

## Minutes of Quest Council Meeting 7-June-2016

The meeting was called to order by President Michael Wellner at 1:02 pm. All Council members were present, including: Steve Allen, Wayne Cotter, Phil Gisser, Bob Gottfried, Bob Hartmann, Ruth Kovner, Jane Lubin, Bob Moore, Jane Pittson-Chianese, Liesje ten Houten and Michael Wellner.

### Agenda:

- 1) Welcome New Members: As president, Michael welcomed the newly-elected Council members --- Steve Allen, Phil Gisser and Bob Gottfried.
  
- 2) Committee Member's Name Added: Leslie Goldman's name was added to the roster of the new Marketing/Communications Committee, where she has agreed to serve as the chairman.
  
- 3) Conflict of Interest Statements: Michael distributed, and all members of Council signed, new Conflict of Interest statements as required by NY State Corporation Law.
  
- 4) Membership Renewal Letters: Membership Renewal letters for the 2016/2017 Academic Year were e-mailed to the entire membership. The Council has voted to retain the annual membership fee at \$500 (this fee has not changed for seven or eight years); all renewal checks are due by July 31<sup>st</sup>.

In addition, the Council has voted to approve the following membership dues for those who join during the year, rather than at the normal September 1<sup>st</sup> start of the season. From now on, people who join any time during the fall semester will be required to pay the full \$500, and members who join at any time during the spring will pay \$300. Both will grant membership through the immediately following summer session.

- 5) Proposal to Authorize Increased Honoria for Guest Speakers: A proposal was made and a discussion held on the possibility of increasing the honoria that we pay to our

guest speakers to \$500. Currently we offer \$200. Some Council members have felt that this \$200 amount is inadequate. After some discussion a motion was made and approved to table the discussion until September, when we will invite Bob Riess and Hedy Shulman to present their views at the Council meeting.

6) Current Finances of Quest: We continue in very good financial condition as reported by our new Treasurer, Steve Allen. Many thanks to our former Treasurer, John Sicree for his efforts. In addition, we are grateful to those members who have made donations and bequests to Quest.

7) The 2016-2017 Budget: Michael Wellner presented a budget for the coming year, 2016/2017 fiscal year. After a discussion on various aspects of the budget (see below,) a motion to approve the budget was proposed by Bob Gottfried and seconded by Ruth Kovner. It passed unanimously.

Steve, in his capacity as the new treasurer, reminded all that Quest maintains two accounts, one at CCNY which is under their control pursuant to our affiliation agreement with City College, and one that is completely under our control. (In fact, the monies under our direct control are partially in two savings accounts and partially in a checking account.) Steve then said that going forward all monies that are donated to Quest should be deposited directly into our savings account, the goal being to differentiate those funds from any surplus or loss that results from the day-to-day operation of Quest (i.e. our income from membership fees and our normal day-to-day expenses.) All agreed.

8) By-Laws Summary: Steve Allen and Caroline Thompson have prepared a “plain language” version of the Quest By-laws that will be posted on the web site for all members to see. The hope is that this version, which has been edited by Bob Hartmann and Michael Wellner, and approved by the council, will be easier for all members to understand. Thanks to Steve and Caroline for their work on this project.

9) Membership Resolution: The Council noted that the resolution passed at the April General Membership Meeting is now in effect. It states: “For the Academic Year 2016-2017, Quest membership shall not exceed 250 members without first getting the approval of a majority of the general membership, under the provisions of Article IX of the Quest By-Laws. All decisions as to the timing of increases towards this 250 member

cap and as to how choices will be made among applicants will remain at the sole discretion of the Quest Council and Membership Committee.”

10) Sense of the Council: Resolution on Membership Requirements: A discussion was held on the following proposal brought up by Bob Moore and Wayne Cotter, based on recent Council discussions regarding membership guidelines. Their resolution has three primary objectives.

i) To articulate the Council’s views regarding Quest’s expectations of its members, especially new members (presentations and attendance).

ii) To provide guidance to the Membership Committee when interviewing and screening Quest candidates

iii) To make clear that the Council does not consider these guidelines to be absolute requirements, and that no Quest member will be dismissed from the organization for not meeting the guidelines

It is important that the Membership committee be apprised of guidelines urging all potential candidates to be involved in at least one activity and/or make at least one presentation by the end of their second year as a member. Wayne made a motion to approve this proposal, Steve Allen seconded it and the motion carried unanimously.

11) Article in the NY Times on CUNY’s Financial Problems: There was a recent long article in the NY Times on financial problems confronting CUNY and CCNY, and how they may affect CWE and Quest. (Note: subsequent to our meeting the State has funded all of CUNY’s funds that were in dispute and doubt.) It was agreed that Michael would talk to the Dean in general terms about this issue and if there was any way that Quest might help.

12) Christmas Lunch Plans: Because of a quirk in this coming fall’s schedule, our annual Holiday Party will be held on Monday, Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>, outside of Quest, likely at a

midtown restaurant. Stay tuned for further details; Michael & Bob Hartmann are coordinating.

13) Copy Machine: A discussion was held on the possibility of Quest leasing its own high speed multi-function copy machine. It appears that the current machine, owned by CWE, is on its last legs. If we do get a new machine it will be a high-speed printer/copier that will be able to collate and staple as well. More details coming.

14) Coffee: Michael reported that it appears that we have enough volunteers for coffee in the fall.

It was agreed that we would not hold a formal meeting in July, and that our next meeting will be held on Monday, September 12<sup>th</sup>.

