



## ACA National Council of Leaders

Tuesday, February 9, 2016, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.\* EST, Crystal Ballroom, Atlanta Hilton

### -Meeting Notes-

#### Meeting Goals

- NCOL members come together as a working body, representing their Local Councils of Leaders and Affiliate Boards and are prepared to engage with each other and the Board of Directors
- Receive a reports and updates from the Board Chair and CEO
- Engage in guided and informal discussions about timely issues and our contributions as ACA leaders, including work of the Volunteer Development Committee
- View strategic direction through local lens while considering national scope

**Welcome and Housekeeping**, Kurt Podeszwa, member of ACA's Board of Directors and NCOL Steering Committee Chair

**Reports and Updates**, ACA Board Chair, Tish Bolger

**Update from 2/8/16 Board of Directors Meeting:** Bolger shared major discussion areas and action items for the BOD meeting that took place one day prior. These included approving the formation of two, separate task forces that will focus on areas of strategic priority. A task force devoted to Research will be appointed as well as a task for targeting accreditation. The timeframe for the work of these two new leadership groups is modest: essentially early March with a recommendation to the BOD in June, and an update report for the BOD during its spring meeting.

**State of ACA:** Bolger described several association accomplishments including the recent launch of the new website and increased levels of engagement. The local delivery model is now 13 months in process and the transition has gone well, largely due to local leadership's willingness to stretch and consider new ways of work, while maintaining the traditions and culture. Bolger described ACA's strong financial position including its clean, unqualified audit. A recent D.C. update was shared regarding Every Child Succeeds/No Child Left Behind. Bolger also shared BOD leadership updates including Rue Mapp serving as Vice President, Craig Whiting serving as Treasurer, and Ross Turner serving as Board Chair, beginning at the spring BOD meeting. Bolger introduced Turner to the group and Turner thanked ACA for the opportunity and described his optimism for ACA and the camp community at large.

**Update on CEO Search:** Bolger shared the BOD's plan to conduct a CEO search given the news of Tom Holland's camp purchase. She described Tom's year as winning the lottery twice, with being selected as CEO and Tom and Catherine having the opportunity to purchase his childhood camp. The BOD will engage the same volunteer search committee, who will in turn, work with a reputable search firm. The position will be posted online in March. Ideally, the BOD will consider finalists during the spring meeting, with a new CEO starting at some point in the summer. In the meantime, Tom has agreed to stay on through the timeframe a new hire can start. A solid transition plan is in place.

#### Message from Tom Holland, CEO

Holland spoke about several, key association accomplishments including the gathering of volunteer leadership last October, for a special summit which included LCOL leaders, Affiliate presidents, the Executive Leadership Team, Affiliate Executives, and the Outreach and Engagement Professionals. This meeting was really key in setting direction for our work, including the two, strategic areas of focus, including research and accreditation. Holland also spoke about his appreciation of the opportunities he has been afforded at ACA and his plans to transition to camp owner. He spoke of the momentum ACA is experiencing and the benefit of our association moving forward under the context of a "We" proposition.

**Strategic Focus Group Work:** Representatives moved into smaller groups to discuss topics specific to each area of strategic focus.

**Accreditation:**

**Question #1** – What does the ACA Accreditation brand look like today?

- Often associated with resident camps
- Fairly rigid – not much room for exceptions
- Rigorous – especially the first time
- Perceived by parents as the “gold seal”
- Can be expensive
- Internal view (two groups chose to discuss the question from both internal and external perspectives)
  - Difficult process, cumbersome, intimidating
  - Challenge to find enough visitors
  - More rules based than guiding camps toward excellence
  - A pain!
  - Some believe they can get the value without being accredited
  - More of an expectation to become accredited in some regions vs. others
- External view
  - Is it worth it to go through it to get a stamp of approval?
  - Initial commitment is massive and costly
  - Not well known in some areas
  - Some parents do not ask about it
  - Youth development community is impressed by it
  - Seal of approval is pretty undefined for the public/parents

**Question #2** – What do we want the Accreditation Brand to look like in the future?

- More customized, flexible, lego-like
- More acceptance and appreciation by parents
- Administrative folks and decision makers in organizations understand the importance of the accreditation investment.
- Consistency in delivery of program by volunteers (less interpretation by visitors)
- More robust education for visitors on the difficult standards which may include video tutorials
- Broad reach to new audiences
- Have ongoing conversations vs. a one-time, annual report
- Value proposition becomes obvious with better public understanding
- Perhaps outcomes measurement becomes a part of it or there is a more obvious link to research and outcomes attainment, quality enhancement, etc.
- A process where camps can ease into accreditation
- More meaningful ties to professional development and professionalism in general
- Greater value in the seal, like “The Good Housekeeping” seal.
- More relevant and accessible
- Focus on the product (camp experience)
- Barrier-free (eligibility)
- Desirable
- Move from “we passed the visit” to “our campers are better off because we are accredited”

- Better balance between compliance with education (esp. with AAR)
- Less intimidating for new camps
- Greater diversity of programs
- Standards developed specifically for “different” programs
- Partner with organizations that are appropriate when very specific, programmatic standards are needed
- Visitor “tracks” where visitors familiar with specific programs are assigned to visit those camps
- Research back up quality outcomes

**Research:** What are ACA’s best opportunities in the Research Arena?

Groups were asked to prioritize select the three top research areas. In full disclosure, we returned from Atlanta without all of the flip chart sheets/and smaller papers with notes. The list reflects research topics discussed at the fall, 2015 Leadership Summit. We compared our own notes/memories and the bolded topics were mentioned often in reports, but we can’t reflect the priorities set by each group.

**Positive impact of camp**

Positive impact of camp with various audiences including special needs  
Additional outcomes tools development

**Proof camp improves academic performance**

Evidence that attending and /or working at camp improves career readiness

**Evidence of the skills we are really building at camp**

Economic impact studies

Evidence that camp experiences improves success in college including graduation rates, years of college completed, etc.

**Volunteer Development Committee, Tony Oyenarte and Rich Garbinsky, Co-Chairs**

*See separate notes, posted to the NCOL home page.*

**Local Leadership Sharing – What’s New, Work-in-progress, Celebration Point:** Each local office shared three points regarding these topics. Several, great accomplishments were described with many local leaders echoing that the new local delivery model is working.

**Optional Informal Discussion Tables** were offered for those who wished to stay and eat lunch. The room was packed with local leaders and BOD members.

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