

Minutes of the Quest Council Meeting 10-October-2017

The October 2017 meeting of the Quest Council was convened at 2:30 PM on Tuesday, October 10th. In attendance were Bob Gottfried, Steve Allen, Jane Lubin, Phil Gisser, Michael Wellner (ex-President, non-voting, and acting secretary for this meeting), Bob Hartmann, Frieda Lipp, Pam Gemelli, Eileen Kelly, and Bob Reiss. Absent were Ruth Kovner and Marian Friedmann.

Our first order of business was to discuss a proposal (attached) from the Caring Committee. Liesje ten Houten, chair of the Caring Committee joined the Council to discuss a few issues:

- a) A proposal to send an email to all members asking for volunteers to provide assistance when a Quest member who lives in the same neighborhood has a temporary need for help.
- b) Live streaming of Quest class lectures
- c) A thought to honor birthdays of Quest members
- d) And the possibility of some sort of formal recognition of long-time members

Only the first, formal proposal was discussed, and its merits were quickly recognized, and the council agreed that the Caring Committee should proceed as outlined. It will, and will report back at the next meeting.

Next, Steve Allen presented his Treasurer's Report. His summary included:

- a) That Quest remains in a solid financial condition.
- b) Our reserves include about \$230,000 in our own bank accounts, and approximately \$80,000 at CCNY.
- c) We are in the process of asking CCNY to transfer \$50,000 to our account, to reduce the large surplus currently in our account at CCNY.
- d) There remain some questions surrounding precisely which forms we should be using to file our Federal and State Tax returns. In an attempt to resolve this issue once and for all, Steve, Bob, Michael and Herb Folpe (current chair of our Audit Committee) will meet next week with Quest's outside accountants. More details will follow.
- e) There are some inconsistencies between our current bylaws and the current Affiliation Agreement between Quest and CCNY/CWE. At the next General Membership meeting we will propose the necessary changes to our bylaws. The proposed amendment was later approved by email vote of the Council and is appended to these minutes.

Next, Michael gave a quick review of our current membership: it now stands at 229 paid members, with one interview with a prospective member scheduled for this week.

Following that brief report, Michael and Bob Hartmann reported on their success in securing a restaurant for our annual Christmas/Holiday luncheon. We will be at Scaletta restaurant, located on West 77th Street opposite the Museum of Natural History, on Friday December 8th, at noon. The restaurant will be closed to the public, and we will have the entire place to ourselves. It holds easily 125 (or more) people, so there should be no limitations on the number of members and guests that we can accommodate. The cost to attend will be \$40 per person, an increase of \$15 from last year --- but for a much more upscale venue. The Quest-paid subsidy per member will be \$20. Quest members may bring guests, an option that was not available last year, at a cost of \$60 per guest. An announcement to the membership will be made shortly.

Steve next presented his attendance report, with a particular eye on the effect (if any) of holding three simultaneous classes. So far it appears that our attendance is running very close to the levels of last fall. And, Steve also reported, that next semester it's very likely that we'll be back at only two classes (plus a workshop here and there) running simultaneously. All in all, our daily attendance remains at approximately one-third of current Quest members.

Steve next reported on the activities of the Communications Committee. A few items of note:

- a) Wayne Cotter is about to "go live" with a split of the existing "Questcommunity" Google group, into one group for social related items (the existing Questcommunity), and a new group for Quest-related business (Questbusiness). More details will follow shortly.
- b) The two existing Quest web sites, Questmembers.org and Questlifelong.org, are in the process of being merged (only the "lifelong" site will survive). The members-only information on the new "lifelong" site will be protected with individual passwords (rather than just the one "25broadway7" password in use now). Steve cautions that this merger will proceed s-l-o-w-l-y in order to be sure that we don't lose any functionality. We'll start with the move of the private members page to the "lifelong" site - once that's working smoothly, we will proceed further. Stay tuned.
- c) He and Robert Hernandez are cooperating on a test of streaming Quest lectures over the internet to those members unable to physically attend classes (because of illness, or similar). All such access will only be by invitation.

Next the Council revisited the proposal originally made by ex-member Stuart Dunn for an automatic reduction in membership fees for (as yet undefined) older, long-standing members. It was the general consensus that the existing tuition abatement program available to all members is sufficient. It was also agreed that the President, Vice President and Treasurer be authorized to grant a tuition abatement in cases brought to them by members in need.

Next Quest's Leave of Absence program was discussed and reviewed. As a rule Leaves of Absence are granted on an Annual basis only, but again it was agreed (unanimously) that the President, Vice President and the Treasurer may grant leaves for one semester only in exceptional cases.

A brief discussion was held on the newly established Social Committee, whose two chairs have both said that they wish to resign. Bob Reiss agreed to talk to Vivian Oliver who was a big proponent of increased social activities; Bob Gottfried suggested that we might discuss this at the upcoming General Membership Meeting.

Next: Bob Gottfried has agreed to purchase a new microwave oven for the lunchroom, in response to requests made by several members.

The question of the use and efficacy of the existing hearing loops was reviewed, along with a request that we install a hearing loop in Room 15-17, in addition to the existing loops in all the other classrooms that we use. Bob Gottfried will talk to Davi Saroop to initiate the process. More details to follow.

Finally our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 7th, at 2:30 P.M.

All business having been concluded, the meeting was adjourned at precisely 4:02 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael

Michael Wellner
Acting Secretary

Statement of By-Laws amendment proposal approved by the Council in a email vote:

It has come to the attention of the Council that there are two places in the section of the Quest By-Laws on Finances where reference is made to the "then-current Affiliation Agreement between QUEST and CCNY/CWE." The current Affiliation Agreement no longer contains any language that these clauses could make reference to. The Council therefore recommends that the membership amend the By-Laws to eliminate these two references without making any other changes to the By-Laws. This change will have no impact on the meaning of any clause in the By-Laws.

These are the two clauses, with the references to be eliminated highlighted in bold and italics.

A. All Membership Fees (see Article IV(B)(2) above) collected by QUEST are to be recorded by the Treasurer (see Article V(C)(3) above), and then transmitted to City College's Division for Worker Education (CCNY/CWE) for deposit into an account that is maintained exclusively for QUEST, *in accordance with the then-current Affiliation Agreement between QUEST and CCNY/CWE.*

B. Disbursements from that account, to include approved reimbursements for monies laid out by QUEST and/or its members, shall be made only by CCNY/CWE *in accordance with the above referenced Affiliation Agreement.* All expenditures above \$500 not included in the adopted budget (see Article V(C)(1)(e) above) require approval of the Council. All expenditures up to \$500 shall be signed off by the President or Treasurer.