



Seniors College of Prince Edward Island
President's Report for the Annual Year
01 July 2019 to 30 June 2020

During our 21st year, Seniors College continued to provide a broad spectrum of course offerings to its Members in an environment that provided both stimulating peer learning opportunities and social interaction. Unfortunately, the 2020 Spring session had to be cancelled due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent closure of all schools and non-essential businesses.

By July 2019, the Seniors College Content Management System (CMS) had been completely restructured. Leading up our annual member registration in September, many performance enhancements had been implemented including (1) the migration to a new platform (Microsoft Azure) which could handle our capacity issues; (2) the optimization and upgrading to our existing website; and (3) the improvements to communications with our membership. Although it cost approximately \$20,000.00 it was worth the investment and registration was both quick and seamless. The only downside was the approximate 11% reduction in the number of Members who registered. The feedback from our Members was extremely positive from the registration point of view.

The CSM was further enhanced during the year to allow for the extraction of specific course data and further improvements are being planned.

The objectives of Seniors College are:

- 1. To provide stimulating peer learning opportunities for members**
- 2. To make sure that learning is fun**
- 3. To be responsive to the needs and interests of those 50 years and over**
- 4. To work and develop links with other organizations to further the goals of the College**
- 5. To initiate and participate in research on subjects that affect older adults' way of life**

To achieve our objectives, the College relies not only on its Members but also on a dedicated Board of Directors; a Provincial Coordinator; Course Facilitators and numerous facilities. The skill, expertise, dedication and commitment by everyone in an effort to achieve our objectives is both incredible and impressive. Our UPEI Liaison, Donald Moses, Head Librarian, also provided significant support in during our MOU renegotiations with UPEI. THANKS TO ALL OF YOU FOR YOUR INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE SUPPORT.

Strategic Plan:

The current Strategic Plan (SP) spans the period from July 2018 – June 2022. The SP outlines the organization's direction and guides decision making and activities over that period. The pillars of the SP which are core to the institution are:

- **Volunteers**
- **Lifelong Learning**
- **Social Engagement**
- **Value**

The identified strategies and key activities under each pillar were assigned to the relevant Committees and over the past year each Committee made a quarterly report to the Board on their progress and the activities being implemented to achieve the outstanding goals.

Challenges:

Our primary challenge during the past year was the onset of the pandemic and the subsequent decision re the cancellation of the Spring session. The implications of that decision included ensuring effective communications with our Members and Facilitators throughout the shutdown. We surveyed our Members with respect to their thoughts and concerns re an October return to classes and their feedback was invaluable to the Board when making decisions on our operational plan.

Our bottom line was also impacted. The uncertainty surrounding the duration of the pandemic restrictions was challenging. For example, the Program Committee normally begins the annual planning for our courses in January and had the schedule pretty much in place when the restrictions became effective in March. As the restrictions were somewhat eased, it became apparent that capacity in our courses would be reduced due to the social distancing requirements and the reduction in the number of facilities that could hold our classes. In addition, some facilities indicated that SC would be responsible for sanitization of the areas after classes and providing sanitizer etc. for anyone attending our classes.

Our second challenge was in September when the Registration process was seamless but the number of Members was significantly reduced. The Board was in the process of developing a strategy to increase our visibility and membership numbers when the pandemic shutdown occurred.

Partnerships/Community:

We have continued to maintain our existing community partnerships and have forged new initiatives with other partners.

- **Our partnerships continue with the Province of Prince Edward Island and UPEI and we had partnered with Holland College to launch a “pilot tutoring program” for students in**

the Department of Health and Community Studies. Many thanks to the volunteers from our members who stepped up to participate in this initiative as well as to Pat MacAulay who spearheaded this initiative on behalf of SC. That pilot program was offered in the fall of 2019.

- We renegotiated our Memorandum of Agreement with UPEI for a further 5 years. Special thanks to Donald Moses for supporting our proposals and ensuring the value of partnering with SC could not be measured by dollars alone.
- We continued to meet with government officials to ensure that there was a greater understanding of the mandate and mission of SC.
- The City of Charlottetown and the Town of Stratford continued to provide classroom/meeting space at no cost to SC.
- We had an information display at a District Women's Institute Convention and our revamped Powerpoint presentation was a great success.

Finance:

On the financial side, we ended the year with a Net Income of \$3,189; Net Assets of \$60,609 and Liabilities of \$11,516. The Liabilities include \$11,375 of Deferred Revenue from grants received in previous years. Thanks to our Treasurer, Kate Gordon, for keeping us on track and providing the Board with various budgetary options when making decisions on our ongoing operations.

A "Notice to Reader" engagement was entered into with ArsenaultBestCameronEllis (ABCE) as Lisa MacKay of the CAAL Management Group had stopped providing the "Independent Review" that she had completed for us for a number of years. ABCE recommended 3 minor adjustments and the Board approved the Financial Statements as presented by ABCE.

Program/Courses:

There were 420 Members registered during the year, a reduction of 56 Members from the previous year (476). More than 83% of our members take classes in Queens County. We continue to experience low registration numbers in both Kings and Queens counties which makes it difficult to run courses. A minimum of 7 registrants is now required to hold a course.

The number of courses originally scheduled for this year was 161 in the 3 Counties over 3 terms. The length of the courses varied from 1 to 8 sessions and the feedback from our Members is very supportive of the shorter length courses (1-4 sessions). The shorter courses require more work to organize and increase the number of courses required on our calendar. Each year up to 25% of the course offerings change and run the gamut from "academic" courses to physical exercise courses to wine tasting and cooking courses. The longer courses such as Art, Bridge, Island History, Computer and Cooking remain very popular.

A total of 33 courses which were scheduled for the Spring term were cancelled due to the pandemic.

Many thanks to the Program Committee for all their hard work in selecting, organizing and finding Facilitators for the courses. The Committee is open to suggestions for new Courses and new Facilitators who can offer their time and talents.

In September, the Board purchased 2 new amplification devices for use in the larger venues to improve both the sound quality and intensity.

Marketing/Promotion/Communication:

The rebranding of our posters, pamphlets and banners to achieve a younger, more vibrant representation of our Members was completed last year and has significantly enhanced our visibility with the public. Multimedia promotions were undertaken during the year including advertising in “The Buzz”; interviews on CBC radio and tv; and publications in the print media. Planning is ongoing for a media blitz promoting SC and targeting a greater audience using airwaves, print and social media with the help and support of local personalities.

In addition, the Technology Committee is exploring additional ways to use Facebook to enhance the presence of Seniors College with both our members and the general public in our demographic.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the continued operations of Seniors College when we were faced with adversity during the year – particularly the Board and Committees. Without the full support of each of you our future could have been much different.