

UAFAA Alumni Association Board of Directors
Spring Meeting Minutes
April 18-19, 2025

Friday, April 18

1. At 9:35 AM President Rhonda Widener **called the meeting to order** with a roll call vote:

Seat	Individual	Attendance
President, Seat 9C – FNSB	Rhonda Widener	In-person
Vice President, Seat 11C Municipality of Anchorage - OUTGOING	Thomas Farrugia	In-person
Treasurer, Seat 2A – Southcentral Alaska	Birch Foster	In-person
Secretary, Seat 10C – Outside of Alaska	Lorna Shaw	In-person
Seat 1A – Rural Alaska	DeeDee Ivanoff	Excused
Seat 3A – FNSB	Ryan Tilbury	In-person
Seat 4B – Southcentral Alaska	Meredith Cameron	Online; joined at 10:06
Seat 5B – FNSB	Valerie Demming	In-person
Seat 6B – At Large	Darryl Lewis, Sr.	In-person
Seat 7B – Southeast Alaska	Tim Lamkin	Online; joined at 9:45
Seat 8C – At Large	George Cromer	Excused; joined online at 4:18 pm
Seat 11C – Municipality of Anchorage – INCOMING	Mischa Ellanna	In-person
UAF Development & Alumni Relations Director, ex officio	Theresa Bakker	In-person
Alumni Relations Manager, ex officio	Felicia Burud	In-person
Alumni Storytelling Manager	Katie Straub	In-person
UAF Hockey Alumni President	Scott Roselius	Online; 9:58 – 10:08

2. President Widener gaveled into the **annual meeting** at 9:35 AM. UAFAA BOD introductions focusing on the connection to UAF and Alaska.

Scott Roselius joined the call, introduced himself and gave an update from Hockey Alumni Association. The 100 year UAF Hockey Reunion is scheduled June 19-21, 2025 with several events but a relatively informal schedule that will include a Thursday gathering at the Boatel, a luncheon on Friday at Carlson Center will include a locker room tour and a review of fundraising projects underway. There will be a Friday night golf outing at Fairbanks Golf Course and Saturday night at the Gold Panners baseball game.

10:22 – gaveled out of the annual meeting

3. **Agenda adoption**

MOTION: The Board adopts the agenda as presented.

Moved by Birch Foster, seconded by Thomas Farrugia, passed without objection.

4. **Approval of the Winter 2025 Meeting Minutes**

MOTION: The Board approves minutes for the Winter 2025 meeting – with spelling

corrections to two last names.

Moved by Thomas Farrugia, seconded by Darryl Lewis, passed without objection.

5. **Land Acknowledgement** – UAFAA President

The UAF Alumni Association acknowledges the Alaska Native nations upon whose unceded traditional lands we are located. Our offices and facilities are located on Troth Yeddha, a sacred site of the Lower Tanana Dene people. We acknowledge and honor the ancestral & present land stewardship and place-based knowledge of the peoples of these territories.

6. Mischa Ellanna, the newly elected representative for seat 11C, was formally **welcomed to the board.**

7. **Standing reports and committees**

- a. Executive Committee report – Theresa Bakker cited the Hockey group as a great example of a well-run affinity network. **She presented the opportunity to sponsor the hockey reunion luncheon at the \$2,500 level.** This fits within the FY26 operating budget in the Network support and/or Event sponsorship line items in the budget and does not require board action. **Board discussion expressed support.**
- b. President's report – Rhonda Widener thanked the board for supporting her through her term as president and for the thoughtful engagement of the members. Rhonda presented the opportunity to identify the Alumni representative at commencement – with a UAFAA Board selection process and policy rather than ad hoc selection. This work will be delegated to the Awards Committee with a process outlined and presented by the UAFAA staff at the Fall Board Meeting. **Board members were also invited to suggest potential tours and board visits for future meetings; this topic will be added to future meeting agendas to prompt the discussion.**
- c. Executive Director report – Theresa Bakker. A new UAFAA staff report item will be added to future agendas to be more inclusive of the staff and variety of activities the organization has underway. She reviewed the board packet and some of the items in the upcoming agenda, highlighting areas for discussion. Theresa also mentioned the onboarding process/new board member training that will be provided for those who were newly elected to the Board.
- d. Network and ex officio reports – Scott Roselius provided his report during the annual member meeting.
- e. Scholarship report – Lorna Shaw shared news that the scholarship recipients have been selected and the UA Foundation will present those awards. The scholarship process worked well and committee members were thanked for their work. Future awards will be made differently and a new process will be enacted. **The gift agreements with the UA Foundation will be updated and the role of the scholarship committee will be revised to include more connection to scholarship recipients and alumni.**

MOTION: The UAFAA supports the removal of a requirement for Director of Alumni approval from the selection process of funds #80819 and #80849. Moved by Thomas Farrugia, seconded by Valerie Demming, passed without objection.