All business having been concluded, the meeting was adjourned at 3:10 pm. \_

Respectfully submitted,

# Ruth

Ruth Kovner

## Minutes of Quest Council Meeting 12 September 2016

The meeting was called to order by President Michael Wellner. All council members were present: Steve Allen, Wayne Cotter, Phil Gisser, Bob Gottfried, Bob Hartmann, Ruth Kovner, Jane Lubin, Bob Moore, Jane Pittson-Chianese, and Liesje ten Houten.

### Agenda:

- 1) Minutes of Last Meeting: Approved via e-mail.
- 2) Raising Honorarium for Guest Speakers: The Council reviewed a prior proposal to raise the amounts that we offer to our Wednesday afternoon guest speakers from the current \$200 to a possible \$500. Bob Riess and Hedy Shulman, who have taken over for Sandy in procuring the speakers for us, were guests of the council. After some discussion, it was agreed to authorize Bob & Hedy (and Barbara Oliver who s sharing the responsibilities with Hedy and Bob) to use their own discretion to pay up to \$500 if appropriate. Since the speakers for this term are already set, Bob Gottfried made a motion to authorize a budget of not more than \$2,500 to be spent on speakers for the spring term. The motion was seconded by Michael Wellner, and approved unanimously. The council agreed to revisit this issue next year to determine the effectiveness of this increase.
- 3) Membership: Roy Clary, Chair of the Membership Committee, was also present as a guest of the council. He reported on status of Membership. We now have 231 members, with a cap of 250 in place. Roy emphasized that interviews with all prospective members stress our peer-learning model; as a rule we state that new members are expected to make at least one presentation within their first two years of joining the organization. While this is stressed, it was repeated that no member will ever be expelled for failing to make a presentation. We also discussed plans to resurrect classes on technical issues (PowerPoint use, etc.) and the expansion of those classes to include helpful hints on how to make more effective presentations.
- 4) Treasurer's Report: Our finances continue to be pretty solid. Nothing has changed materially from the end of last term.

- 5) Marketing & Communications Committee: This committee, now chaired by Leslie Goldman, will focus primarily on our marketing efforts via the “questlifelong.org” web-site. All Council members are encouraged to review that web-site in detail and report to Leslie (and Steve) their comments and opinions.
- 6) List of Committees with New Chairs and Members: Steve Allen will update the list of all committees, their members and chairs. The Council also agreed on exactly which committees should present reports to the council in person, or simply by written report, as specified in the by-laws.
- 7) Holiday Luncheon Plans: This year’s annual Christmas/Holiday luncheon will not be held here at 25 Broadway. Michael & Bob (Hartmann), as a committee of two, have selected the Le Rivage restaurant on 46<sup>th</sup> street, in the theater district. The restaurant can accommodate a maximum of 100 people --- so sign up early! Reservation sheets will be distributed shortly. The luncheon will cost \$25 per person, which is heavily subsidized by Quest.
- 8) New Copying Machine: We are seriously considering leasing a new copy machine for the Quest office --- one that will collate and staple and be much more robust and faster than our current machine. The cost should be minimally more than what we are spending now. If we do go ahead, then members will no longer be reimbursed for the cost of any copies made on the outside.
- 9) Noontime Knowledge: We are planning to broaden and expand the range of subjects for our Noontime Knowledge sessions, in part to help alleviate potential overcrowding in the lunchroom. “Ted Talks” and other similar videos may well be shown, followed by a class discussion. More details will follow.

The next council meeting is scheduled (unusually) for Wednesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, at 2:30 P.M.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

**Ruth**

Ruth Kovner,  
Secretary

## Minutes of Quest Council Meeting 5 October 2016

The meeting was called to order by President Michael Wellner. All council members were in attendance: Steve Allen, Wayne Cotter, Phil Gisser, Bob Gottfried, Bob Hartmann, Ruth Kovner, Jane Lubin, Bob Moore, Jane Pittson-Chianese and Liesje ten Houten.

### Agenda:

- 1) Review of Minutes of last meeting: Accepted with changes noted.
- 2) Guests:
  - a. Vivian Oliver, as co-chair of our newly-formed Diversity Committee: We all agreed on the desirability of expending efforts to attract new members from a more diverse ethnic and cultural communities. We realize that this is, indeed a difficult task (IRP and PEIR apparently have the same), but Vivian, with Doreen DeMartini as a co-chair, is anxious to try. Toward that end they will seek other members to join their committee, and the council has agreed to allocate funds to support their effort. More news to follow.
  - b. Bob Reiss and Carolyn McGuire as members of the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC). After several meetings of the LRPC, Bob has drafted a comprehensive report based primarily on a SWOT analysis of Quest, and focusing on our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. This represents the final report of the LRPC and has been approved by all members of the Committee. A copy of that report was distributed to each of the Council members. More discussions need follow, and it was agreed (in the interest of time) that the Council would hold a special meeting on October 31<sup>st</sup> to focus exclusively on this report, and what the next steps of the LRPC will be.

One decision made was to form a new Ad Hoc Development Committee, with John Sicree as Chair, to explore options for finding other space in the unlikely event that we have to give up our present space. (Of course, we are all aware of the recent resignation of CCNY's president).

The LRPC is scheduled to sunset after its final report to the general membership in the spring of 2017.

