Advancement Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 14, 2025
9:30 – 11:00 AM
Via Zoom

Present: Marjie Blevins; Steve Kenney; Brian Mullen; Kris Smyth; Joel Rainville; Gabi Rohde

Staff: Andree Aronson; Matt Halley; Lacy Sietsema

Excused Absence: Maya Missaghi; Mark Richards

The meeting began on Thursday, May August 14, 2025, at 9:31 a.m.

Meeting Intention: Led by Joel.

DEI Statement: Matt read the DEI Statement.

Minutes: Approval of May, June, and July minutes were presented for approval. Hearing no changes to any of the minutes, Brian moved to approve and Kris seconded. All present members voted in favor, with Steve abstaining.

Advancement Update

Andrée provided an update on the work the Accola Senior Leadership team is doing. There has been a lot of planning, diving into information, and using this to create actionable plans.

Andrée reported that the new Marketing and Communications Manager has been hired. She is currently in the process of interviewing for the Community Engagement Manager position.

A plan is being developed for current/potential donor outreach. Board members will be included in this plan. It was reported that every month, there will be an hour-long open house at Learning In Style School. This event will introduce people to Accola and its programs, and will involve a tour of the facility.

Updated Year-End Advancement Report

Andrée reviewed the FY25 end-of-year revenue report. Accola made about $500,000 in contributions, which is lower than the projected $700,000 that was budgeted. Andrée is pulling donor data, including those who did not donate this year. Earned income and estate gifts were over the projected budgeted amounts. Event revenue was higher than anticipated.

There was a discussion about the annual gift from the Province and how it is reported. The committee discussed the need for a robust contributions program and the need to deepen connections between people and Accola. Matt reviewed the strategies for increasing contributions in FY26.

There was a discussion about Septemberfest. The Province is putting this event on, but Accola will be tabling at the event. Matt stated that Accola's presence will build relationships and that nothing will be lost in this new arrangement. The committee discussed how Accola is reaching donors.

Update: Marketing/Elevator Speech

Matt reported that the Accola Executive Committee has requested that Advancement and Marketing be separated into two committees. Andrée and Matt will review the charter. Steve explained the rationale for this request.

The committee discussed elevator pitches. There will be three versions that can be tailored to different individuals: high-level, medium-level, and in-depth. Dan Ryan has provided input on this project. These pitches are meant to be guides, but Board members can make changes. A training will be created to help Board members learn how to make asks. The committee discussed how to build relationships between potential donors and Accola.

Work Plan

Steve reported that the Nomination and Governance Committee has requested a summary of the 2024-2025 committee goals/results, as well as the FY26 committee plan. Joel reviewed the goals and requested feedback.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lacy Sietsema, Accola