and action in local communities in western North Carolina.

Rich also serves on the Board for the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy (SAHC). A land trust based in Asheville, NC that conserves farmland, scenic beauty, clean water, and places for people to enjoy outdoor recreation in the mountains of Tennessee and North Carolina

In his spare time, Rich plays tennis and ultimate Frisbee, fly fishes, backpacks, and rafts.