

ALLIANCE COLLEGE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (ACAA)

Annual Membership Meeting August 24, 2024

Officers in Attendance:

Michael Anderson (1978), ACAA President; James Koscielniak (1981), ACAA Vice President; Susia (Burgess) Styborski (1983), ACAA Secretary; Marcia Pilkievicz (1975), ACAA Director and Membership Chair; Randy Polovick (1981), ACAA Director; Sally (Domzalski) Day (1985), ACAA Treasurer and Foundation Secretary; Richard Day (1985), Chair of Alliance College Alumni Association Foundation; Aundrea Cika-Heschmeyer (1985), ACAA Director; Lori Neese Kolin (1987), ACAA Director; Louis Sitnik, (1986), ACAA Director.

Alumni in attendance: Mary (Modzelewski) Rodgers (1976); Basia (Gdula) Adams (1984); Christine (Marchewka) Pawlowski (1969)*; Roberta (May) Polovick (1981); Selene (Erikson) Szczepanek (1987); Kathy (Strzelecki) Branscomb (1969); Helene Strzelecki Rose (1969); Regina Jaworski (1970); Cynthia (Cvetic) Jarzab (1966); Marilyn (Breon) Sisco (1978); Denise Marie Hamar (1975); Ray Usclowski (1970); Al Purzycki (1977); Cathy (Zielinski) Purzycki (1977); Mary Ann Posanski (1976); Carol (McNerney) Schonewolf (1983); Yvonne Tuchalski (1980); Tess (Rejman) Kurkowski (1978); Chester Ponikowski (1973); Ben Kman (1987); Kathleen Jo (Polanski) Noce (1982); Ed Mohylowski (1976).

Alumni attending via Zoom: Kris Kwacz (1983); Chris Rapcewicz (1986); Felicia Bruce; Les Rachocki (1967), Carol Crumley; David Praisner (1987); Celeste Mickiewicz (1967).

*Alliance College Faculty

Call to Order

The meeting was held at the Bayview Conference Center at the Sheraton Bayfront with meeting conferencing via Zoom and was called to order at 10:33 am by Michael Anderson, President. President Anderson welcomed all in attendance and thanked everyone for participating in the meeting. Michael Anderson reminded attendees that they must be a member in good standing to participate in any of the voting during today's meeting. Our membership chair, Marcia Pilkievicz, was ready and available for anyone wishing to pay their membership dues during the meeting. Membership dues are \$45 for 2 years and lifetime membership is available for \$500.

President Anderson introduced the current ACAA Officers and Board of Directors.

The agenda for the meeting was reviewed and available for each participant.

The minutes from the Annual Membership Meeting from November 18, 2023 were approved following a motion by Basia (Gdula) Adams and a second by Regina Jaworski.

2024 Reunion First Impressions

Mary (Modzelewski) Rodgers suggested that a map of the layout of the facilities be provided with the weekend itinerary.

Vice President James Koscielniak reported that a golf cart will be provided for Saturday evening activities. The golf cart can accommodate 5-6 people at a time and will be available throughout the entire evening portion of the events.

Selene (Erikson) Szczepanek asked where the afternoon presentations were being held.

Afternoon presentations are in the same room as the current meeting room.

Selene (Erikson) Szczepanek also suggested that since this was the 3rd time the reunion was being held in Erie PA a new location should be chosen.

President Anderson reported that a survey was sent to alumni post-2022 Reunion and more than half of the respondents indicated a preference for Erie PA.

Randy Polovick reported that we did look at other options and the necessity for a venue to also have sufficient accommodations.

James Koscielniak added that the reunion has been in October in the past but this year the convention center was reserved for the diocese for the first 2 weekends in October of this year.

Cynthia (Cvetic) Jarzab gave thanks to everyone that has made this event happen and that all the activities thus far have been marvelous. She added that the food, the gift bags, and the people have been delightful. Overall, she reported everyone is highly impressed.

