

# ALLIANCE COLLEGE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (ACAA)

## Board of Officers Meeting October 22, 2024

### Officers in Attendance:

Michael Anderson (1978), ACAA President; Aundre'a Cika-Heschmeyer (1985), ACAA Vice President; Louis Sitnik, (1986), ACAA Treasurer; Susia (Burgess) Styborski (1983), ACAA Secretary; Marcia Pilkievicz (1975), ACAA Director and Membership Chair; Randy Polovick (1981), ACAA Director; Lori Neese Kolin (1987), ACAA Director; Kathy (Polanski) Noce (1982), Director; Mary Ann Posanski (1976), Director.

**Alumni in attendance:** Roberta Polovick

**Absent:** Richard Day (1985), Chair of Alliance College Alumni Association Foundation.

The meeting was called to order at 6:37 pm by Michael Anderson, President. President Anderson thanked everyone for attending and prioritizing their schedules to attend. He shared the agenda for tonight's meeting on the zoom screen.

The minutes of September 17, 2024 were distributed via email to all officers and directors. A motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Marcia Pilkievicz, seconded by Louis Sitnik. Motion carried.

### MERCHANDISE

Aundre'a Cika-Heschmeyer reported on researching merchandise to sell with Alliance College logo. She has reached out to Prep Sportswear but not heard back yet.

David Matejczyk was contacted about the license plate frames and he has about 15 of them. We agreed to sell them at \$5 each. Since they license plate frame pictures from the reunion have been posted, many are interested in purchasing one.

Mike Anderson will follow up with Jim Koscielniak for any remaining mugs stickers, or bags left to sell. Susia has a couple of each that she brought back from the reunion that were left over at the registration table Saturday night.

MaryAnn Posanski has taken a lead on the merchandise research and is happy to take "chair" of the merchandise project. Mary Ann has reached out to a woman, Ashley Carlson for a sample packet. Aundre'a and Mary Ann will be sharing more information in the future.

### WEBSITE

Kathy (Polanski) Noce reported her group at Erie is continuing to work on a search for archived information (obituaries, pictures); they do not think they received them in the transfer but not sure yet. Kathy suggested we did not receive everything from the family of the former webmaster. Mike stated he could reach back to them if necessary.

Randy Polovick provided additional details on what materials were brought over in the transfer and believes we would have taken everything we could at the time of the transfer.

### WHY PAY DUES – 1 PAGER

Mike Anderson agreed to work on this with the ideas that we have brought forward so far.

### OFF YEAR REUNION IN 2025

Marcia Pilkievicz reported she has reached out to alumni in Central Florida, including Eva and Mickie. She spoke with them about connecting to another event happening at the same time that we could bridge onto. Casual events like a

Friday happy hour, Saturday meeting, and an informal event on Saturday evening, possibly co-located with a bigger event, such as Polkafest. Randy Polovick volunteered to reach out to their Polka Jammer contacts for possible events. Marcia displayed the FL alumni (160 people) and their hometowns and we could see where concentrations of alumni reside. Susia suggested we also ask alumni about those that “snowbird” in Florida as that would be a good time to hold event when additional numbers are in the South. Aundre’a shared her screen showing the results of the recent survey sent to reunion attendees and another to a group that did not attend. All received the survey results via email as well.

Mike suggested we create a 2025 reunion team. Aundre’a, Randy, Marcia, and Kathy volunteered to help.

#### **QUARTERLY ON-LINE ACAA MEETING**

All agreed this was a good idea and we will need to set schedule quickly. Lori (Neese) Kolin suggested we hold the quarterly meetings on a set schedule such as 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of January, April, July, October. All agreed to pursue. Topics we would cover could include: current board projects, open forum – listen to alumni, merchandise “commercial”. An agenda would need to be set and distributed ahead of the scheduled meeting.

