

## **QUEST COUNCIL MINUTES**

**Wednesday, January 5, 2022**

**Council Members present:** David Bernard, Stephanie Butler, Wayne Cotter, Mary Ann Donnelly, Bob Gottfried, Arlynn Greenbaum, Karen Levin, Nan McNamara, Donna Ramer, Ruth Ward and Michael Wellner.

**Council Members absent:** Penelope Pi-Sunyer

*Council held a monthly meeting via Zoom while on our semester break. The meeting was called to order by Quest President Ruth Ward at 2:45 pm.*

### **Spring Schedule and Summer Encores Program for 2022**

The Spring catalog was emailed to all members and a hard copy is available at 25 Broadway. Mary Ann Donnelly reported that there are 6 sessions planned (as of now) for the summer semester beginning June 7 through July 28. The committee will meet on January 24 to determine additional courses. Arlynn Greenbaum mentioned that space will be left for spring course recommendations as well. Additional recommendations should be emailed to Art Spar at

[QuestEncores2022@googlegroups.com](mailto:QuestEncores2022@googlegroups.com).

## **End of Fall Luncheon**

Council apologizes for not having enough food at our luncheon. We estimated 40 members attending (based on our fall in-person attendance statistics) and ordered the appropriate amount of food. In fact, there were about 100 who attended in person. We also requested Katz's Deli to provide sandwiches cut into thirds so we would have extra sandwiches but they would not do this for us. There will be additional spring lunches held at 25 Broadway. Depending upon the status of COVID, possible dates are March 10 and April 14. The Social Committee will request RSVPs for future lunches.

## **Spring 2022 Year-End Luncheon**

Michael Wellner reported that the committee contacted the new Battery Gardens but hasn't heard back. A visit is scheduled for Bryant Park. The luncheon will be held on the Friday after classes end.

## **In-Person Attendance at 25 Broadway vs. Zoom**

Since our return to 25 Broadway, in-person attendance has been relatively low, especially on Thursdays. Quest has collected attendance data (CWE requested this information in case contact tracing is needed) on a day-by-day basis. Michael Wellner reviewed with Council a fall 2021 attendance report that includes daily attendance for classes at 25 Broadway as well as classes on Zoom.

The results of our attendance statistics indicate that for most auditorium classes, more members attend via Zoom than in-

person but the difference between Zoom and in-person was insignificant for classes in Room 15-17.

### **Technology Committee Report**

Vice President Wayne Cotter addressed some audio and visual issues that we experienced in both the Auditorium and Room 15-17. To resolve these issues, Robert Hernandez, the IT Manager for CWE, tested out a new system called “OWL” with Wayne Cotter. OWL allows the camera to move automatically and the system is voice-activated so all voices are picked up. CWE installed this system in Room 27. President Ruth Ward will ask CWE if Quest can use Room 27 (where the library used to be) as an additional room for Quest classes.

Since Room 27 will not have the side monitors set up in the beginning, Donna Ramer asked if the tech person will be able to see the people attending via Zoom and monitor for questions. The new system will allow this.

### **Quest Recording Policy**

The Tech Committee wrote a report to Council that proposes a policy for Quest to record classes. Council reviewed this report prior to the meeting.

Nan McNamara raised concerns as to why Quest is recording certain classes when we have a hybrid system that is being used. Nan is concerned that posting all our classes online may undermine what Quest is – a community-based organization

where members can discuss, agree or disagree with what is presented.

Nan asked how the decision to record or not record classes was implemented as well as what recordings get posted on the Quest website.

Nan also suggested that we get an outside legal opinion on whether or not we need to get release forms from our members regarding the use of incorporating social media information in Quest presentations.

Vice President Wayne Cotter provided a history of how recording classes first started. When Quest moved to Zoom in the summer of 2020, Quest started recording. Recordings continued for mostly “webinar” courses but not for “discussion/meeting” courses. In the fall of 2020, webinars were recorded unless the lead coordinator did not want to record.

In the spring and summer of 2021, these recording practices remained essentially the same.

In the fall of 2021, when Quest returned to 25 Broadway and began its hybrid program, most of the courses in Room 15-17 were discussion courses and were not recorded. Lecture courses in the auditorium, however, were recorded, provided the lead coordinator agreed.

Wayne noted that Quest's recording policy was discussed at Council in the past. After the fall 2020 semester, all recordings were made available to members during the December to January break. Council then agreed to continue to make these recordings available after the winter break.

Beginning in the spring 2021 semester, recordings were made available to members a day or two after the class was conducted.

Both Michael Wellner and Donna Ramer feel that posting the recordings shortly after each class has an impact on attendance.

Donna suggested that presenters sign a release form about whether or not they would like their talk to be recorded. A form can be included in the new members' kit regarding approval to be recorded. Nan agreed with these suggestions.