Mike Quinn reported that the 1972 soccer teammates are excited and happy to be here and wanted to thank everyone for highlighting the soccer teams at this reunion.

Marcia Pilkiewicz added that other groups or teams could be highlighted at future events, and many in attendance voiced their agreement with the idea.

Chester Ponikowski added that the soccer players and the other alumni networking was an important piece to making the weekend possible and extremely worthwhile.

Aundrea Cika-Heschmeyer reported that activities to get together with alumni from earlier years was an amazing opportunity and we need to make these opportunities happen as we continue to get together.

Financial Report (Sally Day)

Sally Day, Treasurer, reported that she had been serving as Assistant Treasurer and transitioned into the role of treasurer in January 2024, replacing Ed Mohylowski who served as Treasurer beginning in October 2022 to January 2024.

Sally Day reported the cash position of ACAA as of January 2024: \$9,458 checking + \$1,512 savings for a total of \$10,970.

Annual revenue through the timeframe 2020-2022, we collected \$3,585 in membership dues, which included 4 lifetime dues of \$2,000. For 2024, we have collected \$1,810 total in membership dues, \$945 with reunion registration, \$865 without reunion registration. There was no lifetime memberships purchased.

Annual expenses have increased in the last few years as our technology needs have increased. Estimated total annual expenses are \$3,100 which includes: Insurance \$1,100; Quickbooks subscription \$600; Zoom Subscription \$200; Website Server \$200; Website Administrator \$600; Dreamhost Subscription \$200; and Gravity Forms Subscription \$200.

Sally further reported the stream of revenue for ACAA is membership dues and any profit realized from the reunion. It is noted that the reunion is priced at a break-even point.

Comments and questions from the floor were entertained.

Roberta (May) Polovick reminded attendees that we are selling tickets for a Lifetime Membership and the proceeds of the raffle will benefit ACAA. She also gave thanks to Sally as Treasurer for doing a remarkable job throughout the reunion planning process.

Dave Praisner asked if there are any other means of revenue.

Sally Day reported in addition to the two she mentioned earlier, membership dues and any profit from the reunion, the proceeds of the fundraisers going on throughout the reunion weekend will be added income. The fundraisers being held were noted, and include: 50-50, Polish Pottery, Lifetime Membership and Basket raffle.

Selene (Erikson) Szczepanek reminded everyone that all the fundraisers end tonight even though we have events planned for tomorrow, and we were accepting Venmo (payable to Roberts (May) Polovick.

Members of the reunion committee shared different expenses related to the reunion, including but not limited to: food, beverages, security, bartenders, wait staff, DJ (2022 cost was \$400, 2024 cost is \$650), advertising, gift bags, golf cart, rooms for events, service charge of 24%, and tax of 6%.

President Anderson added that we have a food and beverage minimum for each event and if we do not meet the minimum expenditures, we will pay a penalty for each minimum we do not reach.

Membership Report (Marcia Pilkiewicz)

Marcia Pilkiewicz reported we have a total of 84 paid memberships from all alumni. This includes 24 one-year memberships (which is no longer available going forward); 42 two-year memberships; and 18 lifetime memberships. Anyone with a current two-year membership (cost \$45) can upgrade this weekend to lifetime membership with a payment of \$455.

Membership provides:

- Content and maintenance for website www.alliancecollege.com;
- Deliver alumni engagement content through social media platforms;
- Cover costs associated with Alliance College memorabilia;
- Reunion venue deposits; and
- Other Miscellaneous business expenses.

All Alliance College alumni should consider becoming a paid member of the Association. Everyone in the room was asked to contact their fellow alumni and let them know we are here; we need their support to make ACAA last for more years to come.

Cathy Purczyki asked what the membership year was and was told its October to October.

Selene (Erikson) Szczepanek suggested we search for alumni information in ancestry.com accounts to find alumni we do not have information on.