- 3) Update on Membership: We currently have 240 members. Over the course of the summer we typically lose 10% of membership because of "aging out" (illness or death), loss of interest, moving away, etc. This year, however, Steve Allen noted that we experienced a somewhat larger loss than usual. We believe that our increased emphasis on telling new members our expectation regarding presentations and contributions to Quest may well account for this increased loss. It was noted that of the members who had not returned this year (other than those who return was prevented by illness or death) none

were “active” or contributors. The Council is pleased with the efforts on the part of the Membership Committee to tell prospective members that we do expect them to contribute to the organization within their initial two years of membership.

- 4) Committee Report presented by Bob Gottfried. Bob has suggested, and the council agreed, that the following four ad-hoc committees conform with the by-laws requirements that apply to all standing committees: Long Range Planning, Freshman Class, Travel, and (the new) Development. These four committees should report to the council once each semester, and their chairs should serve for no more than three years.
- 5) Lease of new Copy Machine: We are moving forward with plans to lease a new high-speed multi-function (collating and stapling) copy machine. If we proceed (now done) ALL COPIES will have to be done in house, and we will no longer reimburse members who have copies made outside, except in special circumstance in which approval has been obtained in advance from the President or the Treasurer.
- 6) Holiday Party: The Council held a discussion on the decision to hold our Holiday/Christmas Party outside, and not at Quest. The primary issue is that the restaurant that Bob (H) and Michael selected holds only a maximum of 100 people. Some members have expressed concern since our membership is now at 240. But Michael pointed out that the attendance at previous parties is normally no more than 100, and this year the event will be held off-site, in December, on a day when there are no classes scheduled. There are currently 50 people signed up for the party. The actual cost for this restaurant sit-down luncheon is, of course, much more expensive than our usual sandwiches or Chinese food, but this year Quest will make up the difference. Because of the space constraint, guests are not invited to the luncheon. Of course guests will be welcome at the end of the year luncheon in May. The Council will make arrangements for an overflow location in case the number of people signing on for the lunch exceeds 100 and will subsidize the cost to the same extent as the initial 100.
- 7) Treasurer’s Report. Steve Allen submitted the quarterly written financial report required by the By-Laws. There have been no material changes in Quest's finances since his verbal reports at the June and September Council meetings. He will deliver a summary of this report at the November General Membership meeting
- 8) Article in Stuyvesant Town News: Michael noted that the Dean, who lives in StuyTown, had forwarded an article that appeared in their local paper about IRP. Nothing notable.



All business having been concluded, the meeting was adjourned at 3:53 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by:

*Ruth*

Ruth Kovner, Secretary

# Minutes of a special Quest Council Meeting Monday 31-October-2016



This special meeting was convened primarily to address the Long Range Planning Committee final report, prepared and submitted to the Council by Bob Reiss. A few other items were added to the agenda as well.

Attending were all the Council members except for Wayne Cotter and Bob Moore who were out trick-or-treating at the time. Wayne was good enough to submit extensive comments on the report; Bob was kind enough to wear his Halloween costume to class the next day.

The first item on the agenda was a discussion of the annual scholarship that Quest gives to CWE. It has been \$2500 for years, and in this year's annual meeting with the Dean we suggested that we might increase it this year. After a brief discussion it was agreed that we would increase our contribution by \$1,000 (40%) to \$3,500. [Info after the fact: Davi Saroop, CWE's Administrative Coordinator, is thrilled.]

Next we discussed the new copy machine, which (thankfully) seems to be working quite well. Michael will distribute a policy statement to all Quest members advising them that we will no longer make reimbursements for copies made outside EXCEPT in special cases that have been approved IN ADVANCE by either the President or the Treasurer.

Third, Michael gave a quick review of the Christmas/Holiday luncheon. Right now we have 90 people signed up (4 of whom have yet to pay). With a little luck we should come in just under 100. Let's hope!

Next ensued a brief discussion about an e-mail that Michael received from Vivian Oliver addressing the issue of the difficulties that the hearing impaired have in classrooms other than the auditorium, where there are no microphones for audience members to use when asking questions or making comments. Quest now has one portable sound system that Bob Reiss had bought for less than \$200; Vivian has asked if we might buy two more. We agreed to consider this in time for the beginning of next semester. Steve is doing the research on cost and availability.

Finally, then, the business at hand: The Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) final report. After some discussion on the excellent report compiled by Bob Reiss, the Council agreed on the following:

- At the upcoming November General Membership Meeting we would review the report with those members present. Included would be highlights of the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) that the LRPC performed.
- We would emphasize the need for new members to become active participants (the Step-Up program) – which is already meeting with some success.
- We would note the establishment of a new Diversity Committee, tasked with trying to increase the diversity among our members.
- We would review the current agreement with CWE regarding our space at 25 Broadway, and what our alternatives might be should CWE be forced (by CCNY/CUNY) to re-locate.
- We would not accept any more members this semester (with possible exceptions as noted), keeping the current level of 240. Come the start of the spring semester, when attendance is generally a bit reduced (snowbirds, and the effects of winter weather), we will accept up to ten more members, maintaining the previously agreed-to cap of 250.
- At the April general membership meeting (scheduled for April 5<sup>th</sup>), the Council will present its plan for a membership limit for the 2017-18 Academic Year. By then we will know if, in fact, we have been forced to turn potential members away, and, if so, what our waiting list looks like.
- Steve Allen made a motion that the Council endorse Wayne Cotter's suggestions for edits to the LRPC report and send Wayne's suggestions to the LRPC with a request that they consider these suggestions and then resubmit their report to the Council. This motion was passed unanimously.