#### **CAMBRIDGE SPRINGS MUSEUM**

Lori and Aundre’a shared their conversations about the museum and how we can utilize it as an alumni informational and outreach opportunity. Displaying business cards and an informational rack was discussed. Susia made a motion to spend \$250 for Marquee Creatives to develop an ACAA business card, rack card, and informational sign. Randy seconded the motion. Motion carried. Utilization of the available space would need to be decided and it was suggested that be a question on an upcoming newsletter sent to alumni. What do you want to see in the museum? Aundre’a will draft something for that.

#### **TREASURER REPORT**

Louis Sitnik reported checking balance of \$14,145.74 and savings \$1,512.03. A check for Mike Anderson still needs to be written. Louis noticed 2 charges to Amazon (\$59.91 and \$17.06) which he was not familiar with and needs to follow up on. Louis is not primary signatory and Mike is second. Sally Day still needs to change the 2 factor authentication process and then we will be completely transferred.

#### **WEBSITE LEGACY**

Randy Polovick reported the website committee continues to work to put together upgrades and it is hoped the website will live on even when we are gone. All agreed to continue to make investments in the website. Mike suggested we reach out to alumni to make investments (donations) specifically for the website. Marcia suggested the donations made in memoriam of deceased members be targeted for that purpose. We would need to be transparent about where the money is going and we can ask that going forward but could not go back attach previous donations to a “website fund”. Mary Ann Posanski suggested that part of our exit strategy include using remaining funds for website upkeep in perpetuity. Aundre’a also reminded the group that we want to make strides toward developing a “sponsorship” aspect of donations. Sponsoring the newsletter was previously discussed but we could also have website legacy sponsors.

Marcia Pilkiewicz asked about members needing to update directory information. The website is not set up to do that as yet. We still want that to be a feature of the website. For now we have to manually edit.

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

Marcia Pilkiewicz reported we have 91 members, including 2 new lifetime members. Aundre’a suggested we include a “welcome to new members” piece in the newsletter. All agreed great idea. Marcia will send new members names to Aundre’a.

Mike Anderson asked what we are doing about those members paid through 2024? Marcia reported she would be willing to send a friendly reminder to renew. Renewals will be 2 year only at same rate of \$45 for two years. Any dues increase would have to take effect 2026.

## **ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT**

Aundre'a Cika Heschmeyer reported that information about the board elections and scholarship presentation was picked up by Dzinnik Polonijmy.

## **TOPICS FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER**

Cambridge Springs Museum

Letter from President

Welcome New Members

Membership Appeal

Link to Survey and Scholarship

Alumni spotlight (suggestions include Richard Day, Bob Hruby) with pictures from Alliance years and current picture.

All agreed good ideas. The alumni spotlight may take some time to pull together and we do not want newsletter delayed if we stick to monthly distribution. Suggestions of possible questions to ask alumni for spotlight will be gathered and organized for future discussion.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **EXIT STRATEGY**

Kathy (Polanski) Noce sent a draft of an exit strategy by email prior to the meeting. All agreed that it was comprehensive. Suggestions for improvements should be sent to Kathy.

Louis Sitnik suggested a different name for the exit strategy, perhaps Legacy Preservation. All agreed to think on this.

Lori (Kolin) Neese reported there is a last bottle of wine destined for the last remaining alumni to have. It was suggested that we open the bottle at the last official reunion. Kathy reported this should be noted in the Exit Strategy/Legacy Preservation Document.

### **BOARD GOALS**

1. Prepare for exit strategy
2. Continuation of legacy website
3. Foundation goals
4. Increase membership and engagement
5. Quarterly Open Meetings
6. Archival History
7. Reunions

### **2026 REUNION**

Based on feedback from surveys Erie PA is the biggest choice. All activities being held at the Sheraton (not use convention center) was agreed as a necessity. Discussion on possible dates and activities was held.

