

QUEST COUNCIL MINUTES

Friday, March 13, 2020

Members present: Steve Allen, Wayne Cotter. Betty Farber, Marian Friedmann, Pam Gemelli, Phil Gisser, Bob Gottfried, Frieda Lipp, Carolyn McGuire, and Michael Wellner

Member absent: Jennifer Jolly

This special conference call meeting of Quest Council was called to order by Quest President Bob Gottfried at 1:00 p.m.

Spring Semester

Bob Gottfried opened the meeting by announcing that Governor Cuomo has closed all CUNY and SUNY schools in New York for the remainder of the spring semester due to the Coronavirus disease outbreak. Therefore, Quest will not be holding classes until the beginning of the summer term, June 2, at the earliest.

Barbara Bianco

Bob Gottfried noted that he had approved compensation for Quest's Office Manager Barbara Bianco for the two days that Quest was closed this week. Council then unanimously voted that Barbara be compensated in full for the remaining days of the spring semester during which she is scheduled to work.

Tuition Reimbursement

Council discussed various ways members could receive a tuition reimbursement for class time missed during the spring semester. Based on these discussions, Bob Gottfried offered the following motion:

Tuition for the 2020-21 Academic Year will remain \$550, but all members who joined in the spring of 2020 will receive a credit for the full amount of the tuition they paid, which will be applied to next year's tuition. All other current members will receive a partial credit toward next year's tuition in an amount to be determined by Council prior to the registration period for next year.

The motion was unanimously passed.

Upcoming Council Election

In accordance with its bylaws, Quest holds elections every May. Several Council members noted that one important part of the election process is the "Meet the Candidates" sessions that allow Quest members the opportunity to listen to and question prospective candidates. Since no such opportunity will be available this spring, Bob Gottfried set forth the following motion:

The Council directs Quest's Nominations and Elections Committee (NEC) to set an election date during September 2020 rather than May 2020. In addition, the date for any members who wish to add their names to the list of candidates proposed by the NEC to submit the necessary signatures required by the Quest bylaws has been extended from March 31 to April 15, 2020.

The motion was unanimously passed. The Council noted that this deviation from the bylaws seemed to be the closest way to

adhere to the intent of the bylaws under these extraordinary circumstances.

The Council will ask the Nominations and Elections Committee to provide guidance in soliciting signatures electronically to any member who does wish to obtain signatures to add their names to the list of candidates.

It was noted that just one candidate is currently slated to run for each of the following officer positions: Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. If no other candidates emerge by April 15, Council requests that all unopposed candidates running for these three positions attend subsequent Quest Council meetings on an informal, nonvoting basis until they are officially voted into office.

Emailing Publications

Following a discussion among Council members, Council determined that for the spring 2020 semester, *Q News* and the fall 2020 Curriculum Guide will be emailed to all members. The fall Curriculum Guide will also be printed in hard copy and made available to members when Quest resumes classes.

In addition, one copy of *Q Review* will be mailed to each Quest household this spring. Following the hard copy mailings, an electronic version of *Q Review* will be posted on Quest's website. (Please note that *Q Review* authors, poets and artists may receive up to three hard copies of the publication. Additional copies for these *Q Review* contributors will be available at the Quest office when classes resume.)

Summer Session

The summer session is currently scheduled to begin on June 2. A question was raised whether Council should recommend to the Curriculum Committee that the summer session consist solely of “encore” presentations or whether these sessions should be supplemented with selected presentations by Quest members who were unable to present due to the suspension of the spring session. Council voted to table discussion of this issue until a later date to allow Council to receive input on this question from the Curriculum Committee.

Creative Arts Day

Creative Arts Day, scheduled for May 14, has been canceled since it was part of the spring semester. Wayne noted that in the past one of the summer time slots was devoted to a session wherein Quest poets and writers read their pieces. Council agreed that the Curriculum Committee should consider a scaled-down version of Creative Arts Day for the summer session that would not include plays or art, but would include such readings.

Scheduling Fall Classes

Steve Allen, speaking as Council liaison to the Curriculum Committee, suggested that the Council request that the Curriculum Committee send a memo to lead coordinators of spring 2020 classes offering assistance in planning for inclusion of cancelled presentations. He also mentioned that six spring classes are not scheduled to continue in the fall and that the Council should request that the Curriculum Committee work with the coordinators of those six courses to develop a plan for

offering cancelled presentations. Council agreed with these suggestions.

25th Anniversary Luncheon

Due to concerns about the Coronavirus outbreak, Council decided to move Quest's gala 25th Anniversary Luncheon at Manhattan's Harmonie Club from May 15 to September 25. The luncheon will still be held from noon to 3 p.m.

Fall General Meeting

Steve Allen proposed moving Quest's General Meeting this fall up to the Wednesday afternoon of the second B Week of the fall semester since Quest will not be holding a spring General Meeting this year. Council agreed with this proposal provided there are no insurmountable conflicts with the General Lecture Series for that date.

Caring Committee Initiative

Council and Quest's Caring Committee strongly believe that during this hiatus, it would be helpful for Quest members to reach out to neighbors and friends that may be suffering during this difficult period. To make it easier for Quest members to stay in touch with their Quest neighbors, Michael Wellner, Quest's Membership Chair, will e-mail all members a membership list sorted by zip code. The list will include contact information to allow members to more easily stay in touch.

Online Communication

Martha Drezin, Chair of the Marketing & Communication (M&C) Committee, proposed on behalf of the M&C Committee, that

Quest encourage more online communication among members during the next few months, including “hyperlinks, documents or messages designed to educate entertain and inspire.”

Council agreed with the proposal and discussed whether a separate Google Group should be initiated for those who would like to share such expanded information.

After discussion, Council determined that the current QuestCommunity Google Group is sufficient for this purpose. Wayne agreed to write a draft email encouraging members to share as much information as possible via QuestCommunity during the upcoming months. The draft will be circulated for approval to all relevant parties.

Online Sessions

Several Quest members have suggested that Quest offer online classes (remote learning) to members as many universities are now doing. It was the general consensus that the logistics involved in recording such classes and the limited technical expertise of many of our members argue against such an approach at the present time.

However, Bob Reiss has been working with Robert Hernandez on this issue over the past few months and Council encourages Bob to continue his explorations. Any other Quest member with technical expertise who is interested in pursuing this initiative should email Bob Reiss.

Access to Seventh Floor

Since Quest is closed for the remainder of the spring session, Quest members are not permitted access to the Seventh floor of 25 Broadway. Anyone requiring access to any material on the Seventh floor should contact Bob Gottfried.

Membership Issues

Michael Wellner, Quest's Membership Chair, noted that during this shutdown period, the Membership Committee is continuing to access voicemail messages left by individuals inquiring about Quest. His Committee will be responding to those messages on a timely basis. Along those lines, Steve Allen will soon post a notice of the Quest shutdown on our website.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:01 p.m.