- We would review our current financial situation with the membership, including the possibility of increasing membership dues for the 2017-18 year. It was noted that this would only be the second increase in the twenty-two years that Quest has been established.

We are scheduled to meet again in one week, on Monday November 7<sup>th</sup>, (the day before E-Day!) for our regular monthly council meeting.

All business at this special meeting having been concluded, the meeting was adjourned at 3:53 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Ruth Kovner  
Secretary

### **Minutes of Quest Council Meeting 7 November 2016**

The president, Michael Wellner, called the meeting to order at 2:38 P.M. Present were Steve Allen, Phil Gisser, Bob Gottfried, Bob Hartmann, Ruth Kovner, Jane Lubin, Bob Moore, Jane Pittson-Chianese and Liesje ten Houten. Absent due to illness was Wayne Cotter.

#### Agenda:

- 1) Guests: Two committee chairs were invited to update the Council on the recent activities of their committees: Caroline Thompson, chair of the Curriculum Committee and Marian Friedmann, Chair of the Scheduling Committee.

a) Caroline Thompson, briefed us on the three courses that will be dropped and their replacements. The Long 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Architecture, and The Election Course will not continue. In their place will be new courses on Immigration and the Changing America, and an Environmental Issues course. And Steve Koenig's music course will be expanded from a workshop to a full course, for a net effect of zero. As always, Caroline will provide a more detailed update at the November 16<sup>th</sup> General Meeting.

Caroline also noted that the Curriculum Committee has three sub-committees:

- Summer Session
- Summer School Recommendations (Best courses), and
- Step-up Committee\*

\*It does seem that more members are "stepping up" to make presentations or lead class discussions. Steve questioned whether we might recognize these people in some way (a different color lanyard?). No decision at this time.

She also mentioned that there will be an email to the membership to motivate ideas for possible new courses. And another will be emailed in order to find more presenters for the upcoming terms.

b) Marian Friedmann, reported on her method of assigning time slots for upcoming courses (a thankless job!). Factors include:

- > Other courses also in that time frame
- > The course subject matter (we try and avoid two similar classes being taught simultaneously)
- > Is it a workshop course or a regular course?
- > Usual number of members attending the course?

Suffice it to say that this is no easy task, especially with the quality of our courses improving all the time. Satisfying everybody is almost impossible, but the committee tries please as many people as possible.

- 2) The minutes of the previous meeting (Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>) were accepted unanimously.
- 3) Treasurer's Report: Steve Allen reports that our finances continue to be in good shape and there has been no appreciable change in our holdings. A detailed report will be presented by Steve at the Nov. 16<sup>th</sup> General Meeting.
- 4) Proposal by Vivian Oliver: Vivian submitted a paper expressing the belief, on the part of our many members with less-than-perfect hearing, that there is a pressing need for good, quality microphones and speakers in all the rooms except the Auditorium. The Council quickly agreed to do a bit of research to see what

products, similar to the portable speaker that we now have, that might prove beneficial. (Update: one such item has already been ordered to test.)

- 5) Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC): At the upcoming General Meeting Michael will deliver a summary of the extensive LRPC report presented to the Council.
- 6) Holiday Party: Currently we have about 94 members who have paid for the lunch, and we are getting close to the maximum number of 100. (Should more than 100 members want to attend, another venue will be provided.)
- 7) Computer Courses: We also discussed the possibility of resurrecting, in one form or another, the computer classes that had been given, by Bob Reiss and Steve Allen and Michael Wellner (and others) five or six years ago. With so many new members, and more “old” members giving more presentations, there does appear to be some demand to repeat these classes. A few members have requested a more advanced Power point class. We discussed the possibility classes might take place during Noontime Knowledge sessions, or after school at 2:30. Stay tuned for more information.

The next meeting of Council will be held on Monday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, at 2:30 PM.

This meeting was adjourned precisely at 3:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in a cursive script that reads "Ruth". The signature is written in black ink and features a long, sweeping flourish that extends from the top of the letter 'h'.

Ruth Kovner  
Secretary

# Minutes of December 5, 2016 Council Meeting

The meeting was called to order by President Michael Wellner; all members of Council were present: Steve Allen, Wayne Cotter, Phil Gisser, Bob Gottfried, Bob Hartmann, Jane Lubin, Jane Pittson-Chianse, Bob Moore Liesje ten Houten, and Ruth Kovner.

## Agenda:

### 1. Guests:

Membership Co-chairs Roy Clary and Bobbie Gold were invited to the meeting to give us an update on membership. As of today we have 242 active members (after removing Rick Salter who is relocating back to Toronto and Joan Briller moving to Indianapolis). Roy reported that they had five or six prospective members anxious to join Quest right now. Their concern is that a delay for even a few weeks may cause them to look for other senior options. Both assured us that these were very good candidates who would be an asset to our group.

In light of the coming spring term, when attendance tends to be reduced (several members in Florida and California, for example), and demand usually slacks off compared to the fall, Roy and Bobbi urged us to accept these applicants, which will increase our membership to a few less than the current cap of 250. A motion was made by Bob Gottfried to instruct the membership committee to accept these people; it was seconded by Steve Allen and passed unanimously.

2. Minutes of the recent General Membership Meeting as well as those of the Council meeting of November 5<sup>th</sup> were accepted unanimously.
3. Holiday Luncheon: It is now officially closed; 102 people have subscribed, although we expect a few no-shows (as usual). (Post-meeting note: Somewhere around 94 members actually attended, and it turned out to be extremely well received and very successful.)

