

Cannon Valley Elder Collegium
Minutes of Board Meeting
November 16, 2016

The meeting of the CVEC Board of Directors took place on Wednesday, November 16, 2016, at the Northfield Senior Center. Members present were Anne Aby, Joan Drenth, Phil Eaves, Mary Emery, Mike Harper, Jean Haslett, Steve Kelly, Peg Morrison, Judy Mason, Jerry Mohrig, Eric Nelson, Bob Speckhals, Dale Talley, and Dan Van Tassel. Also in attendance were staff members Barb Jenkins, Rich Noer, and Dale Sommers. Confirming a quorum, Chair Jerry Mohrig called the meeting to order at 3:45 p.m.

1. The Chair asked if there were any additions or changes to the previously circulated agenda. There were none.
2. A motion to approve the minutes from the Board meeting of October 19, 2016 as circulated was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.
3. In his report as Executive Director, Rich Noer said that as of this morning information regarding Winter Term 2017 course offerings (including registration form, course descriptions, names and background of instructors, and days, times, and class locations) had been made available on the CVEC web site. On Friday the newsletter will be mailed to members who request hard copy and made available on line to all others.

Rich passed around a sample of our inaugural Gift Certificate, a means by which anyone can purchase a certificate which can be used by a designated recipient to cover tuition for a CVEC course.

Rich also announced that a fund-raising letter from Jerry was recently sent out. Besides commenting on the centrality for many of CVEC's program of course offerings, the letter makes mention of the recent renewal of computer-related audio-visual equipment at both the Senior Center and the Village on the Cannon— important upgrading for the two primary teaching facilities utilized for CVEC courses. The letter also notes the expansion of on-site CVEC courses to the Faribault community, the ongoing attempt to keep tuition at the minimal cost of \$50, the self-same amount established at the inception two decades ago, and the decision to increase the salary of each staff member from \$2,000 to \$3,000 beginning with next year's budget. An innovation set forth in this year's fund-drive is the demarcation of categories of annual giving: Friend, up to \$150; Patron, \$150 to \$499; and Benefactor, \$500 and above.

Jerry added that he and Rich would be making a presentation about CVEC at tomorrow's Rotary luncheon.

4. Operations Director Dale Sommers reported that evaluations of Fall courses have been completed. The return rate continues to vary with course from 20% to 90%, with now

almost exclusive reliance on the electronic medium. Only three mailed-in or box-deposited evaluations figured in this term's tally. Faculty had been asked to announce the simple but important process in their final classes.

5. No report was scheduled from Curriculum Director Ed Langerak, who was absent and currently in South Africa.
6. Barb Jenkins, Financial Director, commented on the previously circulated data comparing 2015 and 2016 Fall Term operational expenses and income. Though roughly parallel in overall expenses and income, class material expenses for this term were nearly double, purportedly due to the decision to fully refund such expenses, on a trial basis, rather than limit refunds to the normal limit of \$5 per student. Even so, the dollar increase is minimal. Total income, however, was down, there being a difference in amount of gifts and in tuition income.

Peg Morrison, Treasurer, spoke to CVEC fund balances, as of mid-November 2016. These showed no reason for concern.

7. Jerry called on Vice Chair Dale Talley for a report on the status of the search for a new Curriculum Director. Dale reported that to date about a half-dozen names have been suggested. Emails have recently gone out to recent instructors, board members, and other members announcing the opening, summarizing the desired qualifications and chief duties, and inviting nominations. She and Jerry emphasized that the targeted date for an appointment is early February. Jerry urged members present at the meeting to give serious consideration to nominating persons they think might fill the bill.

On another note, Dale assured those present that pies will in fact be available from the usual source for the Annual Membership Meeting scheduled for Sunday afternoon, March 26, 2017.

8. Jerry and Peg shared the planning to date for the Board Holiday Party, which is set for Sunday afternoon, from 2 to 5, December 11th, in the community room of the Village on the Cannon. Board members, staff, and committee members and their guests will likely number about 35 altogether. An upper limit food budget of \$400 has been set and the menu, catered by the same creative caterer who did Jerry's 80th birthday party, will feature hors d'oeuvres, wine, and non-alcoholic beverages. It promises to be fun!
9. Jerry prompted a discussion regarding Board size. The bylaws allow for a range of 12 to 16 directors. Currently there are 16. The Nominating Committee will soon be dealing with seven completions of terms, one not eligible for another term, the other six each eligible for a second three-year term. The question raised has to do with how effectiveness of discussion can be maximized. It has been argued that discussion can become unwieldy or diminishes when the group reaches or exceeds twenty persons. In the present case, with all members and staff in attendance, the group sitting at a Board

meeting has a potential of being twenty, should there be no absences. Lively discussion ensued as to ways to encourage discussion. One idea is to have more ventilation of an issue occur at the committee level, along the lines of the present Executive Committee. Perhaps more could be done at the standing committee level. If, after being thrashed around in a smaller, committee-like conclave, some position or proposal were to come before the Board with a summary of pros and cons (as has and does in fact occur quite often), then members would have an advance opportunity to consider and even take sides on the matter. However, it was argued that such a summary process can end up curtailing useful spontaneity and variety of input that might occur in the absence of such advance preparation.

Another approach discussed involves breaking the Board (of, say, 20) into cells, each with only a few participants, engaging each cell in discussion of the given issue, and then convening for a group discussion and ultimately a vote. Such a dynamic could certainly be implemented in future Board meetings. There was agreement that it would be worth trying. With a smaller board, it was also pointed out that the provision for including non-members as participants in the standing committees widens representation and expertise without having unwieldy committee size. To the suggestion that committee work be given more emphasis, even if it meant dropping of a Board meeting or two, the chair pointed out that while we typically have eight meetings per year, the Bylaws mandate a minimum of six regular Board meetings; hence, that suggestion of lessening Board meeting time and concomitantly increasing Committee responsibility could be accommodated.

Another factor to consider has to do with the desirability of the symmetry that would be afforded in the future if the same number of terms each year were reset. A show of hands made it clear that the idea of reducing the number of directors from the present sixteen to fifteen (an average of five terms expiring each year) is quite acceptable. Phil Eaves, the Board member serving on the Nominating Committee, remarked that the discussion that had ensued at the meeting today would definitely be of assistance in the forthcoming nomination process.

10. Note that our next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 18, 2017.
11. The meeting was adjourned at seven minutes to five.

Respectfully submitted by Dan Van Tassel, Secretary