

Cannon Valley Elder Collegium
Minutes of Board Meeting – October 19, 2022
Presented by David Peterson, Secretary
Meeting by Zoom, hosted by Carol Rutz

Members Present: Jill Ballard, Barbara Crouter, Bruce Dybvik, Susan Evans (Chair), Arthur Higinbotham, Patricia Johnson (Vice Chair), Steve Kelly, Tim Madigan, David Norman, David Peterson (Secretary), John Robison, Colleen Vitek (Treasurer).
Absent: Karolyn Bertelson.

Staff Present: Carol Rutz (Executive Director), Dan Sullivan (Curriculum), Nicole Barnette (Finance and Registration).

- I) **The meeting was called to order by Susan Evans at 3:45P.**
- II) **The minutes were approved** by unanimous vote after the addition of David Norman to the names of those who attempted to be in attendance.

Susan Evans took the floor to introduce three new board members: Bruce Dybvik, Tim Madigan and John Robison. All members, new and incumbent, then introduced themselves with brief biographical summaries and statements of the reasons for their commitment to CVEC.

III) **Staff reports**

A) **Executive Director, Carol Rutz.**

Carol Rutz encouraged all members, new and incumbent, to read over the founding documents – Bylaws and Policy Manual – which are available on the CVEC website.

Further, Carol gave heartfelt thanks to all board members for their help in making the annual meeting the success it was with special gratitude to those responsible for the overall organization: Barbara Crouter, Susan Evans and Karolyn Bertelson.

Carol then reviewed the status of our search for her replacement. Copies of the job description were passed out at the annual meeting and copies remaining after that were placed at 50 North. It will be posted on our website and will be featured in the next newsletter. She urged all board members to mention the opening to friends who might qualify, suggesting that if prospective applicants want more information about the position can call her with questions. She encouraged us all to begin recruiting immediately and to give the names of any interested parties to Susan Evans.

Susan asked for an estimate of the amount of time Carol has devoted to the job. Carol responded that the time commitment is quite variable and cyclic based on various deadlines. The position requires considerable flexibility and the load has stabilized as we have managed the pandemic.

The process for receiving applications will be to submit them to Susan Evans who will review them and bring them to the board and executive committee for consideration. Sue also urged the board to act quickly so that we may have time for some overlap during which the new Director will work alongside Carol. Dan Sullivan observed that active recruiting will be essential as this is not a position that will appeal to very many people and that successful candidates will of necessity have a serious commitment to the mission of CVEC.

B) **Finance & registration, Nicole Barnette**

Finance: Nicole presented the operations report and the fund balances, noting that market volatility caused a \$12,000 loss in our investment portfolio. John Robison asked whether the Dekker or other funds were designated for specific activities. Colleen Vitek responded that though the Dekker contribution is segregated, it was originally given to support the general educational mission of CVEC; accordingly, our use of the funds is not significantly restricted. Colleen then provided a brief summary of our investment history, long-term fund growth and effects of recent market volatility.

Registration: Nicole reported that the increase in the number of classes offered has resulted in a commensurate increase in total enrollment. In the fall term, we turned away 19 registrants. There were 16 individuals registered who had not previously taken a CVEC class and 11 people are taking two classes. Of current registrants, 100 are from Northfield and 37 are from out of town. Art Higinbotham asked how many registrants were from locations far enough from Northfield to prohibit in person attendance; that is, how many registrants are dependent on our Zoom offerings. Nicole offered to get this information. When asked, Nicole clarified our policy for handling scholarship requests, saying that the registrant simply checks a box indicating need and that the tuition support is provided. We have about 3 or 4 such requests per term; no verification of financial status is required.

C) Curriculum, Dan Sullivan.

The winter term offerings have not changed since Dan's last report. The spring course line-up is still quite fluid. Dan is currently working with 15 course proposals, 6 offered by women (an increase and improvement on previous terms). The proposed offerings are diverse. Dan is in several ongoing conversations and hopes to have at least 15 confirmed classes.

Covid restrictions continue to be an issue – a lid on enrollment. Though previously we had many instructors willing to accept 18, 20 or even more students for in-person classes, we held enrollment to 15 more recently. This applies to both in-person classes – for social distancing – and Zoom classes – for the dynamics of managing a screen showing all participants. As we proceed, it would be ideal to relax these restrictions for in-person classes to increase enrollment and turn away fewer applicants. This has been driven partly by the limits placed on us by Village on the Cannon. The other venues are less restrictive and we will examine our options in the future. VOC will now accept 20 for classes held there and may be willing to relax masking requirements. We may also consider expanding offerings at other locations or even seeking new venues.

Dan and others believe that demand exceeds our capacity and people who are turned away through the lottery are very disappointed. It may be that people turned away will be discouraged and not apply in the future.

There ensued discussion of how to define and present our vaccination policy. We require “full vaccination,” but do not define this. Various options were presented: “recently boosted” or “fully vaccinated” may be too loose; “boosted within 6 months prior” may be too restrictive, “having received the most recent booster” may be about right. Dan observed that strategic vagueness may be the right approach. We do not check vaccination cards or require attendees to verify or even vouch for their vaccination status. So in fact we are depending entirely on the integrity of our enrollees, which is probably a pretty good bet. We can make our on-line statement brief in order to conserve valuable screen space and then make the requirements more detailed in materials provided to registrants. Carol Rutz observed that we need to be clear up front as to what our covid protocols are. We should not post a general statement on our website and subsequently, in a different context, issue a version that is more restrictive. Susan Evans proposed that the curriculum committee should review these questions and bring recommendations to the board. This proposal was unanimously accepted in an informal vote.

IV) Committee Reports

There were no reports from the standing committees beyond materials and comments noted above.

V) Policy Discussion – Sue Evans

Susan Evans read a letter from Dan van Tassel in which he took exception to an apparent promotion by CVEC of a book recently published by a CVEC member. Van Tassel's letter observed that CVEC seemed to be showing “partiality towards specific individuals” in a way that suggested that CVEC was endorsing the work in question. It was generally agreed that it is not appropriate for CVEC to be in this position, and it was unanimously agreed, by voice vote, that in future we will consider an amendment to our policy manual. The Publicity Committee is charged with drafting an amendment that CVEC promote or advertise only events or activities that are directly by and in the name of the Cannon Valley Elder Collegium.

VI) Executive Director Honorarium

In the same spirit that motivated last month's discussion of raising the honorarium for instructors, the board was asked to consider the salary currently paid to the Executive Director. The present amount is \$3,000. Like the instructor honorarium, this has not changed for several years. It was argued that even at a significantly higher level, this amount will not in itself be a meaningful incentive and is unlikely to motivate applications from individual who would otherwise take no interest in the job. Consensus was ultimately reached that we will leave this amount at its current level, as we did with the instructor honorarium. It has not been and will not now be part of the job announcement. If a desirable applicant feels that a larger payment is appropriate, the request will be brought to the board and we will consider our options.

VII) Adjournment

At 5:12, there being no further business before the board, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

David Peterson, Secretary