

Cannon Valley Elder Collegium

Minutes of Board Meeting

November 15, 2017

The meeting of the CVEC Board of Directors took place on Wednesday, November 15, 2017, at the Northfield Senior Center. Members present were Barbara Crouter, Joan Drenth, Phil Eaves, Mike Harper, Jean Haslett, Mary Ho, Steve Kelly, Jerry Mohrig, Peg Morrison, Bob Speckhals, Dale Talley, and Dan Van Tassel. Also in attendance were staff members Perry Mason, Rich Noer, Dale Sommers, and Kathy Sommers. Confirming a quorum and in the absence of Chair Dale Talley, who was delayed in arriving till 4 o'clock, Vice Chair Phil Eaves called the meeting to order at 3:50 p.m.

1. Phil asked if there were any additions or changes to the previously circulated minutes from the Board meeting of October 18, 2017. There being none, a motion to approve the minutes was made, seconded, and approved.
2. In his report as Executive Director, Rich Noer acknowledged and expressed gratitude for the help behind the scenes provided by volunteers Barb Jenkins, Joan Drenth, Ed Lufkin, Jean Haslett, Mary Ho, and Joan Stoesz to complete the task of stuffing, sealing, stamping, and addressing this year's 648 fund drive letters. A repeat work session is anticipated for addressing November newsletter copies later this month. The work of volunteers in our organization is greatly appreciated. Rich also noted that he had sent notice of last month's final acceptance of the Faribault program to all who had served on the ad hoc Faribault committee, and he read a brief thank-you note in response from Brenda Johnson of the Faribault Senior Center.

In way of update regarding the search for a successor to Dale and Kathy Sommers in a combined position of Registration and Finance Director, Rich announced that the process would be guided by a search committee consisting of Dale Talley, himself, Barbara Crouter and Peg Morrison. The job description and notice (as circulated with the agenda) will appear in the November newsletter, which it is hoped will result in names of possible candidates being suggested by the membership. Should that recruitment endeavor need additional follow-up for expanding the potential pool, we may wish to place announcements of the opening in the faculty and staff email want-ad services of both Carleton and St. Olaf. As a possible third means of securing qualified applicants, should those two steps need to be supplemented, we could resort to various websites geared for such personnel searches.

3. Operations Director Dale Sommers reported that a CVEC student from River Falls, WI volunteered assistance to instructor Lawrence Archbold, who has difficulty projecting,

by securing and donating a wireless headset microphone and receiver so that all in the class were able to hear their instructor. Dale also reported that the course evaluations for Fall term will shortly be tallied and sent to the Curriculum Director.

4. Discussion then ensued regarding the proposed salary for the Registration and Finance Director position. The recommendation from the Executive Committee is to offer \$5,000 to the person hired for this revised staff position, which would render a savings of \$1,000 from the two staff positions as currently constituted, inasmuch as it takes into account both the efficiencies inherent in the position when combined and the decision to remove from the position technical support that had been handled by Dale as Operations Director and instead to concentrate that function in a volunteer arrangement with a cadre of qualified individuals. The Board voted to approve the proposed salary of \$5,000.
5. Curriculum Director Perry Mason reported that the course offerings for Winter Term 2018 were leaner than anticipated, but still constituted a desirably varied and strongly attractive batch. Just before going to print, a course on poetry was withdrawn by the instructor for personal reasons; it will be rescheduled in a later term. A total of 12 courses/sections, with one being offered in Faribault, will be available. The goal had been 15. If possible, another of the courses may lead to a second section, depending upon demand and instructor's availability. Perry did add that his forecast for Spring Term includes a wider sampling from Faribault and a goodly array of courses in total.
6. Treasurer Peg Morrison noted that the Operations Report as of 11/10/2017 and the Fund Balances tally for October 31, 2017, both of which had been circulated with the agenda for this November meeting, were favorable. Peg also stated that the amount maintained in Operating Funds was calculated to meet ongoing expenses for approximately six months and that should that amount reach a level significantly in excess of coming expenses, in consultation with the Executive Committee and the Financial Director, she would (as has been past practice) expedite a transfer of appropriate funds from the combined checking and savings accounts to the endowment funds for the purposes of earning a higher yield. She pointed out that this practice is in accordance with the National Council of Non-Profits.
7. Chair Dale opened the floor for discussion of the calendar placement of the annual Board social gathering, reporting first that the survey of preferences between December and May were as follows: 6 for either, 2 indicating they wouldn't be attending, 1 definitely for December, and 5 opting for Spring. By consensus the Board favors Spring over Winter; consequently, plans for a social event in May will proceed accordingly, possibly in the form of a picnic.

