

QUEST COUNCIL MINUTES

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

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

Council Members absent: None

Council held its monthly meeting at 25 Broadway with some members participating via Zoom. The meeting was called to order by Quest President Ruth Ward at 2:45 pm.

Spring 2022 Year-End Luncheon Update

Michael Wellner reported there will be 13 tables of ten and that the menu for the restaurant will be emailed on April 8. Michael will let Ruth know the attendees from CCNY and CWE.

Checks for the luncheon should go to Bob Gottfried. Information will be emailed to all members with instructions on where to send the check. Please email Bob Gottfried at Bob@gottfried.net with requests regarding a table after sending your check.

Proposed Parliamentary Rules Update

Per our March 9 meeting, Vice President Wayne Cotter distributed proposed rules for conducting business at Quest Council meetings. Both Michael Wellner and Donna Ramer added comments for Council to discuss.

Council discussed these rules and Wayne will revise them to reflect our comments for final discussion at the May 11 meeting.

Soliciting New Committee Members for 2022 - 2023

Quest President Ruth Ward noted that the bylaws require all committees to solicit new members by July 31 of each year. She suggested that this year these solicitations be combined into one email and sent to members rather than sending multiple emails to members.

Ruth suggested the following for Council to discuss and approve:

Prior to April 15, the Chair or their appointee should send an email to Ruth and Donna Ramer that includes a brief description of their committee and the skills needed, if any, to become a member. Ruth will then send an email in mid-May to all members that combines all committee information.

The combined email will note that for some committees there may be more applicants than committee openings.

Nan McNamara suggested it may be helpful to include in the email to members whether someone can apply for multiple committees or just one or two committees. Nan also suggested that Committee Chairs get together to review who has applied for various committees. This will prevent an overlap of members.

After all responses are received from the Committee Chairs, Donna will compile a grid that displays the members who applied for each committee. This will be shared with all Committee Chairs.

Arlynn Greenbaum asked if there was a maximum number of people allowed to be on a committee. Ruth said there is no maximum number, but the bylaws state there is a minimum number of three people.

Stephanie Butler asked about the term limits required for a committee member and suggested this be included in the letter. Ruth said the bylaws state that for the Membership, Scheduling, Curriculum, and Auditing committees, no committee member may serve for more than four consecutive years. For all other committees a rotation of Committee Chairs every three years and a recruitment of new members are encouraged.

Bob Gottfried asked if the Curriculum Committee can send a second letter asking for volunteers to be on that committee. Wayne Cotter clarified this can be done by any committee if they need additional volunteers but it should wait until after May 15.

Going forward, Donna will include information about being a committee member and serving on a committee as part of the new membership kit.

Council approved Ruth's approach for soliciting new members.

New Committee Chairs

Ruth distributed a proposed list of Committee Chairs for the 2022 – 2023 academic year. The chairs will be discussed and voted on during Council's May 11 meeting. Ruth reviewed this list with the chairs and all chairs are aware of the term limits applicable to their committees.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Update

David Bernard reported that he and Michael Wellner met with Nina Woods from CWE leadership. Nina received the letter written by Dean Mercado as well as the Quest brochure and will contact CWE alumni, friends and colleagues to promote Quest. David also met with Dee Dee Mozeleski, who will reach out to the alumni and faculty of CCNY on behalf of Quest. The committee has spoken about contacting alumni of historic black colleges and will pursue that area. North Carolina Central State University is one of the colleges. Pereta Rodriguez contacted alumni of Asian organizations.

Long-Term Planning Subcommittee Update

Nan McNamara updated us and explained that the committee will take the following steps:

- Meet prior to the May Council meeting
- Review the feedback from the discussion group attendees
- Evaluate which items need to be discussed early in the summer/fall
- The new Council will make decisions about future changes

Membership Update

Donna Ramer reported there are 237 members (including seven founding members and fourteen new members). We received \$62,701 in revenues for the spring semester. Barbara Gelber will continue to include features on new members in *QNEWS*.

Council discussed the subject of age as it pertains to Quest membership as well as to issues of diversity. Donna mentioned that “younger” members will have better technology skills and will be able to help us plan for the future of Quest.

Mary Ann Donnelly said we need to decide our strategy over the hybrid format and its impact on our attendance and sense of community.

David Bernard asked if Council had any concerns about the number of members being lower. Wayne said there were some concerns in the Marketing and Communications (M&C) Committee. When Quest was near its membership cap, marketing was not a large concern. Since the pandemic, it has been difficult to design a viable marketing approach. Donna recommended that M&C, DEI and Membership get together to plan a strategy for recruiting new members.