4. Treasurer's Report (Steve Allen): Finances continue to be in-line with our budget forecasts, if not a bit better. We expect to end the year with a small surplus.

Steve also noted that he is seeking more professional help with the Quest website, and looking to replace the young student who has been (successfully) working with us for the past couple of years.

Steve also informed us that our attendance is up around 10% over last year, and that more new members are leading classes and making presentations than in the past. Good news, indeed!

5. Update on Portable Speakers: One of the microphones for the portable PA system that we use particularly often in Room 15-17 has gone missing; Bob Reiss has volunteered to buy a new one. And we will also purchase enough complete portable systems so that each classroom can have microphones to use for class members when asking questions or making comments on the presentation --- just like we can now do in the auditorium.
6. Report on Meeting with the Dean: CCNY has a new Acting President, Vince Boudreau, the former Dean of the Colin Powell School at City College. He is a good friend of Dean Mercado, and is well aware of Quest and our activities. At this meet and greet meeting was Michael, Bob Hartmann and Bob Gottfried.

Michael Wellner and Steve Allen met with the Dean to make him aware that, in planning for our future, we are always cognizant of the fact that we have a year-to-year lease on our physical space at 25 Broadway, and are in the process of doing some long range planning in the (very) unlikely case that CWE would be forced to move, and that we, in turn, might lose our lease. Although we all believe that such an event is most unlikely, we are doing some scouting around and want the Dean to know up front.

We also discussed briefly that we are likely to increase our dues for the 2017-18 year, and that a portion of that increase will likely go to CWE.



7. Spring 2017 Semester: The new course catalog is due in any day; classes begin on January 30<sup>th</sup>; we are off on Lincoln's Birthday (February 13<sup>th</sup>;) on Presidents' Day February 20<sup>th</sup>; and spring break is the week of April 10<sup>th</sup>. The last day of classes is May 11<sup>th</sup>; our Annual Luncheon is set for Wednesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>.
8. The Long Range Planning Committee will sunset at the end of the spring semester. A final report will be distributed to the membership at the April 26<sup>th</sup> General Meeting.
9. The Council appointed Wayne Cotter as the Council member of the Nominations and Elections Committee, and we agreed to discuss at the February meeting not only the other members of that committee but any guidance that the Council might provide.

Our next meeting will take place on Monday Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017, at the usual 2:30 P.M.

All business having been concluded, the meeting was adjourned by precisely 3:42 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in a cursive script that reads "Ruth". The signature is written in black ink and features a prominent, sweeping flourish that extends from the top of the letter 'h' and curves back over the rest of the name.

Ruth Kovner, Secretary

## Minutes of Quest Council Meeting 6 February 2017

The meeting was called to order by President Michael Wellner at 2:33 P.M. All members were present with the exception of Bob Moore, who was in Antarctica (excused absence!). Present were Steve Allen, Wayne Cotter, Phil Gisser, Bob Gottfried, Bob Hartmann, Jane Lubin, Jane Pittson-Chianese, Liesje ten Houten, Ruth Kovner, and Michael Wellner.

- 1) Minutes: The minutes of the previous Council Meeting of December 5, 2016, have been distributed via Email to all Council Members, having previously been unanimously approved.
- 2) Membership Update: Our Current membership of Quest stands at 248, and the Membership Committee reports that there are several people awaiting interviews. Once we reach our limit of 250, we will (a) form a waiting list, and (b) encourage people to join for the summer (cost only \$100) where we have no limit. This will allow them to better see whether Quest is for them. It is noted that those who join for the summer will have no guarantee of acceptance for full-time membership in the fall.
- 3) Treasurer's Report: Our Treasurer, Steve Allen, gave us a mid-year summary of our Budget and Year-to-date expenses. Our finances remain in good shape; revenues are slightly ahead of budget, and expenses are slightly below. We expect to end the year with a small surplus.
- 4) December 12<sup>th</sup> Luncheon Review: Unanimous approval and rave reviews were voiced by those present who attended. It was a very successful holiday luncheon.
- 5) Update on our New Portable Speakers: Steve and Michael reported that Bob Riess, who undertook the task of purchasing two new portable speakers for use in the classrooms, has completed his task. There are now portable sound systems that can be used for Q&A in each classroom.
- 6) Council policy on outside guest speakers' selling their books on Wednesday afternoons: The Council has agreed unanimously to allow our guest speakers the opportunity to sell their books at Quest in conjunction with their lectures. Our lecturers are generous in speaking at Quest for very minimal Honoria, so we should be willing to accommodate them. Of course, the existing policy that precludes any Quest member from selling any of his/her wares at Quest remains in effect.
- 7) NEC Update: Wayne Cotter, Chair of the Nominating and Election Committee, reports that he has now assembled his committee. Included are Paul Adler, Leslie Goldman, Nan McNamara, Myra Nissen and, of course, Wayne Cotter. They are now seeking candidates for four openings for Council-at-Large seats plus candidates for the positions of President and Vice President. Steve Allen

moved that we accept those named to the committee. It was seconded by Phil Gisser and passed unanimously by the Council.

Steve Allen proposed acceptance of the following motion: "The Council urges the NEC, in creating its schedule for members to meet the candidates, to allow ample time for members to ask questions." It was seconded by Bob Gottfried and was approved unanimously.

