

QUEST COUNCIL MINUTES

Date: February 11, 2025

Council held its monthly meeting at 25 Broadway in Room 7-39. President Donna Ramer called the meeting to order at 2:45 p.m.

Council Members Present: Karen Cullen, Mary Ann Donnelly, Peter Fleischman, Paul Golomb, Bob Gottfried, Vince Grosso, Nan McNamara, Donna Ramer, Tamara Weinberg, Ilene Winkler (via Zoom), and Judy Winn.

I. General Administration

- Donna welcomed the Council members to a new semester.
- Fall 2025 Schedule: Donna distributed a proposed schedule for Quest's Fall 2025 semester and made a motion, seconded by Nan, to approve the schedule as written. Council unanimously approved the motion.

II. Treasurer's Report: Peter Fleischman

- Peter reported on Quest's income and expense, the year-to-date variance between actual and budgeted income and expenses, and Quest's balance sheet, which remains strong.
- Tuition collected through February 7, 2025 is about \$12,000 less than budgeted because to date there are fewer new members than projected. (See Membership below regarding prospective members.)
- Despite the reduced income from tuition, there currently is a favorable variance between actual and budgeted total income and expenses. This variance is attributable to, in addition to the tuition item noted above, the receipt of the tail-end of the Eisler contribution, the reimbursement of capital expenditures spent last year, and certain expenses coming in under budget, such as the December luncheon (\$3,000 under budget) and rent (\$5,000 under budget). However, many budgeted expenses will be incurred later in the year, such as guest speaker fees and costs for special events and the 30th anniversary book.

III. Curriculum: Paul Golomb

- Paul reported that the Curriculum committee had its first meeting last week. The committee will hold a new course brainstorming session for members at lunchtime on Thursday, February 20, to generate and discuss ideas for new courses.
- Paul said that the committee will follow the policy, established this past fall and continuing this spring, of offering 31 regular courses, plus workshops, and scheduling only two classes per time slot, plus workshops.

- Council discussed the policy of scheduling only two classes per time slot, noting that some Quest members have said that they would prefer more classes per time slot even if that means fewer attendees per class. Some Council members spoke in support of the 31-course cap. Some Council members suggested that the desire for more courses may reflect a desire for new or a greater variety of courses and commented on the abundance of literature classes this spring. Donna and Nan noted that the balance in class topics changes each semester and each year.
- Paul advised that after the committee considers the results of the brainstorming session, the committee will send a survey to determine interest in proposed courses and in coordinating and/or presenting in a class in these courses. Ilene suggested capturing the year members joined Quest in the survey.
- Paul said the committee will add to the curriculum any new course that is fully developed with topics and presenters. The committee has already received one fully developed course proposal and expects more.
- Judy confirmed with Council that workshops are not courses, with respect to the 31-course limitation. She and Donna noted the importance of workshops to the Quest curriculum. Judy questioned if it mattered where the workshops are on the schedule. After discussion, Council agreed that workshops should be scheduled at times that complement and do not overlap or compete with classes that would be of particular interest to workshop participants.

IV. Membership: Tamara Weinberg

- Tamara advised that the Membership and Marketing & Communication committees co-hosted a prospective member event on December 11 attended by four people and another information event on January 28 attended by 17 people.
- She also reported that Quest currently has 254 active members. She said that two former members have returned, three new members joined in December, and four new members joined in January. The Membership committee continues to communicate with anyone interested in Quest and is in the process of interviewing four prospective members.
- Tamara explained the process the committee follows for prospective members. The committee provides prospective members with a list of FAQs and a catalog and, if possible, the prospective members attend an information session. The prospective members then attend one or more classes. Finally, if they are still interested, the committee interviews the prospective members.
- Peter questioned whether Quest might be losing prospective members because of the time lost in the interview process. Tamara pointed out that the information sessions are scheduled towards the beginning or end of semesters and prospective members can also attend a class, often on the same day as the information session. Interviews can be scheduled shortly thereafter. In addition, the Committee continually responds to requests for information and extends invitations to sample a class. Other Council members with experience on the

Membership committee said they did not think the process was overly long or causing prospective members to drop out.