Aundre'a Cika Heschmeyer made a motion to hold the 2026 ACAA Reunion at the Sheraton Bayfront on October 23-25, 2026. Kathy (Polanski) Noce seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Lori suggested we look at the 2027 (40 YEARS OF Alliance closure) to be held in Cambridge Springs. Aundre'a Cika Heschmeyer made a motion we hold the 2027 Informal Reunion Gathering in Cambridge Springs. Lori (Neese) Kolin seconded the motion. Agreed that we pursue 2027 in Cambridge Springs.

## NEXT MEETING

November 19, 2024 at 6:30 pm CS time. Lori (Neese) Kolin reported she will be unable to attend and will need to be excused.

Motion to adjourn by Mary Ann Posanski, seconded by Lori (Neese) Kolin. Meeting adjourned at 8:41 pm.

## 2024 ACAA Reunion

Vice President James Koscielniak provided a preliminary report to the group. The hotel hosting the event will be the Sheraton Bayfront located at 55 W Bay Drive, Erie, PA, This hotel is next to the Courtyard location used for ACAA Reunion 2022. The Sheraton Bayfront is larger and more comfortable than Courtyard.

The 2024 reunion is currently targeted for August 22-25, 2024 – Zabawa Weekend in Erie PA. During group discussion the possibility of keeping the reunion in October was discussed and Jim Koscielniak will reach back to the Sheraton for availability in October 2024.

Tentatively we have 10 Rooms are reserved for Thursday August 22, 2024 at a rate of \$189 with tax \$213.57; 50 rooms are reserved for Friday August 23, 2024 at a rate of \$189 with tax \$213.57; and 50 Rooms are reserved for Saturday August 24, 2024 at a rate of \$189 with tax \$213.57. Prices for October dates are not known and will be reported at a later time.

### Event options include

Friday Mixer: Option 1; use the Anchor Plaza as we have before, located between the Courtyard and the Sheraton Bayfront. Start time 5:00, end 9:00pm. Cost is \$500 for cash bar and keg of Polish beer; \$2000 for appetizers and tent rental, taxes and gratuity \$500 for a total of \$3000 A golf cart can be provided at an additional cost to help with transportation between the Sheraton and Anchor Plaza.

Option 2; The Erie Yacht Club (recently remodeled) and less than four miles from the Sheraton. Outdoor and ballroom venue on the Bay. Cost is \$300 for cash bar and keg of Polish beer; \$2755 for appetizers and tent rental, taxes and gratuity \$787.60 for a total of \$3842.60 This location is 3.5-4 miles away. Would need to car pool, Uber, for travel back and forth. This option was decided against and Jim will look into additional options to have at Sheraton site, other than Anchor Plaza.

Saturday Meetings: Sheraton Start 8:30 am – 12 noon; use of room is free with \$3000 minimum expenditure. \$750 for beverage and snack service.

Saturday Dinner: Convention Center, west ballroom as we did in 2018. Thought is an outdoor summer grilled steak/chicken dinner cooked on the patio but served family style or buffet. A DJ is preferred.

Saturday and Sunday Brunch: On your own.

Other discussion points included consensus that the appetizers/food for Friday night should be upgraded as there is no dinner cruise that night and people attending will be expecting something substantial to eat. The appetizers for Saturday can be more casual such as cheese and crackers and fruit plates as a full dinner would be served after the one hour cocktail hour. Jim will get options and pricing for these ideas.

There was agreement among attendees that we would like the activities of the reunion to be centralized around the area of the Sheraton to save on transportation concerns, ambulation concerns, logistics and overall providing more time to meet and socialize with each other in one central area than people being spread out across many sites.

Marcia asked about alumni hoping to assist with the reunion and consensus was once venue, meal choices, and dates are finalized volunteers can be used for specific tasks such as registration.

### **Next meeting**

Next meeting is Tuesday Oct 10 at 6:30 pm, zoom link sent to all on 9/13/23. Please confirm your attendance with Susia.