- 8) Update From the Development Committee: Outside Space: Steve reported that this group, after carefully examining the space we currently use at 25 Broadway, and then talking with several real estate professionals, has concluded that to rent any space similar to that which we now enjoy will be very costly, indeed. The most sensible solution, should the need arise, may well be to seek space within a college or university complex. Right now we all agree that it is premature to take any further steps. We are trying to be prepared in the event that the current space at CWE should no longer be available to Quest.
- 9) By-Laws Changes: We are contemplating some small, essentially technical changes to the Quest By-Laws. These will be discussed in detail at the March 6<sup>th</sup> Council meeting, and distributed to all members well before the April General Meeting.
- 10) Metropolitan Museum of Art Request: Bob Reiss has inquired whether the Council would approve his request to fund the next Friday Museum trip, which will cost \$24 per person. After discussion, the Council voted unanimously not to approve the use of Quest funds for any outside museum visits.
- 11) Acting Workshop: A request was made by Marilyn Rosen and the leaders of the Acting Workshop to spend \$1,400 for the rental of a sound system and engineer for the end of year acting workshop performance in May. After considerable discussion, the Council voted unanimously not to approve the request, believing that it was too costly for a one time event. Suggestions were made on ways to perhaps purchase some equipment that we would then own (forever) that might achieve the same end. .
- 12) Finally, the date for the next meeting was fixed as March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2:30 PM.

All business having been completed, the meeting was adjourned by President Michael Wellner at precisely 3:48 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by:

*Ruth Kovner*

Secretary

## Minutes of Council Meeting 6-March-2017

The meeting was called to order at 2:32 by Michael Wellner, president. All council members were present as were two guests, Roy Clary, as chair of the Membership Committee, and Caroline Thompson, as chair of the Curriculum Committee. Council members in attendance were Steve Allen, Wayne Cotter, Phil Gisser, Bob Gottfried, Bob Hartmann, Jane Lubin, Jane Pittson-Chianese, Bob Moore, Liesje ten Houten, Ruth Kovner and Michael Wellner.

1. The Minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously accepted earlier via e-mail.

2. Guests: Our first report came from **Roy Clary, Membership Chair**, who reported that we have reached our membership cap of 250, and have now started a waiting list. There seems to be no question that the demand for membership continues to increase.

Roy commented that the increased participation of new members has been a big plus, and the Council agreed. More new members are giving presentations in their first year or two years at Quest. The membership committee will continue to emphasize to all candidates that they interview for membership that Quest is a peer-learning organization and that we expect all members to contribute to its successful functioning.

Our next report came from **Caroline Thompson, Curriculum Committee Chair**, who first reported on those courses to be discontinued next year. These include Here There Be Monsters and the Environmental course. The Acting Workshop will be on hiatus. But the (very) good news is that there are several new courses that have been proposed, and the curriculum committee currently has more than enough potential courses (including "The Art of Illustration," "The Bible as Literature," "The Universe," "Middelmarch" and "The Constitution.") "Fiction into Film," will be returning after a hiatus. There are courses in the pipeline to replace those that will be discontinued. In fact, we may well be in the enviable position of being able to offer three courses (not including workshops), rather than just two, in the same time slot.

After Caroline left, the Council debated the issue of holding three courses simultaneously, and agreed that that decision should be left to the Curriculum Committee. However, it is the sense of the Council to encourage the Curriculum Committee to experiment with having three courses simultaneously, which would have the added benefit of potentially reducing crowding in existing classes. Michael then made a motion to "approve" the Curriculum Committee's suggestion to have three courses for as many time slots as necessary; this was seconded by Ruth Kovner, and approved unanimously.

Caroline also noted that some long-running courses will be placed on hiatus, in order to make room for some of the new courses. Specifically, the committee has proposed that

"The Big Picture" and "The Supreme Court" may take a break - the latter to be "replaced" by the Constitution course.

Caroline further noted that following in the steps of the late June Dwyer, who stepped down after two years, she will also step down as Chair of the Curriculum Committee in May. Her contribution to this very important committee and her enthusiasm are commended. And she is in the process of recommending her replacement to the president and the Council.

In sum, the outlook for the Quest curriculum is very bright, indeed.

3. When A Member Becomes Cognitively Impaired: The Council discussed how to react when a member becomes disruptive and/or unable to function at, or contribute to, Quest. While we all appreciate that this is a very sensitive matter, the sense of the Council is that in such a case, should the member wish to continue to attend classes, we will require that he or she be accompanied by a family member or an aide who can provide any required assistance.

4. Elections in May: Wayne Cotter reported for the NEC that we have five openings for Council at Large seats, as well as upcoming vacancies in the offices of President and Vice President. So far there are nine candidates running for the five Council seats (one of which is for a one-year term only), two people running for president, and one for vice-president (initially a one-year term as well). The NEC has scheduled six dates in April for the candidates to speak to, and be questioned by, the membership at lunch time.

5. Treasurer's Update: Steve Allen, our Treasurer, states that our finances continue in good shape. We should finish the year at close to break-even. There is an unexpected bill from an accounting firm that we have used to prepare last year's tax return, which has turned out to be more complex than anticipated. We are negotiating to have that reduced, and, going forward, to see if we can find less-expensive methods of having our tax returns prepared, including possibly doing them in house. More details to follow.

6. By-Laws Amendments: Steve Allen has proposed making a few changes to the Quest Bylaws, and he will prepare a final version of those proposed changes, as well as a memo that explains the proposed amendments to the membership. He will circulate this memo to the Council for email approval prior to distributing it to the membership.

