

ALLIANCE COLLEGE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (ACAA)

Minutes of the Board Meeting September 17, 2024

Officers in Attendance: Michael Anderson (1978), ACAA President; Aundre’a Cika-Heschmeyer (1985), ACAA Vice President; Susia Burgess Styborski (1983), ACAA Secretary; Marcia Pilkiewicz (1975), ACAA Director and Membership Chair; Randy Polovick (1981), ACAA Director; Kathy (Polanski) Noce (1982), ACAA Director; Mary Ann Posanski (1976), ACAA Director; Louis Sitnik, (1986), ACAA Treasurer.

Alumni in Attendance: Roberta (May) Polovick.

Absent: Lori (Neese) Kolin (1987), Director; Richard Day (1985), Chair of Alliance College Alumni Association Foundation.

Meeting called to order at 6:37 pm via Zoom by President Mike Anderson.

Review of Minutes

The minutes of August 23, 2024 were emailed on September 5, 2024. Louis Sitnik made a motion to accept the minutes of August 23, 2024 as distributed. Randy Polovick seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The minutes of August 24, 2024 were emailed on September 5, 2024. Marcia Pilkiewicz made a motion to accept the minutes of August 24, 2024 as distributed. Roberta Polovick seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The minutes of September 3, 2024 were emailed on September 14, 2024. Marcia Pilkiewicz made a motion to accept the minutes of September 3, 2024 as distributed. Mary Ann Posanski seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Welcome and Introductions

President Mike Anderson welcomed everyone on the zoom call and thanked them for their time to attend the meeting. President Andeson made special mention of Aundre’a Cika-Heschmeyer and Louis Sitnik as new officers, and Mary Ann Posanski and Kathy (Polanski) Noce as new directors.

President Andeson invited each of the new Directors to speak on their interests for the Board.

Kathy (Polanski) Noce indicated she is hoping to contribute to the Board where she is needed. She has strengths in data and IT and can offer those skills as needed. She is happy to be connecting with Alliance College alumni and hoping to help with getting more alumni involved.

Mary Ann Posanski reported she is looking forward to helping with membership engagement and will offer her assistance in any way she can.

Financial Recap

Louis Sitnik gave an overview of the financial state of ACAA. We have \$14,904.97 in the checking account with one outstanding check written to James Koscielniak for \$307.61 providing for a balance of \$14,597.36 in checking; and \$1,512.02 in savings. Louis has met with Sally Day for transitioning the Treasurer position. Sally is in process of compiling a package of materials for Louis and will mail it to him shortly. Louis will need a letter for the bank from Mike as President confirming Louis' election as Treasurer. Mike reported he will complete the letter this week. It was agreed that Mike should be on the ACAA accounts as a signatory. Louis and Mike will work with Sally to complete that process. Sally has a debit card for access to the ACCA accounts and will destroy hers once Louis has one for ACAA use.

Mike reported that one of the suggested revenue streams mentioned at the annual meeting on August 24th was selling of sportswear. Aundré'a has reached out to two businesses that she is aware of that can do orders as needed and also do order fulfillment, and both companies were overwhelmed with current customer base and not taking on new customers. She added that previously ACAA had an account with Prep Sportswear but our account was cancelled by them due to inactivity. Mary Ann Posanski stated she had a contact for sportswear and would inquire what they could provide for us. Randy Polovick suggested we check with Mouse as he has provided shirts in the past from his contacts. Kathy Noce reported she had spoken to Mouse about the possibility while at the reunion and Mouse indicated it was no longer a simple process. All agreed that a business that could provide shirts (or other items) "on demand" is the way to go, as opposed to having to purchase a large quantity at one time and our group be responsible for fulfillment.

Kathy Noce suggested other activities that could raise revenue such as silent auction, alumni memory book, branded merchandise, and crowd funding campaign. Consensus was that we need to be open to any possibility.

Mike Anderson stated that having more frequent meetings was brought up as a suggestion at the annual meeting on August 24th and we could bring our ideas to these meetings as well.

Marcia Pilkiewicz reported that she met with some members of the Membership Committee yesterday and a majority of those attending agreed that a raise in dues was appropriate move to consider, starting in 2026. (Membership Committee is comprised of Roberta Polovick, Janice Kornacki, Tess Kurkowski, Ed Mohylowski, Celest Mickiewicz, Mary Ann Posanski and Marcia.) Louis Sitnik asked if we can wait to decide if we should raise dues and if so, by how much until we see what the results of a membership campaign are. Agreement that membership drive at current rates is a priority currently.

Website Update

Randy Polovick reported we can drop the .biz website/domain name as .com is the way to go for the future.