ACAA Website Update (Randy Polovick)

Randy Polovick reported on the happenings surrounding the Alliance College website over the past 2 years. Previously, the website alliancecollege.com was maintained by Chet Federowicz, who sadly passed in 2023. Administrative access to the website was not possible after Mr. Federowicz's death. Alliance College alumni Kathy Jo (Polanski) Noce headed a

group “Partnership Erie” from Penn State Behrend that constructed an interim website, alliancecollege.biz. Since there was no access to alliancecollege.com the group from Partnership Erie had to start from ground level and mirror the information that was displayed in alliancecollege.com.

Randy Polovick happily reported that alliancecollege.com is now back under ACAA control and while it is still a work in progress, many improvements have been made. We have a better governance model with multiple Board members having access to the website and ability to make administrative updates and posts. Alumni will have access to the website to pay membership dues and update their own information. It was reported that membership dues can be paid through the website using Paypal; when a user selects membership level (two year or lifetime) it leads to a link to pay. Paypal does accept credit cards.

While Partnership Erie has re-built the website and helped the Board as an interim measure it was not intended to be a permanent solution to managing the website. Randy Polovick shared that the website committee comprised of himself, Mike Anderson, Kathy Noce, and Aundrea Cika-Heschmeyer sent out three project announcements requesting bids for maintaining the ACAA website. One response was received indicating the party was not interested in submitting a proposal. A second response was received which far exceeded our budget. The third response was from Marquee Creatives for a fee of \$200 for service beginning September 1, 2024 and ending December 31, 2025. It includes one hour per month of free services. Other services such as social media engagement could also be completed by Marquee Creatives staff at an additional fee. Marquee Creatives is a company owned by Alliance College Alumnus and ACAA Director Aundrea Cika Heschmeyer. At a meeting yesterday of the Officers and Board of Directors of Alliance College Alumni Association it was agreed to hire Marquee Creatives as web host and content manager.

President Anderson gave thanks to Dr. Kathy (Polanski) Noce and her team at Partnership Erie for the professional service and for their expertise in assisting our Association over the last 18 months.

Cynthia (Cvetic) Jarzab asked if we lost the old information such as pictures and obituaries. Randy Polovick reported that Partnership Erie was able to mirror everything from alliancecollege.com to alliancecollege.biz so nothing was lost.

Lou Sitnik reported a question from Chris Rapciewicz via Zoom asking about selling Alliance College sportswear on the website to increase revenue and Aundrea Cika-Heschmeyer reported she will be working on this as a priority task.

Selene (Erikson) Szczepanek made a motion to move to the topic of New Business to have Elections at the end of the meeting. Ben Kman seconded the motion. Motion passed.

New Business

Selene (Erikson) Szczepanek spoke about the Poland Trip presentation indicating it was phenomenal. She also suggested that people consider fundraisers for their birthdays as a “donate to Alliance College Alumni Association” event.

Kathy (Strzelecki) Branscomb suggested that the alumni membership registration be noted to be tax-deductible. Ed Mohylowski reported that donations to an association cannot be considered tax deductible. Kathy (Polanski) Noce asked why ACAA cannot be qualified as a 501c3. Richard Day reported it is an IRS determination.

President Mike Anderson presented a powerpoint on **The Future of the Alliance College Alumni Association.**

FACT: We are forecasted to have \$8,500 in our bank accounts after the reunion (assuming a loss of \$1,000). This loss does not include the cost of the bags or tumblers.

FACT: Registration update – 90 registered attendees as of 8/20/24

- 2022 reunion attendees – 99 (10% greater than 2024)
- 22 of 90 registrants paid alumni dues (2 years @ \$45) with their registration (24%)
- Registration revenue this far is \$1,035 (\$517.50 per year)

FACT: Membership revenue from non-reunion attendees - \$855 (19 at \$45) – already in bank account.

Summary – We have 3 years of funds left assuming current registrants continue paying dues.

FACT: We have little interest from the alumni at large to serve on the Board and it is increasingly difficult to retain the Board members we have.

Where do we go from here?

