

Seniors College of Prince Edward Island
President's Report to the AGM November 27, 2021

Covid-19 has dictated much of how we conducted our lives since March 2020. The past fiscal year July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 has been a challenging one but I am happy to report that because of a lot of hard work by our volunteer Board of Directors and the support of our membership, Seniors College continues, stronger than ever.

In the summer of 2020, a survey was conducted of the membership and facilitators re: possible return to face-to-face classes in the fall of 2020. Given the constantly changing vector of the pandemic, the decision was taken in July 2020 that classes for the fall semester would be cancelled. We did however need to continue to conduct ourselves in a manner that would allow us to quickly resume operations should Public Health restrictions be lifted. The Committees of the Board worked tirelessly to maintain contact with our members and to be prepared for the safe return of classes. Given the fluidity of the situation, the Board made a series of decisions to cancel classes on a semester-by- semester basis. The introduction of the vaccination program and the enthusiastic uptake by seniors made us hopeful for a return to the classroom in the fall of 2021.

Programs

The Programs Committee chaired by Shirley Pierce also included Janet Ellis, Janet Garland, Andy Smith, Michele Dorsey, and Lynn Murphy. The Committee continued to meet and maintain an active calendar of courses for each semester of 2020/21 despite the cancellations. Committee members, worked with previous facilitators and others to have 17 human interest sessions videotaped and uploaded to our website during the spring of 2021. Each week one or two new topics were launched. Members and the general public viewed these videos more than 5000 times. This was a great way to maintain members' interest in Seniors College.

By June of 2021, the Committee had approximately 150 courses lined up for the 2021/2022 school year with facilitators confirmed and most of the venues booked. New courses and tours were added included Introduction to Origami; How the Body Works in Health and Disease; Climate Change; Canada Games; Scams and Fraud, etc.

The Facilitator Guide was also reviewed and updated to include COVID requirements.

Information Technology

The Information Technology Committee, chaired by Mary MacPherson also included Kate Gordon, Mary Lou Turner, and Charley Scott, our former Coordinator. Because of the fiscal constraints we were undergoing, no changes or enhancements were made to our website or registration system over the past year. As a further cost-saving mechanism, our Committee chair, Mary MacPherson assumed the responsibility for maintaining our Facebook account during this time as well. The Committee's main focus during the past year was to keep Seniors College members informed and engaged via email, our website and Facebook account. The decision was made to keep our previous year's courses visible as a tool for public awareness of the types of courses offered by the College. In February 2021, the IT Committee created a Seniors College YouTube channel. Between February and May 2021, 17 YouTube presentations were prepared by facilitators on various topics, (several of which were meant as introductions to 2021-2022 course offerings). These presentations were then posted to the Seniors College Facebook page for member viewing and to grow College awareness.

Marketing

The Marketing Committee chaired by Andy Smith also included, Pat MacAulay, Shirley Pierce, Mary MacPherson and Mary Lou Turner. Much of the Marketing Committee's work over the past year has centred on ensuring members were kept informed of semester cancellations, via email and media, and kept engaged by making them aware of our on-line presentations. The Committee with the

help of news stories and interviews on CBC, local radio stations, and the Guardian was able to ensure that members received the latest updates via as many channels as possible.

In the spring of 2021, Gary MacDougall, former editor of the Guardian, agreed to write two articles about the return of Seniors College in the fall of 2021. These were extremely well received when they appeared in the Guardian and were also cross listed on our social media platforms. This effort was part of a broader strategy to use social media, and “free” publicity wherever possible to announce our return to the classroom to existing and potentially new members.

Finance

It goes without saying that the past fiscal year has been a very challenging one for the College from a fiscal perspective. The Board made a decision early on in the pandemic that we needed to maintain contact with our members and be prepared for our eventual return to classes while at the same time reducing our expenses as much as possible. Our Treasurer, Kate Gordon will present the steps taken and the resulting financial position, in her report.

I can report that Seniors College ended the year with an operating deficit of \$22,245 (vs. a surplus of \$3,189 in 2020), total net assets of \$38,364 and total liabilities of \$12,375. Cash on hand at the end of the year was \$50,539 (vs \$72,125 the previous year).

Looking Ahead to 2021 -2022

As we look ahead to the coming year, there is one major priority for my last year as President.

The current Strategic Plan for the College spans the period from July 2018 – June 2022. Our Strategic Plan 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

Work on the next iteration of this plan will begin in the spring of 2022 when we will once again be surveying our members and facilitators for feedback and direction.

Concluding Comments

The resiliency of Seniors College over the past nineteen months has been very reassuring. The fact that the College returned stronger than ever this fall is thanks in large part to the hard work and dedication of our Board. I would like to publicly thank them for what has been a very challenging time. I would also like to thank our members who maintained contact with us and who returned in record numbers this fall. It is very gratifying to have such a response. While I return to class was not without challenges, our members have remained positive and understanding. Thank you.