Aundré'a Cika-Heschmeyer reported Marquee Creatives has begun the transfer process for the website from Partnership Erie. We are looking at 5-7 days for transition to new domain to be complete. A link for the scholarship application was not on the website previously but it has been added and is now usable. Aundré'a and Louis will work on getting Paypal set up in the new website.

Mike mentioned a concern about the photos and obituaries from the old website being lost, and Kathy (Polanski) Noce stated she will check to see what came over to them at Partnership Erie.

Membership

Marcia Pilkiewicz discussed the current state of the membership and summarized the comments from the meeting held last night with members of the Membership Committee. The common denominator for participants not on the Board was that they are unaware of the fiscal situation and hearing about the dire situation from Board members and from Mike Anderson at the Saturday evening gathering was powerful. There was agreement that more work needs to be done to pull in participation by other sports teams, by fraternities and sororities, and other groups. Updating of emails is a task the committee is taking on now. They have not yet decided on methods of outreach but using the newsletter would be good resource. Most committee members reported they rely on Facebook for their information and do not utilize the website.

Randy Polovick added that more than one person spoke to him about why do they need to be a dues paying member. We need key points to tell, to share, to publicize. He added we need to talk about how we collect information as alumni will be entering their own information. How do we bring them in first?

Alumni Engagement/Reunion Surveys

Marcia suggested an email blast with the highlights of Mike's fiscal outlook speech. Mike reported he has a summary of that speech in the President's Letter on the website. A link to it is in the newsletter developed by Marquee Creatives. Andre'a shared the newsletter on screen and all agreed it was a high-quality newsletter. The newsletter will have surveys for those that attended the 2024 reunion and those that did not. We hope to gather information for future reunions. The newsletter can be a useful tool in spreading the word about membership and its value. Louis Sitnik added that the newsletter can grow to include many items of potential interest to alumni, health articles, recipes, memories. Susia Styborski stated the newsletter was amazing and hits the items we want to focus on, adding a suggestion that it include a way for alumni to ask questions or follow a link for more information.

Andre'a added that as the development and mailing of the newsletter is pro bono from Marquee Creatives the officers agreed to list them as a sponsor of the newsletter. Discussion held about using sponsorship of the newsletter as a means of garnering support from alumni and as a revenue resource. Andre'a will work with her team to develop a cost/price point for sponsorship. Kathy (Polanski) Noce suggested we look at sponsorship levels as well. Suggestions for additional items for future issues included: photos or items from Mouse's archive, alumni photos or stories where they were in 1960 when at Alliance and where they are now.

Andre'a spoke about the use of Constant Contact which is a digital marketing and email marketing platform that helps organizations create and send email campaigns, manage social media, and more. ACAA has access to this service through Marquee Creatives. This can be a vital tool for finding and engaging alumni. Constant Contact fee is paid by number of interactions. Randy Polovick suggested we also take ads in Zgoda and Pol AM journal for reaching alumni. Andre'a reported press releases have been sent out about the elections from the recent reunion.

Off-year Reunion

There was consensus that in-person meetings on off years located in areas of high alumni residences such as the East coast/Philadelphia, Florida, and Chicago are the way to go. We would also offer zoom participation for those that could not travel. Andre'a suggested we work with the membership committee to determine where our biggest areas of active alumni are.

Discussion about when to hold the next reunion was held with varied opinions on 2026 or 2027. Some expressed feelings of not wanting to celebrate the college closing and others wanting to celebrate 40 years since closing and we have persevered. Still others felt 3 years was too long to wait since “we’re not getting any younger” and some thought “people expect it to re-occur every 2 years”. Agreement to have reunion in 2026. The time of year and location will be determined after surveys are received back. Aundre’a reported she, Randy Polovick, and Roberta (May) Polovick toured the Sheraton Bayfront on Sunday after the reunion and found appropriate areas to have all activities on the Sheraton Bayside location which would negate the need for long travelling distances to the Convention Center across the harbor inlet.

Cambridge Springs Library

Lori (Neese) Kolin had shared information to Mike Anderson about the historical room at the Cambridge Springs library dedicated to Alliance College. A suggestion was made to have a ACAA postcard or note card on display so we can reach out to potential members. Also suggested an article in a future newsletter about the library.

New Business

Mike Anderson suggested meetings once per month. All agreed.

Next Mike suggested we all work on ideas for what we would like for goals for the Board. What are our goals for the coming year? What are our goals for the next 2 years? We were reminded that we are tasked with developing an exit strategy. That must be a goal. Kathy (Polanski) Noce reminded all that every great organization and business has an exit strategy in place. Its part of responsible leadership.

Next Meeting

October 22, 2024 via Zoom at 6:30 pm Cambridge Springs time.

Adjournment

Kathy (Polanski) Noce made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by Marcia Pilkievicz. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:11 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Susia Burgess Styborski, ACAA Secretary