MOTION: The UAFAA authorizes the UA Foundation to revise the gift agreement to remove the external selection committee from the scholarship selection process from the following funds: #80596 UAF Alumni Association Scholarship; #80712 Fairbanks Chapter UAF Alumni Association Jim Doogan; #80103 Jay Hammond; and #80752 Audrey Stanfield Loftus.

Moved by Rhonda Widener, seconded by Thomas Farrugia, passed without objection.

- f. Legislative report – Meredith Cameron thanked the interim leadership and participation in her absence and congratulated the group on a great fly-in and advocacy effort. Birch Foster shared his experience as a first-time attendee and thanked the staff for the coordination efforts. Ryan Tilbury also reflected on a successful trip.
- g. Awards report – Darryl Lewis thanked the staff for their support in the process. The 2025 recipients were announced: Wayne Donaldson will receive the William R Cashen Service Award and Alan Straub will receive the Distinguished Alumnus Award.
- h. Governance committee – Thomas Farrugia presented the election results:
 - Seat 8C, At-Large: Kevin Liu
 - Seat 9C, FNSB: Rhonda Widener
 - Seat 10C, Outside of Alaska: Lorna Shaw
 - Seat 11C, Municipality of Anchorage: Mischa Ellanna

MOTION: The Board approves the 2025 election results.

Moved by Lorna Shaw, seconded by Darryl Lewis, passed without objection.

The new board members will begin voting during new business.

- i. Finance report – Birch Foster presented investment highlights and reviewed the proposed FY26 budget. The investment portfolio reached \$1M for the first time ever in Q3-24 and is currently close to that figure. Staff will present a comparison document at the Fall 2025 meeting to review the FY25 actual and the FY26 budget.

MOTION: The Board approves the FY26 budget.

Moved by Lorna Shaw, seconded by Darryl Lewis, passed without objection.

Tim Lamkin abstained from the vote because there was an oversight in the electronic meeting documents.

New board members will begin voting during new business.

- j. Ad Hoc Centennial report – Tim Lamkin will be working on the events when the legislative session adjourns. Felicia Burrud reviewed the branding work underway and the upcoming oral history project that will begin this fall. Rhonda Widener acknowledged past president Tom Brice's inaugural gift that started the fundraising efforts.

UAFAA staff introduced UAF student employee Aiden, an accounting student at UAF.

OLD BUSINESS

8. The Board toured the **Student Success Center** on the 6th floor of the Rasmussen Library with Jennifer Tilbury, Associate Vice Provost for Student Success. She showcased the variety of ways the center is able to support students of all levels and thanked the UAFAA for the financial support it has provided.
9. The Board visited the **Department of Military and Veterans Services** space on the 4th floor of the library and learned about the Robison Room plans within the Rasmussen Library. Upon returning to the Alumni office, the Board discussed opportunities to provide additional support. Ideas considered included supporting a gift of missed interest, supporting a specific project or ask, and support for a ribbon cutting event. Event sponsorship fits within the FY26 operating budget in the Network support and/or Event sponsorship line items in the budget and does not require board action. **Board discussion expressed support to sponsor the ribbon cutting event.**
10. The Board enjoyed a presentation by the **Benefactor Fund Awardee**, the UAF Japan Alaska Club: UAF Student Trinity and Japanese exchange student Sota talked about the variety of events the club hosts. They thanked the UAFAA board for financial support and shared that the funds were used to support cooking and calligraphy activities, the club's most popular events. They purchased two rice cookers and a variety of calligraphy brushes.
11. **University Women's Association** President Pam Wagaman and Secretary Pat Ivey shared some background on the organization and expressed an interest in potential collaboration as a possible Nanook Network. The UWA is 85 years old and has provided more than \$300,000 in donations to UAF students, earning money for 55 years through the annual holiday bazaar. The organization has a long history of formal teas and formal dances, USO dinners, Christmas potlucks, adopting students for holiday dinners when students were unable to go home for the season. A book group has been ongoing for most of the existence of the club. The UWA has IRS 501(c)3 nonprofit status and recently donated \$12,000 to UA Foundation from the 2023 bazaar. Donations are typically made to the Bunnell House, KUAC, and UAF scholarships. The UWA commissioned a sculpted totem pole representing the women in Alaska in the 1980s; it is now installed outside the Wood Center. The organization maintains a presence on the campus, but there are few long-term members who have the time and talent to facilitate the holiday bazaar – it has become unsustainable. The UWA has an annual meeting on June 1 and they need to have some hard conversations about the future of the organization. There are currently approximately 79 active members, but the number continues to decline, and contact methods between the organization and UAF – students, staff, and alumni – have deteriorated. Adequate volunteer hours are no longer available to sustain the previous level of activity. There was extensive discussion of

