

MINUTES OF THE QUEST COUNCIL MEETING June 13, 2017

The first Council Meeting under Bob Gottfried, our new president, was called to order at 12:33 pm on June 13, 2017. Council members attending the meeting included Steve Allen, Marian Friedmann, Bob Gottfried, Phil Gisser, Bob Hartmann, Jane Lubin, Eileen Kelly, Ruth Kovner and Bob Reiss. Pam Gemelli and Frieda Lipp, new Council members, and Michael Wellner, immediate past president were traveling and unable to attend.

Two guests were invited to address the Council: Arlene Hijinlian and Larry Shapiro, co-chairs of the Mentoring Committee, who requested the Council's support for a newly constituted Mentoring Program. This program, a reactivation of a lapsed mentoring effort, will be newly designed to assist new members to transition into Quest more easily. Although we now have both a "Step Up Program" and a "Presentation Boot Camp" to encourage new members to become active, and these have produced some good results, there is still a feeling that entering Quest as a new member can be daunting. This new program will pair a new member with a veteran Quester with similar interests, and will complement our other efforts. The Mentoring Program will be offered only to those who are interested in and agree to work with a Mentor. Bob Hartmann made a motion to institute the program; Jane Lubin seconded, and the motion was approved.

Everyone agreed that Quest needs a continuing influx of new members, who bring with them fresh ideas and a willingness to participate. This will make for a stronger, healthier organization.

Treasurer's Report: Steve Allen, Treasurer, presented his proposed budget for the 2017-18 academic year. He indicated that our revenues have increased with our increased membership (currently at 250), and are projected to continue to do so with the new cap of 260 members. It was noted that our contribution to the CWE Scholarship fund has been increased by \$1,000. We also anticipate a small increase in our rent, reflecting, in part, our additional space as has been reported in previous Council Meeting Minutes.

The Council also discussed the reserve account that Quest has built up over a 20 year period, mostly from member bequests and contributions, but also from small

surpluses of income over expenses. This reserve is to cover major contingencies -- in particular the highly unlikely (we hope) possibility that we must move from 25 Broadway. Steve mentioned that the Facilities and Development Committee, headed by John Sicree, has met with several real estate people who are familiar with and work with non-profit organizations. This is helping us to prepare for this contingency.

Bob Reiss proposed a motion that a budget item be added for an amount to be added to this reserve fund each year, rather than just have any surplus that is left at the end of the year go towards the reserve fund. Some Council members expressed the opinion that this might reduce our flexibility in meeting unanticipated needs during the year. The motion was defeated.

Raising Annual Dues: The proposal to raise our dues by \$50 was confirmed by the Council. The new rate will be \$550 for those joining any time in the fall, and \$350 for those joining any time during the spring semester. The increase goes into effect with the coming new school year, 2017. Please remit **all** payments by end of July.

Quest Website: Steve Allen presented a proposal from the Marketing and Communications Committee to combine the two Quest websites (marketing and internal) into a single website, to make member use of the website easier and to make website maintenance easier. The Marketing and Communications Committee also recommended that because of difficulties in assuring the privacy information posted to the website, we remove the membership list from the website and that we give members the option of removing their photos from the website. These proposals were accepted by the Council. Implementation will be completed by the end of the Summer. Members who want a copy of the membership contact information or a full set of member photos can obtain it from Eneida in the Quest office [if she is not available, please email your request to Steve (stevenallen2@gmail.com)]. There will be two versions of the roster available: one with contact information only, and one with the more detailed data.

Proposed Quest Social Media Policy: Recent personal attacks posted on the Quest Community E-mail Forum have dismayed many of us. Posts such as these

are considered harmful to our organization. A formal Social Media Policy has been proposed by Steve Allen:

For over 20 years, Quest has been totally dependent on the extraordinary volunteerism and participation of its members. Public criticism of any member in Quest communications, such as the Quest Community e-mail list, is both disrespectful and can jeopardize members' willingness to participate in the wide array of activities to which members give their time. We need to remember that all members in a peer-to-peer organization, whether they are coordinating a course, giving a presentation, acting in a play, or participating in the governance of the organization, are volunteers. Volunteers should not be subjected to public criticism.

We encourage the use of Quest communications for the free expression of ideas, making suggestions for improvement, and other thoughts including critical comments about Quest policies. However, criticism of any particular individual in such a public forum would be a violation of this social media policy.

Steve proposed that we adopt this formal Social Media policy; his motion was seconded by Marian Friedmann. The proposal passed unanimously. As a follow up, the Marketing and Communications Committee will meet to discuss how best to implement this new policy and will report back to the Council.

Museum Trips Budget: A motion was made by Bob Reiss (and seconded by Ruth Kovner) to add to the budget a line item of \$2,500 to cover the costs for those members who attend the Friday museum tours offered to our Quest members. The thought was expressed that this would improve our relationships with many of these cultural organizations. However, not all charge fees to Quest members (e.g. MoMA does not charge us). The motion did not carry.

Payment of Dues: There was a unanimous vote taken on a motion made by Steve Allen and seconded by Bob Hartmann that full payment of the year's dues is required unless a member reports a hardship confidentially to the President or the Treasurer.

Committee for Social Interaction: A proposal was made to establish a new Social Interaction Committee, headed by Bobbi Gold and John Spiegel, who have volunteered to lead it. The committee will meet periodically to arrange after class

social interactions among new members and between these new members and our veteran Questers. The committee believes that getting friendly over wine and cheese might be a useful way to help new members bridge the “newby” gap. The proposal was approved by a unanimous vote of the Council.

Committee Chairs: Bob Gottfried submitted his list of proposed Committee Chairs for the new year, and it was approved by a sense of the Council resolution. The president will formally notify these Committee Chairs, as is the custom.

Friday Make- up days: In the past few years some classes have been canceled because of snow or other inclement weather and those who may have spent months preparing their presentation may have had their class canceled and therefore missed their opportunity for their presentation, or perhaps have it rescheduled at an inopportune time. To mitigate this problem a suggestion was made to use a few Fridays as “make-up” days. But before any vote can be taken, or this idea brought up to membership, Bob Gottfried will have to discuss it with the Dean. We will report on this at a later date.

The next Quest Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday September 12th, at 2:30 PM. All business having been completed, the president adjourned the meeting at 2:30 pm.

Enjoy your summer.

Respectfully submitted by
Ruth
Ruth Kovner
Secretary