8. Next Dale called for discussion regarding the optimum size for the Collegium Board. Several remarked on their experience with other boards and shared that in such organizations as Minnesota Non-Profit Boards as well as Human Resources, the ideal size recommended is from 8 to 11 members. Typically, an odd number is chosen for the purpose of avoiding tie votes. The main argument for a smaller board than 15 or 16, as has been the number on the CVEC Board, is that a smaller number is more conducive to participation and wider sharing of viewpoints by all or most members on issues leading up to a vote or decision. It was more or less agreed that CVEC, previously having 16 board members and presently having 15 members, should work toward a total of 13 by next fall or so and then work on dropping to 11. The best method of reduction is probably through attrition. Another factor complicating the matter is that it would be desirable to achieve a pattern of similar numbers of members in cohorts sharing the same board terms, so that continuity could be better maintained. The Executive Committee will discuss the matter further, looking at the realities of three-year terms and shifts in the years of their respective completion, with an eye toward a workable balance of terms beginning, continuing, and ending. Another thing bearing on the matter is that of the desire of board members whether to seek a second term or end their tenure upon completion of a single three-year term.

9. Rich entertained discussion regarding a proposed amendment to the Policy Manual (previously circulated, and attached to these minutes) consisting of an expansion of the section treating desiderata for the design and delivery of CVEC courses. The amendment was motivated by Perry's document "What Makes an Elder Collegium Course" (also attached to these minutes as previously circulated); it would insert into the Policy Manual desiderata listed by Perry that have traditionally been assumed but never made explicit. The consensus was to adopt the amendment language as drafted by Rich, with the addition of a statement requiring the submission of a syllabus. Perry's document would be, as originally intended, used to orient faculty new to CVEC as to the best practices for course design in our program. As required for changes to the Policy Manual, the amendment will be discussed a second time and voted upon at the next board meeting.

10. Bob Speckhals reported that the members of the Faribault Committee personally shared with him their gratitude for the continuing support that CVEC has given the program offered in Faribault by endorsing its progress from an experimental venture to a regular and ongoing part of the Collegium. He too looks for an ambitious set of course proposals coming from the Faribault contingent for Spring Term.

11. The next regular meeting of the Board is set for Wednesday, January 17, 2018.

Respectfully submitted by Dan Van Tassel, Secretary

Proposed Policy Manual amendment concerning Elder Collegium courses

Perry's statement, "What Makes an Elder Collegium Course/" should be an effective way of introducing new or prospective instructors – particularly those coming from a non-academic background – to what we expect in Elder Collegium courses. It should also be useful in encouraging returning CVEC instructors to think over how they manage their courses.

But the Policy Manual, which is intended more for those who run the Collegium, is written in a more succinct and focused style. So I've tried to extract the important policy issues that Perry's piece contains and insert them briefly into section 5 of the Policy Manual. They basically consist of most of his long item 6. I see his items 1-5 as expansion or spelling out of what's said or implied in item 6.

The text in green below comes from Perry's piece, while the red is from me. Black is current text.
—Rich

SECTION 5 – COURSES

- 5.1 There are three terms per year, each eight weeks in duration. Classes normally meet once a week for two hours, with a brief (ten-minute?) break near the midpoint. Most courses are eight weeks in duration; the normal minimum length is four weeks or its equivalent.
- 5.2 Classes are normally organized to encourage student participation in each session's activities. Even lecture courses should build in time and consideration for student input, discussion, comment, disagreement, and/or communal reflection.
- 5.3 Courses are to be at the first-year college level in terms of the degree of intellectual sophistication assumed. Our students should be at least literate high school graduates or the equivalent. In general, there should be no further expectations of expertise in any academic discipline.
- 5.4 In general, courses will be in the liberal-arts tradition. In particular, they will not consist of simple, how-to-do-it instruction.
- 5.5 To promote student engagement and learning, courses should ordinarily encourage students' preparation for each session. Without this, class discussions tend to remain superficial and unfocused.

The remaining sections, formerly 5.3 through 5.8, would be re-numbered 5.6 through 5.11.