communication, social media resources, partnership opportunities for coordination of the bazaar, and the need for physical volunteers for set up and operating hours at the event itself. The event is the second week of November – set up on Friday afternoon/evening – but the event runs Saturday and Sunday. There may be additional opportunities to tell the AWU story to a wider audience in March next year, around National Women's Day. **Theresa Bakker will attend the UWA Annual Meeting and she and the UAFAA staff will continue to engage and look for opportunities to collaborate.**

12. Rhonda Widener **recognized outgoing Board members** Thomas Farrugia and George Cromer, thanking them for their service. The 2017 graduation ceremony in which Thomas was hooded was shared and he was presented with a custom bowl from the Great Alaska Bowl Company. Theresa recognized Thomas as part of the first class of new board members she worked with and appreciated his willingness to step up as treasurer and develop the structure to ensure the financial health of the UAFAA. Thomas expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to serve the UAFAA, shared his pride in the work he's been part of for the past five years, and has offered to remain engaged as a member of the finance and centennial committees. He also recognized the exceptional staff and the work they accomplish. Rhonda and Theresa also presented (virtually) a custom bowl from the Great Alaska Bowl Company to recognize his contribution.
13. At 4:25 the meeting was **recessed until Saturday** morning, with many members going to the UAF CTC Celebration for Community and Industry Partners at Hutchison Institute of Technology.

Friday, April 18

President Rhonda Widener **called the meeting back to order** at 10:02 am with board member introductions.

Seat	Individual	Attendance
President, Seat 9C – FNSB	Rhonda Widener	In-person
Treasurer, Seat 2A – Southcentral Alaska	Birch Foster	In-person
Secretary, Seat 10C – Outside of Alaska	Lorna Shaw	In-person
Seat 1A – Rural Alaska	DeeDee Ivanoff	Online; joined at 10:40
Seat 3A – FNSB	Ryan Tilbury	In-person
Seat 4B – Southcentral Alaska	Meredith Cameron	Online
Seat 5B – FNSB	Valerie Demming	In-person
Seat 6B – At Large	Darryl Lewis, Sr.	In-person
Seat 7B – Southeast Alaska	Tim Lamkin	Online
Seat 8C – At Large - INCOMING	Kevin Liu	In-person
Seat 11C – Municipality of Anchorage – INCOMING	Mischa Ellanna	In-person
UAF Development & Alumni Relations Director, ex officio	Theresa Bakker	In-person
Alumni Relations Manager, ex officio	Felicia Burud	In-person

Alumni Storytelling Manager	Katie Straub	In-person
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NEW BUSINESS

14. **New and returning board members were seated** with a round of introductions.
 Kevin Liu – Seat 8, At-Large
 Rhonda Widener – Seat 9, FNSB
 Lorna Shaw – Seat 10, Outside of Alaska
 Mischa Ellanna – Seat 11, Municipality of Anchorage

15. The Board declared the following potential **Conflicts of Interest** in the interest of transparency:
Ryan Tilbury – wife is Associate Vice Provost, through work sees many former students, in role with YKSD interacts a lot with financial aid and other UAF offices
Birch Foster – works for ADF&G but has no current official collaborations with UAF
Mischa Ellanna – no direct conflicts, Chair of the Schmidt Charitable Trust, a scholarship granting organization, serves on the DGGS advisory board, brother is IT manager at the library
Kevin Liu – none, but in his work for the City of New York he serves as a board member for the pension plans
Lorna Shaw – none, daughter is a student at another university
Tim Lamkin – works as staff in the Legislature, daughter is UAF student, serves on the Alaska State Council on the Arts
Meredith Cameron – plays a role in federal funding from NOAA to UAF, participates in selection committees that could impact UAF students, similarly for scholarships
Rhonda Widener – works directly for President Pitney and stays out of politics
 Neither Valerie Demming nor Darryl Lewis had potential conflicts to disclose.