V. Marketing and Communications: Donna Ramer

- Donna advised that the Marketing and Communications committee met on February 10. Since the committee's advertisements for the January information session attracted only a few people--four of the 17 attendees came in response to the committee's advertisements--the committee has decided that those advertising efforts will be curtailed going forward. Instead, the committee will focus on other outreach tools.
- The committee is developing an action plan detailing these outreach efforts, including initiatives to develop Quest's pages on YELP, LinkedIn, and other networking sites, and more regular outreach to people on Quest's growing subscriber list. She also confirmed that the committee will resume search engine optimization efforts to increase the chances that Quest will show up if a person is searching for adult education or lifelong learning groups.
- In response to questions from Council, Donna advised that the committee was working on leveraging Quest's 30th anniversary to generate publicity.
- Ilene pointed out that there are very few postings on Quest's Facebook page, and that one of the postings is a year-old complaint. Donna said the committee will work on improving the page.

VI. Nominating and Elections Committee (NEC): Tamara Weinberg

- By email dated December 21, 2024, Donna submitted to Council a motion to approve Bob Gottfried replacing one of the members of the NEC who needed to step down from the committee. By email, Council approved the motion 10-1. With this change, the 2025 NEC members are Tamara Weinberg, Bob Gottfried, Steve Chicoine, David Bartash, and Karen Levin. Karen Levin is Chair. Tamara Weinberg is Council Liaison.
- Tamara reported that the NEC has prepared lists of prospective candidates and has begun to reach out to those members to determine their interest in running for Council. She advised that there are four at-large council seats to fill. For personal reasons, Council members Paul Golomb and Ilene Winkler decided they are unable to run for second terms. Council members Mary Ann Donnelly and Nan McNamara have reached the end of their second two-year terms.
- The NEC will hold lunchtime "Meet the Candidate" meetings at noon, Monday-Thursday, April 21-24.
- Bob made a motion, seconded by Tamara, to hold the elections electronically on Friday-Sunday, April 25, 26, and 27. After discussion, the Council unanimously approved the motion.
- Donna reminded Council that the General Meeting is on Wednesday, April 30. The new council members elected in April will be invited to attend the May 13 Council meeting.

VII. Technology: Donna Ramer

- By email dated January 3, 2025, Donna submitted to Council a motion to approve the Technology Committee's request that the following Spring 2025 classes be recorded: Week A: Supreme Court, History of NYC, and Cinema Quest and Week B: Give My Regards to Broadway, Artists & Their Works, Upheaval in American Values' Distinguished Speaker, and NYC & Its Environs. By email, Council unanimously approved the motion.

VIII. New Business: Donna Ramer

1. Lifelong Learning Conference: Donna

- Donna made a motion, seconded by Paul, to approve adding \$4,000 to the budget to pay for two Council members to attend this year's Lifelong Learning conference at Emory University in Atlanta. After discussion, the Council unanimously approved the motion.

2. List of Motions and Current Committee List: Karen

- Karen distributed a List of Motions Introduced at Quest Council from 2020 to the Present and a list of current Committee Chairs and Members including tenure information. The Committee Chairs and Members list has been reconciled to the committee lists maintained on the Quest website and by Raquel in the office.
- Karen reminded Council that next month she will be sending to committee chairs a request for their annual committee reports and will update the Committee Chairs and Members list after the annual reports are received.

3. Term Limits for Committees: Donna

- Donna raised for discussion the idea of instituting term limits for all committees, noting that currently the bylaws establish term limits for chairs (3 years) and members (4 years) for only the Auditing, Curriculum, Membership, and Scheduling committees. For all other committees, the bylaws state that "a rotation of committee chairs every three years and recruitment of new committee members are encouraged."
- Donna reminded Council that per the bylaws the President, with the approval of Council, appoints the chairs of all standing committees, and that each such appointment is for a one-year term.
- Council members made various points regarding the need for turnover, new blood, and new ideas, but also the need for continuity, knowledge, and experience. Some Council members stressed the value of new members getting involved in Quest by joining committees and the need for committees to engage in succession planning.

- Donna suggested that two Council members prepare for the Council's consideration a list of ideas and options to address the question of committee term limits and succession planning. Bob and Karen agreed to work together and present their ideas to Council at the March meeting.

The next scheduled Council meeting will be at 25 Broadway on March 11, 2025, at 2:45 p.m.

Donna adjourned the meeting at 4:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Cullen, Secretary

Documents distributed at meeting: Agenda, Proposed Quest 2025 Fall Schedule, Treasurer's Report, List of Motions Introduced at Quest Council from 2020 to the Present, List of Committee Chairs and Members