7. Printing of the Course Catalogue: Larry Shapiro has proposed a change in the schedule for printing our semi-annual Course Catalog. To reduce time pressure, Larry has suggested that we first produce, in-house, a black-and-white copy of the catalogue that we can distribute to our members either at the end of this semester or at the

beginning of the summer session. So doing would enable the Curriculum and Scheduling Committees to be less-rushed in getting the catalog out. Then, once the B&W version has been distributed (and proof-read), the full color version, which we use as a recruitment tool, can be completed later in the summer. We all agreed to give this a try.

#### 8. Preparations for Upcoming Elections and the General Membership Meeting:

1) Candidates for office will speak to the members at lunchtime Monday through Thursday, April 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>, and then on Monday and Tuesday April 24<sup>th</sup> and April 25<sup>th</sup>. Council at Large presentations to Quest members are on April 17 through April 20<sup>th</sup>. The President and Vice President speeches are on April 24<sup>th</sup> and April 25<sup>th</sup>.

2) We will also schedule Noontime meetings to discuss and prepare for a Membership vote on the membership cap for the next (2017-18) year. Steve Allen, Bob Reiss and Bob Gottfried have agreed to do some preliminary work on the wording of the ballot to be used.

9. Year End Luncheon in May: Jane Lubin reports that plans are in progress for the luncheon on Wednesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>. We will congregate again at the beautiful Battery Gardens Restaurant in Battery Park, after viewing the annual presentation of scenes by the Acting Class.

10. Membership Fee Increase: Steve has done some extensive research and has found that the fee for our Quest membership has been the same \$500 for the last fourteen years! Had we simply kept pace with inflation, our current dues would be about \$700; we have certainly enjoyed a bargain for more than a decade. But now, even with our increased membership, our costs (including the rent that we pay to CWE/CCNY) continue to go up, and the Council agrees that we may have to increase our membership fee for the 2017-18 year. The Council will consider a few options, and report its decision to the members at the Annual Membership Meeting on April 26<sup>th</sup>.

11. Piano for the Auditorium: Roy Clary has noted that we are fortunate to have several concert level pianists at Quest, but unfortunately we have no instrument on which they can play. Roy suggested that we could likely purchase a used piano for less than \$1,000; others have suggested that we ask our members who might have (or know of) a piano that they (or their friends or families) might be able to donate. If so please let Roy or Michael know... and thank you. We have already spoken with the Dean at CWE and he would be quite happy to have us place a piano in the auditorium. So --- if you have access to or know of a used upright piano, please let us know. Thank you.

The business of the meeting having been concluded, the meeting was adjourned at 3:52 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted by:

A large, elegant, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruth". The lettering is fluid and cursive, with a prominent, sweeping flourish that extends from the top of the 'h' and curves back towards the left.

Ruth Kovner  
Secretary



# QUEST COUNCIL MINUTES - April 3, 2017

**In addition to the regular monthly Council meeting on April 3, there was also a special supplementary Council meeting on April 18. The minutes of this supplementary meeting are appended below.**

President Michael Wellner called the meeting to order at 2:38 P.M. Attending were Wayne Cotter, Bob Hartmann, Liesje ten Houten, Bob Moore, Jane Pittson-Chianese, Jane Lubin, Steve Allen, Phil Gisser and Bob Gottfried. Ruth Kovner was absent, and Jane Lubin graciously agreed to take the minutes in her stead.

## Discussion of Upcoming Election:

Candidates Carolyn McGuire, running for President, and Panny King, running for an at-large council seat, have each advised the NEC that they have decided to withdraw their candidacies. That leaves eight people running for five vacant council seats, and Bob Gottfried running unopposed for President and Marian Friedmann running unopposed for Vice President. One of the council seats is for a one-year term only, and that one-year term will be filled by either a volunteer from among the five elected, or one of the five whose name will be drawn by lot from among the winners. Also, because Bob Gottfried has resigned as Vice President to run for President, Marian will also serve only an initial one-year term completing Bob's remaining year on his term as vice president.

Wayne reviewed the procedures for the upcoming noontime membership meetings in which members will have an opportunity to make opening statements and then take questions from the members. Four council candidates will speak each day beginning on Monday April 17<sup>th</sup> and ending Thursday April 20<sup>th</sup>. The candidates for President and Vice President will have the same opportunity on April 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>.

Actual in-person voting will take place on Monday and Tuesday May 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>; votes will be tabulated at 2:45 P.M. on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. The election results will be sent to the winners and losers via email, and then be posted on the bulletin board. Members and candidates will be told about one one-year council term in the four information sessions.

## Treasurer's Report

Steve reviewed his Treasurer's Report for the April 26<sup>th</sup> meeting. Generally speaking our finances remain essentially the same: We have accumulated about \$210,000 in a savings account fully under our control, and there is about \$70,000 in our account at CCNY. The savings is strictly for any unexpected contingencies, the most worrisome

of which is a potential (although unlikely) loss of our space at CWE should something happen within the CCNY/CUNY organization.

Steve also discussed the fact that our dues, at \$500 per year, have remained unchanged for fourteen years. During that time had dues simply kept up with inflation our current dues would be about \$700 per year. Quest continues to be a bargain!

Maintaining dues at the same level has been accomplished mainly by (1) increasing our membership, and (2) carefully watching and controlling our expenses. The Council is discussing the possibility that for the next year (2017-18) we may wish to raise dues by a relatively small amount (see below).

Steve then noted two areas of concern: 1. Financial, and 2. E-mail communications and maintenance of the Quest website. We need to find volunteers with particular skill sets in these areas or we may be faced with having to hire outside people to do the jobs.