Karen Levin asked how people were recruited. In most cases, it is either via a friend or the Internet. Michael mentioned that he did an analysis of how many members joined through a friend referral vs. the Internet. Donna suggested doing a “round-up” article like AARP or through a magazine editor.

Nan McNamara raised the issue of fees for the fall session. Council needs to vote on this and Bob recommended that this be approved by the new Council in May. He recommends that we charge the full fee for both fall and summer (including summer). Council discussed that the renewal fee for fall 2022 and spring 2023 (including the summer session) be charged as one fee and paid in one check. Michael suggested we postpone this decision until May.

Donna made a motion that we charge new people \$100 for the summer session and they be considered full members. Michael Wellner seconded it. Council unanimously agreed to charge \$100 for the summer session.

Electronic Archives Information Update

Quest Treasurer Stephanie Butler clarified that Steve Allen is the only person who can access this site at this time. Steve is looking for two people to help him with the new software system and Wayne volunteered.

Nominating and Elections Committee (NEC) Update

Bob Gottfried reported that one candidate decided not to run for Council, so there are now four candidates for three positions.

The Officer Candidates: Wayne Cotter will run again for Vice President; Karen Levin will run again for Secretary and Peter Fleischman will run for Treasurer.

The At-Large Candidates running for office are: David Bernard, Arlynn Greenbaum, Larry Shapiro and Judith Winn.

There will be several “Meet the Candidates” sessions held during the Noontime Knowledge time slot. On May 2 and May 4, the At-Large Candidates will speak and on May 3, the Officer Candidates will speak. We encourage all members to attend one of these sessions.

All voting will be electronic and done by SurveyMonkey.

Discussion Groups Update

David Bernard reported that there were several discussion groups held (including on Zoom) and facilitated by Council members. About 12% of membership participated in the groups.

The key points brought up by members are:

- Hybrid Presentations
 - Hybrid presentations are here to stay
 - Most participants agreed hybrid classes have a negative effect on in-person attendance and loss of community at Quest
 - Suggestions to reduce the number of hybrid presentations

- Encourage In-Person Attendance
 - Delay access to recordings (e.g., for 4 weeks) or until end of semester
 - Hold more in-person only classes

- Hold more lunch time activities such as TED talks, short films, current events
- Hold regular social activities such as wine & cheese, ice-cream socials
- Hold meditation or yoga at lunchtime
- Miscellaneous Issues
 - Increase membership diversity
 - Consider car service to help people with transportation issues
 - Consider a structural change to presentations so more discussion is encouraged
 - Consider a buddy system

Council discussed the feedback from these meetings. To encourage more in-person attendance and ease the burden on tech volunteers, Wayne suggested we reduce the number of hybrid classes and delay the timing of the recordings. To encourage more participants, Ruth suggested we send discussion group invitation emails more often so people don't miss seeing it.

Donna suggested that Quest year-end lunches be organized so that members don't sit with friends all the time. The Social Committee can put names in a hat and coordinate the tables.

Council will send a thank you to all members and discussion group participants. The new Council will be looking at these

issues in further detail and additional discussion groups will be held in the fall.

Treasurer's Report for March 2022

Quest Treasurer Stephanie Butler reported that we received \$40,000 from CWE and this amount is in our account. She also explained that we had not approved certain funds paid from the Leedom/Cott bequest. Bob Gottfried clarified that Council needs to annually approve funds that are paid from reserves but not reflected in our operating budget.

Quest President Ruth Ward clarified that Council needed to approve \$17,500 from reserves. This amount reflects \$10,000 for two Leedom/Cott speakers as well as \$5,000 for Leedom/Cott scholarships. There is an additional advance payment of \$2,500 for Al Franken to speak in the fall.

Ruth also explained that Council needed to approve \$8,500 from our operating budget. This reflects \$5,000 for Quest scholarships to CWE and \$3,500 to the CWE film festival.

Stephanie made a motion to approve \$17,500 from reserves and \$8,500 from our operating budget for a total of \$26,000. Donna Ramer seconded it. Council unanimously approved \$26,000.

The Council's next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, May 11, at 2:45 pm. It will be held at 25 Broadway in the Brooklyn Room or by using the auditorium link.

The meeting was adjourned by Ruth Ward at 5:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Levin

Secretary