- In all probability, reunion attendance will continue to drop. Aging alumni base.
- We could reimagine a lower cost reunion, but how much savings could we realize and provide a quality reunion? Could it be profitable?
- We could increase alumni dues, but do we believe more than 24% of reunion attendees will contribute at a higher cost? We would need to raise dues to \$85 a year with current membership level.
- We could lean into an alumni engagement initiative but that takes additional money and committed human resources.
- We are at a serious inflection point.

CASE A: Keep operating as we are and let our funds quietly expire?

CASE B: Accept our reality and develop an exit strategy.

President Mike Anderson then opened the floor for discussion.

Selene (Erikson) Szczepanek asked how we are reaching those people that do not use the computer. Perhaps we should be asking for a second contact address, such as child or spouse email.

Ben Kman suggested that only members can have full access to our website, which could in turn encourage alumni to become a member. He also suggested we have on-line meetings on a monthly or quarterly basis to engage alumni and keep membership alumni more fully engaged. He also suggested regular email updates to alumni.

Vice President James Koscielniak suggested that since the Association has given money left over from previous reunions to the Alliance College Alumni Foundation, the Foundation should be asked to give some of their funds to support the Association.

Richard Day, Foundation President, reported that legally the Foundation cannot give money to the association.

James Koscielniak asked if the Foundation could be merged into the Association or taken over by the Association.

Richard Day reported that the Foundation is set up as a separate not for profit organization and cannot be taken over by another group.

Selene (Erickson) Szczepanek spoke of the moral responsibility the Foundation has to its donors who have given money in good faith to be used for scholarships; and added that there could be legal implications if funds were not used as stated.

Marcia Pilkiewicz asked why the profits from previous reunions were given to the Foundation.

Richard Day reported that it was an Association decision to support the scholarships and the legacy of Alliance College to our younger generations.

Sally Day reported that monies have not been given to the Foundation from the Association since at least prior to 2018.

Basia (Gdula) Adams spoke in favor of acknowledging Richard Day's responses and knowledge of the basis of the Foundation.

Cindy (Cvetic) Jarzab asked why the Foundation lost its not-for-profit status, and while it is in this state is the Foundation still governed by IRS rules.

Ed Mohylowski stated it is confusing to have an Association and a Foundation and we should check with Les Rachocki who would know why we have two separate entities.

Richard Day answered that regardless of status the rules of the Foundation exclude giving funds back to the Association and requires that they use the money (for scholarships) as intended.

Randy Polovick thanked Jim for the idea and stressed to all that we need all ideas to help us work through our future, whatever it holds.

Mary Ann Posanski suggested that we ask the Friends of Alliance College for assistance with getting word out, with financial support, and with alumni engagement.

Aundrea Cika-Heschmeyer reported that there had been several Facebook accounts related to Alliance College and in the past others have merged with the official ACAA site except for Friends of Alliance College site.

Marcia Pilkiewicz suggested the Board speak to the administrator of the Friends of Alliance College site.

Basia (Gdula) Adams held up a red packet created for alumni to use in their wills and estate planning. She suggested that alumni consider leaving gifts to Alliance College.

Tess (Rejman) Kurkowski asked why the proceeds from the Poland trip went to the Foundation. Richard Day reported the Foundation sponsored the trip and took on the responsibility and the liability for the trip.

Cindy (Cvetic) Jarzab suggested doing a "gofundme" type fundraiser.

Mary Ann Posanski suggested all alumni need to put a little more into the Association, go to friends, raise dues, do what it takes. She reminds us that we saw what the PNA did to our school, we are better than them.

Cathy Purzycki suggested raising dues to \$50 per year.

Mike Anderson asked if we need to make payment of dues mandatory to attend reunion, including the dues in the cost?

Selene (Erikson) Szczepanek agreed with mandatory dues and a mandatory donation.

Richard Day stated the Board has voted at a previous meeting and made a motion to proceed with an exit strategy. Susia Styborski added that while that is true, we also agreed at a subsequent meeting to raise the issues at this meeting and ask for input from those attending.