Arlynn Greenbaum mentioned that the contracts for guest speakers have a clause that asks if the speaker gives permission to record their presentations. If Council agrees not to record classes, Arlynn would like to keep the clause in the contract for guest speakers so that an electronic archive of guest speakers is available.

Wayne Cotter explained the current recording policy in place. The lecture classes that are primarily in the auditorium are recorded. The meeting classes that are primarily in Room 15-17 are not recorded. If the lead coordinator objects to this, they can choose to record.

Nan noted we may want the new long-range planning committee to focus on a strategy regarding recording.

After much discussion, Council voted on the following:

- Do we want a legal opinion regarding the use of a release form?

Seven members voted not to request a legal opinion. Two members abstained from voting and one member would like a legal opinion. The majority of Council voted not to request a legal opinion.

### **Long-Term Planning Subcommittee for 2022**

Vice President Wayne Cotter previously distributed a Quest report that addressed long-range planning for Quest. The report was prepared by an ad-hoc committee and issued in January 2017.

Council reviewed this report and agreed unanimously to appoint a new Long-Range Planning Subcommittee to produce a 2022 report. The committee will include several members of Council and several non-members. Council members who are interested in participating on this committee are David Bernard, Mary Ann Donnelly, Bob Gottfried, Nan McNamara and Michael Wellner. Nan will email Questbusiness to recruit additional members to be on the committee.

One item that Quest's newly formed long-range planning subcommittee will focus on is the question of whether Quest

should continue recording courses once things return to normal. In the meantime, Quest will continue to operate under the “status quo” with respect to recording courses in the spring of 2022.

Council unanimously agreed to keep the “status quo.”

“Status Quo” is defined as follows: All lecture-type courses will be recorded, most of which will be presented in the auditorium. Most meeting courses will **not** be recorded, most of which are in Room 15-17. There will be a few courses in Room 15-17 that will be recorded. All lead coordinators of courses to be recorded will be notified that they can choose not to record their course. All lead coordinators of courses not recorded will be notified that they can choose to record their course.

There are three spring 2022 courses that appear to fall into a grey area (i. e., not clearly lecture or discussion course). They are The Rise and Fall of the British Empire, Shakespeare and Reading the Rabbis. Vice President Wayne Cotter will contact the lead coordinator of these courses to explain what Council discussed and to see whether or not they are interested in having their courses recorded.

### **Membership Update**

Donna Ramer reported that to date 131 paying members have renewed and she has received \$37,951. Membership Chair Nan McNamara said there are an additional 12 members to be re-

enrolled. Ten new people have inquired about Quest and will be interviewed.

A decision on giving the member checks to Davi Saroop will be decided once Council determines if and when we return to 25 Broadway.

### **Electronic Archives Information Update**

Quest Treasurer Stephanie Butler reported that Steve Allen found a program that will address maintaining our electronic archives. This will be discussed at a future meeting.

### **New Insurance Policy**

David Bernard reported this is in process.

### **Focus Groups**

David Bernard mentioned that several members approached him informally to talk about Quest policies and practices including our current hybrid/Zoom approach and class recordings. Based on these conversations, he is suggesting we create focus groups for further discussion. This will be discussed at our February meeting.

### **Proposal for Minor Changes to the Quest Bylaws**

Donna mentioned she has some suggested future changes to the bylaws. She would like to discuss these changes with the Membership Committee and defer this topic to a future Council meeting.



## **Nominating and Elections Committee (NEC) for Spring 2022**

### **Re-Election of New Council Members**

The NEC Committee will include Beth Callendar, Paul Golomb, Bob Gottfried, Andrea Irvine and Mary Beth Yakoubian. Bob Gottfried can report back to Council as the liaison.

### **Re-Election of New Council Members in Spring 2022**

David Bernard, Wayne Cotter, Arlynn Greenbaum and Karen Levin will run again for a two-year term. Stephanie Butler and Penelope Pi-Sunyer will not run again.

### **Spring Semester**

Council will continue to monitor COVID and the challenges we may face by returning to 25 Broadway. The spring semester is scheduled to begin Monday, January 31. However, Council will be voting via email on Friday, January 14 regarding whether or not to close for at least the first two weeks of February. If we decide to close, we will operate on a Zoom-only basis for the first two weeks and continue to assess the situation.

If we return to 25 Broadway, CWE will determine if masks should be mandated based upon CDC protocols. Please know that Quest can always decide if members should be required to wear masks or choose to wear masks in the classrooms regardless of CCNY policy.

## **Treasurer's Report for December 2021**

Quest Treasurer Stephanie Butler reported that our finances continue to be in a healthy state and we are on target to end the year close to our budget.

The Council's next scheduled meeting is Monday, February 7 at 2:45 pm. It will be held at 25 Broadway in Room 15-17.

*The meeting was adjourned by Ruth Ward at 4:30 pm.*

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Levin

Secretary