16. **Board officer elections** were held and without objection, the following members were elected:
President Rhonda Widener
Vice President Lorna Shaw
Secretary Valerie Demming
Treasurer Birch Foster

17. **Committees** were discussed and chairs and members were selected and approved without objection. The 2025-2026 committee roster **is attached** and includes the following committees: Executive, Governance, Finance, Awards, Scholarship, Legislative, and the Ad Hoc Centennial Committees.

18. **Banking** information was updated by the Board.
MOTION: The Board affirms the existing signature authority for these members: Valerie Demming, Rhonda Widener, Ryan Tilbury, Felicia Burud, Theresa Bakker.
 Moved by Lorna Shaw, seconded by Kevin Liu, passed without objection.

19. The following **meeting schedule** was presented:

Friday & Saturday	Sept. 26 & 27, 2025	Fall Board Meeting	In-person, in Fairbanks
Saturday	January 24, 2026	Winter Board Meeting	Virtual/Teleconference
Friday & Saturday	April 17 & 18, 2026	Spring Board Meeting	In-person, in Fairbanks

MOTION: The Board approves the meeting schedule as presented.

Moved by Valerie Demming, seconded by Darryl Lewis, passed without objection.

20. The UAFAA staff provided an **Alumni Engagement update** that included introduction of the 7 Touch Plan, an update on a very successful 2025 Giving Day, an update on the Nanook Network, and the planning underway for Reunion 2025. Felicia Burud expressed appreciation for the Board and the working relationship among the staff, board and UAF leadership. The team shared that there are approximately 42,000 living alumni at this time. **Katie Straub will join the next Scholarship Committee meeting to discuss ways to leverage the Nanook Network.** Mischa will start a Southcentral Alaska network.

21. The February 2025 BOR action to remove DEI language was shared with the UAFAA Board. The **UAFAA Code of Conduct and Strategic Plan** both reference DEI and are not in compliance with the BOR action. To comply with the UA action, UAFAA removed both documents from the website. In order to republish the documents to the website, the language would need to be updated with removal. Alternatively, the documents can be maintained in current form and not published on the website. The board discussed possible paths forward. No formal action was taken at this time and the documents will remain unpublished. **Ryan Tilbury will research actions being taken by other public institutions; Rhonda Widener will reach out to the UAA and UAS Alumni Association presidents to outline the UAFAA BOD's reluctance to make these changes and seek their input. Theresa Bakker will meet with the Chancellor to share the Board's discussion.** All such outreach will be conversational, not formal or in writing. **This topic will be revisited at the Fall 2025 meeting.**

22. The Board was asked to individually review the **Code of Conduct**. If in agreement, the Board is invited to sign and keep the document. **The conversation will be revisited at the Fall Board Meeting.**

23. Board members were invited to make comments for the **Good of the Order:**

Tim Lamkin – Appreciates the DEI conversation and the candor and feelings involved. Looking forward to continuing with the Centennial projects.

Meredith Cameron – Thank you for the virtual meeting option and welcome to the new members. She is excited about the scholarship committee and the work ahead.

Dee-Dee Ivanoff – Has enjoyed participating in the meeting and appreciates the diversity of the Board.

Darryl Lewis – Appreciates the opportunity to discuss diversity and related policies.

Mischa Ellanna – Very pleased to be at UAFAA and can already tell this is a wonderful board.

Kevin Liu – Glad to be here and could feel the emotions when he returned to Fairbanks yesterday. He is learning a lot and looks forward to serving.

Birch Foster – Welcomed our new members and thanked the other members for their commitment to UAFAA. Appreciates the way Alaskans treat one another.

Valerie Demming – Appreciates being on the board, looks forward to the meetings and is excited to be involved. Thanked everyone for their involvement and looks forward to the coming year.

Ryan Tilbury – Great board and great meeting, appreciates the expertise and respect in the room, likes working with this group.

Lorna Shaw – Appreciates the community of Alaska, of Fairbanks, and of UAFAA. Thanked the other board members and staff for their commitment.

Rhonda Widener – Thanked the board for the willingness to continue to serve. She reflected on her long connection with UAFAA and is grateful for the impact it has had on her life. Appreciates the openness and commitment of the UAFAA board.

Theresa Bakker – Thanked the board members for being so inspirational and so focused on students.

Felicia Burud – All part of the Nanook Nation – once a Nanook, always a Nanook! Thanked everyone for a great weekend.

24. The meeting was adjourned at 2:22 pm.