

QUEST COUNCIL MINUTES

Date: November 3, 2025

Council held its monthly meeting at 25 Broadway in Room 27. President Donna Ramer called the meeting to order at 2:45 p.m.

Council Members Present: Bob Belfort (via Zoom), Karen Cullen, Peter Fleischman, Bob Gottfried, Vince Grosso, Stu Parker, Donna Ramer, Ruth Ward, Tamara Weinberg, and Judy Winn.

Guests Present: Membership Committee Co-chair Lynn Vairo

Council Members Absent: Victor Brener

I. General Administration: Donna Ramer

- Quest purchased a half page ad in the journal for CCNY's annual holiday gala.
- At CCNY's request, visitors from LP², CUNY's lifelong learning program, and the College of Staten Island's lifelong learning program will be visiting Quest on December 2 to learn more about our program.
- The proposed slate for the 2025-2026 Nominating and Election Committee (NEC) includes Bob Shick, John Davis, Marian Friedmann, Lynnel Garabedian and Council Vice President Bob Gottfried. Donna explained that the Bylaws call for a five-person committee, including one representative from Council. Although the Bylaws prohibit the Council representative from chairing NEC, Bob Gottfried will organize its first meeting at which they will choose a chair. Donna made a motion, seconded by Karen, for Council to approve the proposed NEC slate. After discussion, with Bob Gottfried recusing himself, Council approved the motion 9-0. Note: After the meeting, Marian Friedman had to drop out for personal reasons and Donna asked Tamara Weinberg to take her place. By a November 5, 2025 email to Council, Donna made a motion for Tamara Weinberg to replace Marian. With Tamara recusing herself, the Council approved the motion 9-0.

II. Treasurer's Report: Peter Fleischman

- Peter advised Council that interest rates on Treasury bills, the primary asset in Quest's JP Morgan investment account, have declined and he does not think that Quest will earn the 4% return on new purchases. This decline in rates will result in a slight decrease in interest income as compared to the recent past.
- Peter also reported that there has been a significant increase in members' use of Zelle to pay for membership fees, Culture Quest events, luncheons, and other Quest activities. The increase in Zelle transactions has created a concomitant increase in the time needed to track and account

for the transactions. Council members discussed options for addressing the issue, which will be revisited at a future Council meeting.

- Peter then reviewed his 11-3-25 Treasurer's Report. As of October 31, 2025, Quest collected \$143,550 for this year's tuition. Quest's current balance of approximately \$1,000,000 is healthy and will come down as expenses are incurred and paid throughout the academic year.

III. Curriculum: Judy Winn

- Curriculum Committee Chair Debbi Honorof has reported that there have been a number of new course proposals, so the Curriculum Committee requested that it be allowed to have one time slot in the Fall semester with three courses.
- Donna noted that Council has previously approved only two courses per time slot, not including workshops. Council discussed whether the course limit per time slot should be increased to three. Some Council members commented that the limit had been adopted to avoid diffusion in attendance and/or a surplus of choice. Other members requested data on class attendance, suggested that one or more older courses take a hiatus to allow for new courses, and recommended that the Curriculum Committee's survey to assess interest in new courses include existing courses as well.
- Judy made a motion, seconded by Vince, to reaffirm Council's prior decision for only two courses per time slot, not including workshops. After discussion, Council approved the motion unanimously.

IV. Membership: Ruth Ward

- Ruth reported that Quest currently has 266 active members and several prospective members.
- With respect to membership fees for members joining after the start of the fall term, Ruth said that Quest had historically reduced fees by 50% for members joining on or after December 1. Council discussed whether there should be a change to this policy. Ruth then made a motion, seconded by Bob Gottfried, that membership fees for members joining after Thanksgiving be reduced by 50% (from \$550 per year to \$275 for the Spring and Summer semesters). After discussion, Council approved the motion unanimously.
- Donna then introduced the Membership Committee's recommendation that Council approve the Committee's admission of new members up to a total of 278 active members, 3% over the current admission cap of 270, which is in accordance with the Bylaws. Membership Committee Co-chair Lynn Vairo pointed out that Bylaws Article IX provides: "Notwithstanding the establishment of the limit as provided for herein, the Council is permitted to increase the membership limit by 3% for extraordinary reasons."
- Council discussed the Committee's recommendation. Tamara commented that Classrooms 15-17 and 27 and the lunchroom were often overcrowded; Donna commented that since Covid and the use of Zoom classrooms were less crowded; and Peter requested attendance

data to assess classroom capacity. Many members commented that Peter's earlier report on the anticipated revenue decrease due to declining interest rates constituted a sufficient finding of "extraordinary reasons" under Article IX. Peter pointed out that after every year, Quest membership falls by 10-15% and that normal attrition will bring the number of active members back to or below 270 by next fall. Donna moved, seconded by Judy, that Council approve, for the academic year of 2025-2026, the Membership Committee's admission of new members up to a total of 278 active members. After discussion, Council approved the motion 9-1.

- Council also discussed increasing the membership cap and determined that it was premature to put the process in place and will review the issue at a spring 2026 meeting.

V. Marketing and Communications: Donna Ramer

- On October 29 Donna was a guest on CCNY's radio show "From City to the World" on WHCR 90.3 FM. During her 30-minute interview, Donna talked about Quest's history, its programs, and the mechanics of its peer-to-peer learning structure. See a fuller report on Donna's interview in the November 2025 QNews.

VI. Technology: Tamara Weinberg

- Tamara reported that the Technology Committee is researching the feasibility of and options for installing movable monitors in Rooms 15-17 and 27. The Committee is also looking into developing digital enrollment forms.

VII. New Business: Donna Ramer

- Donna reported that there had been some complaints about recent politically oriented emails on Quest Community. Council discussed this issue and reaffirmed Quest's Email Policy, posted on the Quest web page. Some members also mentioned the new QuestPolitics googlegroups platform as a forum for members wishing to hold respectful political discussions.
- Stu thanked Donna for her handling of the various issues that fall under the President's purview. He also expressed appreciation for Quest's efforts to bring in and foster new members.

The next Council meeting will be at 25 Broadway on Monday, December 1, 2025, at 2:45 p.m.

Donna adjourned the meeting at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Cullen, Secretary

Documents distributed at meeting: Agenda, 11-3-25 Treasurer's Report.