1. On the financial side, we have been derelict on our auditing function; the auditing committee has largely been inactive. We need to make a concerted effort to reach out to members who have a financial and/or auditing background. And, on a related issue, we still have not filed our tax return for the 2015-16 fiscal year (because we are a non-profit there is no tax due, but a return still needs to be completed). Steve and Michael have a meeting with an outside accountant this Friday to try and get this tax issue resolved, at a minimum expense. An earlier meeting with another outside accounting firm has proved frustrating.
2. On the tech side, Steve Allen continues to be our “operational web site manager,” with little back up. We will ask for volunteers among our members who may have the required computer skills, but we are also exploring hiring a professional as we have done with a new web site firm. Steve has a meeting on April 4<sup>th</sup> with a woman who does some computer work (and teaches) for CWE and may be able to do work for us beginning in the fall.

### **Increasing Members' Dues**

The Council had a discussion on whether or not dues should be increased for the next year. Some members initially thought that we could go one more year at the current \$500 level, while others thought that an increase might well be necessary. Bob Gottfried noted that last year we were able to negotiate with CWE for no increase in our basic rent, but that would be unlikely to be repeated this year. Steve noted that our expenses now are running very close to our income, leaving little margin for any unexpected expenses.

There was a discussion about how large an increase might be required, should we elect to raise dues. Some thought \$50 would be sufficient; others thought that \$100 might be more appropriate. The general feeling was that \$50 is probably sufficient, but everyone quickly agreed that the new council should vote on the increase, rather than leaving the decision to the outgoing council. The actual vote will take place at the June council meeting.

### **Membership Cap**

In preparation for the Annual Meeting on April 26<sup>th</sup>, Bob Reiss, Bob Gottfried and Steve Allen got together to work out a proposed ballot for the vote on establishing the membership cap for next year (2017-18). That proposed ballot is attached, and it allows each person to vote for any cap between 250 and 275, the latter being the level recommended by the Long Range Planning Committee. There was a strong feeling at the Council that using this ballot would allow the overall desires of the membership to be best expressed. A resolution to use this ballot was proposed, seconded, and passed by a unanimous vote.

At the last noontime meeting some people expressed a desire to see attendance figures along with any membership cap suggestions. Steve will provide this for the next noontime meeting scheduled for this coming Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **Bylaws Amendments**

We will propose, at Steve' suggestion, some modifications to the bylaws; details will be distributed the required 21 days before the Annual Meeting.

### **Course Catalog**

The Council reviewed the proposal to first prepare a locally produced Black & White copy before the full color version is printed. Phil reported that the Curriculum Committee says that the catalog is ready to go. The Council strongly suggested that all lead coordinators, and the President and Eneida should have a chance to proofread it before it goes to the printer. The Scheduling Committee should have a chance to look it over as well. Phil will express the Council's sentiments to the Curriculum Committee.

### **Leaves of Absence**

There was a brief discussion on establishing a more formal policy regarding those members who request a leave of absence. The Council proposed that any member who

requests a leave of more than one year must have his request approved by the Council. Requests for less than one year may be granted by the President. A motion to that effect was proposed and seconded, and passed uinanimously.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 8<sup>th</sup>, at 2:30 P.M.

All business having been concluded, the meeting was adjourned at precisely 3:42 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jane*

Jane Lubin  
Acting Secretary

### **Minutes of a special Quest Council Meeting 18 April 2017**

A special meeting of the Council was held at 2:30 PM on April 18<sup>th</sup> to review a few of the items that will be on the agenda for the General Membership meeting that will be held a week from Wednesday, the 26<sup>th</sup>. All Council members were present with the exception of Ruth Kovner, who was ill.

The first item discussed was Steve's Treasurer's Report to be presented to the membership. We all quickly agreed that his report will stress the need a) to have and maintain a reserve fund that would be used in case of future emergencies such as an unplanned required relocation, and b) to avoid dipping into the reserve fund to meet current operating requirements. Steve reported, and the Council agreed, that without some modest increase in dues next year that plan could well be in jeopardy. We all anticipate that there will be some increase in our rent next year (after none this year), and therefore the question of how much dues might have to be increased next year was discussed. Some members thought \$100 might be in order; others thought \$50 would be sufficient. After discussion, Wayne made a motion, seconded by Steve, to recommend a \$50 increase; that motion was passed unanimously. We all agreed that

the final decision should rest with the new Council to be elected in early May. (Hence this is just a recommendation.)

Next we briefly touched on the question of the membership cap for 2017-18, and the upcoming vote. We had previously agreed to allow e-mail voting on this issue; Michael will send out the agreed upon ballot calling for members to vote for any limit between 250 and 275. The final limit will be the mathematical average of all the votes cast.

Finally we reviewed the issue of the proposed changes to the bylaws. Based on hearing a large number of well-argued objections from Quest members to the proposed new language on criteria for membership, we quickly agreed that we would withdraw the changes to Section 4 that deals with the desired criteria for new members. A reading of the current bylaws would suggest that no changes are necessary here. The Council can, of course, make its wishes on this topic known to the Membership Committee, and will share with the membership its reasons for any such guidance

The remainder of the bylaws changes will be voted on, in person, at the meeting. And we agreed that we'd have the wording of the current bylaws related to membership guidelines available on a PowerPoint slide for display at the April 26<sup>th</sup> meeting.

All business concluded, the meeting was adjourned at 3:32 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

*Michael Wellner*