Basia (Gdula) Adams stated that 66 colleges have closed since 2020. It is a fact of life. With aging and increased mobility issues, health concerns, we will not be able to maintain this group indefinitely. We should proceed with an exit strategy.

Ben Kman agreed stating an exit strategy is required, keep the group going but also plan for when we can no longer be here.

Mary Ann Posanski suggested a 20 year plan, donate and keep us going while we can but know we will end at some point. What do we have to do?

Mike Anderson read Article XII Dissolution, Section 1. in the bylaws for the Alliance College Alumni Association. "The Executive Board may propose dissolution of the Association by submitting such a resolution to the membership. The resolution shall be ratified by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the ballots returned.

Celeste Mickiewicz stated she is distressed by this conversation. She asked that before we move to an exit strategy, we do a membership campaign and let alumni know what our current state is. We need to work social media, do mass emails to members, and explain the annual expenses the Association has.

Mike Anderson asked for volunteers to be on a membership campaign committee. The following people volunteered: Tess (Rejman) Kurkowski, Roberta (May) Polovick, Mary Ann Posanski, and Ed Mohylowski.

Mike Anderson thanked everyone for their ideas and their support. He asked that anyone having further ideas or comments to please forward them to a board member. He then asked for any other new business.

Cathy Purzycki reported that Christine (Marchewka) Pawlowski left a notation that everyone be advised the traffic at Zabawa Festival was at a standstill and a free shuttle from SS Peter and Paul Church was available.

ACAA Board Nominations and Voting (Lou Sitnik and Selene Szczepanek)

Lou Sitnik reported that all officers and Board members must be a paid member of the Association, anyone wishing to run for a position that is not a paid member must become a paid member if elected.

Marcia Pilkiewicz determined those present with voting privileges based on their membership status.

Nominations for President were then opened.

James Koscielniak nominated Michael Anderson for President. Louis Sitnik seconded the nomination. Mike Anderson accepted the nomination.

Basia (Gdula) Adams made a motion to close nominations for President, seconded by Regina Jaworski. Motion passed.

Kathy (Polanski) Noce moved to forego voting and elect Michael Anderson for President as the single nominee for the office. Mary Ann Posanski seconded the motion. All in favor. Michael Anderson elected as President.

Nominations for Vice-President were then opened.

Richard Day nominated Aundrea Cika-Heschmeyer for Vice-President. Marcia Pilkiewicz seconded the nomination. Aundrea Cika-Heschmeyer accepted the nomination.

Roberta (May) Polovick made a motion to close nominations for Vice-President, seconded by Basia (Gdula) Adams. Motion passed.

Selene (Erickson) Szczepanek moved to forego voting and elect Aundrea Cika-Heschmeyer for Vice-President as the single nominee for the office. Kathy (Polanski) Noce seconded the motion. All in favor. Aundrea Cika-Heschmeyer elected as Vice President.

Nominations for Treasurer were then opened.

Selene (Erikson) Szczepanek nominated Louis Sitnik for Treasurer. Richard Day seconded the nomination. Louis Sitnik accepted the nomination.

Kathy (Polanski) Noce nominated James Koscielniak for Treasurer. Marilyn (Breon) Sisco seconded the nomination. James Koscielniak accepted the nomination.

Basia (Gdula) Adams made a motion to close nominations for Treasurer, seconded by Lori (Neese) Kolin. Motion passed.

Mike Anderson asked each nominee for Treasurer to provide qualifications for the position.

Louis Sitnik reported he has enjoyed his role as a Director on the Board; he has worked his entire career in the financial world, specializing in risk management; his family has a long association with Alliance College and he would be honored to support the Association as Treasurer.

James Koscielniak reported he has been on the Board since 2012 and this is his 3rd time as reunion chairperson, he is a private business owner and in the finance world since leaving Alliance College where he was an economics major; he has a long family history with Alliance College and its legacy is important to him.

