

Cannon Valley Elder Collegium
Minutes of Board Meeting – September 21, 2022
Meeting by Zoom, hosted by Carol Rutz

Members Present: Jill Ballard, Barbara Crouter, Susan Evans, Arthur Higinbotham, Patricia Johnson, David Peterson, Colleen Vitek, Karolyn Bertelsen, Steve Kelly, David Norman.

Absent: Tim Madigan

Staff Present: Dan Sullivan, Nicole Barnette, Carol Rutz

The meeting was called to order by Susan Evans at 3:45P.

The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

Staff reports:

1) Executive Director, Carol Rutz.

Tim Madigan, new member was unavailable for the planned introduction to the board for technical reasons. Carol Rutz reported that Bob Nyvall and Peggy Sheldon had both resigned from the board for personal reasons, creating a new task for the nominating committee.

Carol also reiterated that 2022-2023 would be her last year as she is resigning her position as executive director for personal reasons. She presented for consideration the job description which was used when she was hired. She has agreed to help revise this document, help recruit applicants, and train the new director over a period to be determined. She urged the board to review and revise the job description quickly and begin the search process as soon as is practical with a goal of finding a new director by year's end. In particular, it was decided that the job description and notice of the vacancy should be made available to attendees of the Annual Meeting in October. Carol noted that she was at a half-time rate while she was in training. To review and revise the job description an ad hoc task force was designated consisting of Barbara Crouter, Steve Kelly, Carol Rutz, Susan Evans and Dan Sullivan.

Carol observed that the new director will be inheriting a robust organization with excellent staff, effective standing committees, stable finances, an excellent roster of instructors, and rich course offerings. All in all, a solid basis for our mission going into the future.

2) Finance and Registration Director, Nicole Barnette

Finance

Nicole presented the operations reports and fund balance statements for July and August. Key observations were that changes in our fund balances (approx. \$10K gain in July and -\$5K loss in August) reflect the recent volatility in essentially all components of our portfolio. She also noted that for FY 2021-2022, tuition revenue was below budget, a consequence of the ongoing challenges created by the pandemic, and that donations were up. Art Higinbotham asked how enrollees from outside Northfield and environs were finding us and whether we could increase our promotional activities to draw in more such enrollment. Carol and others pointed out that we continue to have significant enrollment by individuals who would be unable to attend classes in person regardless of pandemic restrictions. For example, there were two recent enrollees who are nursing-home residents – an indication that remote participation will continue to be a necessary component of the services we offer.

Registration

Nicole's report on fall enrollment included the following highlights: Out of 180 possible slots, 156 were filled. Enrollment levels for two ethics classes were low; all other classes filled to 12 or more out of max 15 possible. Her report also included the valuable observation that "enrollments for 2022 have greatly increased. We do have classes limited to 15 this term, which did affect the oversubscribed courses. I did have a few drops due to the requirements at VOC. Having zoom and other venue locations with less restrictions helped."

3) Curriculum Director, Dan Sullivan.

Dan Sullivan reported that for winter term 2023 we have a strong diversity of topics and excellent offerings by returning instructors. Over the summer, he was able to work with prospective instructors to develop their offerings and that all 15 courses offered were approved by the curriculum committee. There are only two women teaching in the winter term, which is unfortunate.

For the spring 2023 term there are 10 courses lined up, four offered by women instructors. Of the instructors enlisted to date, seven are new to CVEC.

Dan raised the following important questions: The winter term will test the proposition that more courses will result in more robust enrollment. If increases in enrollment are not commensurate with the number of courses offered, how are we to interpret this fact? It seems clear that CVEC is widely known and highly regarded as delivering on an important mission. So, perhaps we should now consider raising the max enrollment to increase marginal income relative to costs. Also, we might do well to expand offering in venues other than our usual ones to make attendance more convenient.

Committee Reports:

4) Nominating Committee, Pat Johnson

Pat Johnson reported that the nominating committee met with the two candidates presented for consideration: John Robison and Bruce Dybvik. Brief bios and statements about personal interests were submitted to the Board. Pat noted that John Robison's background in law and his interest in the intersection of law and morality will bring unique value to his participation in CVEC. Bruce Dybvik has significant experience in AV technology as it is used in publicity and teaching. This expertise, plus his education in philosophy, history and English, and his experience as an instructor give him a unique perspective on our mission and potential for very concrete contributions to our program.

After some procedural discussion, both candidates received unanimous approval from the board. They will be presented to the general membership at the annual pie feast. We may hope that they make themselves available for continued board participation after their fill-in terms expire next spring.

Given that we will have two more vacancies on the Board next year, Pat invited current members to make suggestions for replacements. The vacancies will also be announced at the annual meeting in October.

5) Publicity Committee, Karolyn Bertelsen

Karolyn reported that posters announcing the annual meeting will be placed at 50North and Village on the Cannon. One more e-mail blast will be sent out which will include the title of David Sauer's talk. Also, the meeting and David's talk will be highlighted on the CVEC website. Susan Evans asked whether we could or should send out an announcement by conventional mail. Carol Rutz responded that it can be done if text is provided and can have these printed at the same time she has the other items printed at the Carleton print center. Barbara will get something in the newspaper. The committee made a final request for board members to sign up for tasks at the annual meeting

6) Committee Meetings

Chair Susan Evans requested that all standing committees meet before the annual meeting on 19 October. She encourages more communication between the committees and the chair. Also urges each committee to consider whether their committee could/would benefit from additional non-board members.

7) Annual Meeting Task Force, Barbara Crouter

Barbara Crouter reported that the all-important, sine qua non pies will be delivered to St John's at noon on the day of the meeting. The kitchen monitor (a St John's member) will be present after 1:15 to answer questions and facilitate our activities. The AV tech person will be present to check microphones, etc. A wireless mike will be provided to facilitate the Q&A session after David Sauer's talk.

Handouts available at each table will include reports from the executive director and the director of finance on opposite sides of a single sheet, the CVEC brochure, and the executive director job description. We will also solicit new members for standing committees.

8) Policy Considerations

Instructor compensation: Should we compensate for instructors who prepare for classes which do not run because of low enrollment? Dan Sullivan: Good idea to offer at least a token to these. Colleen Vitek: Perhaps the same as the amount paid for classes that run? Dan: There's a big difference. Actually teaching a class requires much more input than preparation. Dan will bring this to the curriculum committee for consideration and report to Board.

Fund raising: Susan Evans asks what should we send out this year for the annual fundraiser? Can we use the same? It goes to our full mailing list of about 700. Questions: Why do we do this at all? Should it be changed to present a different message, a different argument for why we need their donations? We could specify select items that we need money for, projects which need allocated support. Are we collecting money we don't need as much as other not-for-profits in the community? We might ask regular donors why they donate. We could state the benefits CVEC provides to the community: a place for seniors to get to know each other; personal enrichment and growth; general community-building. We rarely get requests for tuition waivers

but those who do ask have a genuine need. Consider turning this upside down: What if we could offer all classes entirely free? If we promote such services, we might find more people in the community who need transportation, technical support (computers, training) for remote learners. Perhaps a revised fundraising letter should enumerate things we have spent money on in the past few years: zoom technology; AV equipment at 50North and VOC; instructor compensation; scholarships. Perhaps just a general overview of our expense profile?

There being no other business to come before the board, Susan Evans adjourned the meeting at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David Peterson, Secretary