Voting was then held with paper ballots or electronic voting for those in person at the meeting and electronic voting for those attending via Zoom. Paper votes were collected by Selene (Erikson) Szczepanek and electronic votes were collected and gathered by Bradley Schommer, Partnership Erie Web Consultant. Ballots were counted by Selene (Erikson) Szczepanek and Tess (Rejman) Kurkowski. There were more votes submitted than those members eligible to vote. Members present at the meeting reported trouble with electronic voting so they then submitted a paper vote, while apparently their electronic vote did tally.

Basia (Gdula) Adams made a motion to destroy all ballots for the vote for Treasurer due to technical issues and re-vote for the Treasurer position with all present in the room vote only by paper and those on zoom vote only electronically. Mary Ann Posanski seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.

Paper ballots were collected and electronic votes were verified.

Louis Sitnik was elected Treasurer.

Nominations for Secretary were then opened.

Selene (Erikson) Szczepanek nominated Susia Styborski for Secretary. Roberta (May) Polovick seconded the nomination. Susia Styborski accepted the nomination.

Richard Day made a motion to close nominations for Secretary, seconded by Roberta (May) Polovick. Motion passed.

Selene (Erickson) Szczepanek moved to forego voting and elect Susia Styborski for Secretary as the single nominee for the office. Aundrea Cika-Heschmeyer seconded the motion. All but one in favor. One abstained. Susia Styborski elected as Secretary.

Nominations for Director, 6 year term expiring in 2030 were then opened.

Roberta (May) Polovick nominated Kathy (Polanski) Noce for Director for a 6 year term, expiring 2030. Seconded by Carol (McNerney) Schoenwolf. Kathy (Polanski) Noce accepted the nomination.

Basia (Gdula) Adams made a motion to close nominations for Director, seconded by Roberta (May) Polovick. Motion passed.

Selene (Erickson) Szczepanek moved to forego voting and elect Kathy (Polanski) Noce for Director as the single nominee for the office. Al Purzycki seconded the motion. All in favor. Kathy (Polanski) Noce elected as Director.

Nominations for Director, 6 year term with 4 years left to the current term, expiring in 2028 were then opened.

Richard Day nominated Mary Ann Posanski for Director for a 6 year term with 4 years left to current term, expiring 2028. Seconded by Aundrea Cika-Heschmeyer. Mary Ann Posanski accepted the nomination.

Sally Day made a motion to close nominations for Director, seconded by Roberta (May) Polovick. Motion passed.

Susia Styborski moved to forego voting and elect Mary Ann Posanski for Director as the single nominee for the office. Sally Day seconded the motion. All in favor. Mary Ann Posanski elected as Director.

Nominations for Director, 6 year term with 2 years left to the current term, expiring in 2026 were then opened.

Mike Andeson nominated James Koscielniak for Director for a 6 year term with 2 years left to the current term, expiring 2026. Seconded by Aundrea Cika-Heschmeyer. James Koscielniak accepted the nomination.

Richard Day nominated Randy Polovick for Director for a 6 year term with 2 years left to the current term, expiring 2026. Seconded by Roberta (May) Polovick. Randy Polovick accepted the nomination.

Louis Sitnik nominated Chris Rapcewicz for Director for a 6 year term with 2 years left to current term, expiring 2026. Seconded by Aundrea Cika-Heschmeyer. Chris Rapcewicz did not accept the nomination.

Basia (Gdula) Adams made a motion to close nominations for Director, seconded by Roberta (May) Polovick. Motion passed.

Selene (Erickson) Szczepanek asked all members in person to vote using paper ballots and those on the zoom call to vote electronically. Ballots were counted by Selene (Erikson) Szczepanek and Tess (Rejman) Kurkowski. Paper ballots were collected and electronic votes were verified. Randy Polovick was elected Director.

Selene (Erikson) Szczepanek thanked Jim Koscielniak and Sally Day for their service to the Alliance College Alumni Association.

President Mike Anderson thanked everyone for attending and apologized for the technical difficulties.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Lori (Neese) Kolin at 1:03 pm. Seconded by Louis Sitnik. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susia (Burgess) Styborski