

## **Seniors College of Prince Edward Island**

### **President's Report to the AGM December 3, 2022**

The past fiscal year July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 was a year that was once again shaped by Covid and the challenges of offering programming while adhering to public health policies. While the past year was challenging, the hard work by our volunteer Board of Directors and the support of our membership has meant that Seniors College continues to thrive despite those challenges.

The work of Seniors College falls to our part time Provincial Coordinator and the Working Committees of the Board. I will now report on those Committees.

#### **Programs Committee**

The Programs Committee chaired by our Vice President, Shirley Pierce also included Janet Ellis, Luanne Gallant, Maureen Sinnott, Brenda Campbell, Steve Connolly, and Michele Dorsey.

In September 2021, we had 500 plus members register for Seniors College courses, exceeding pre-Covid levels. While we were allowed to return to the classroom in the fall, public health guidelines meant we had to restrict the numbers in our classes, check vaccination records and identification, ensure social distancing, etc. We had waitlists for many classes, but were able to add extra classes and tours, and sometimes change venues to accommodate more people. With the departure of our Provincial Coordinator at the end of September, the Committee along with other Board members took on incremental duties to stay operational. Another coordinator was hired in September, but moved away at the end of February.

By January of 2021, the in-person winter courses were cancelled because of Covid. Some classes were moved to the spring and we were able to offer 16 courses online via Zoom during February and March. These online courses proved to be very popular with our members with many members requesting that we continue to offer some classes online, particularly during the winter months.

The Program Committee continued to be busy in the spring and summer and by June of 2022, the Committee had approximately 150 courses lined up for the 2022/2023 school year offering a mixture of our most popular courses and the introduction of approximately 20% new courses.

We were very fortunate to hire the very talented Tory Kennedy as our Provincial Coordinator in March. Tory has performed her duties exceptionally well and kept us all well-organized.

I would like to thank the Program Committee for all their hard work during this past year.

### **Information Technology Committee**

The Information Technology Committee, chaired by Mary MacPherson also included Luanne Gallant, Mary Lou Turner, and Tory Kennedy.

This past year was an extremely busy one for the IT Committee as well. A strong turnout for September 2021 registration combined with technical issues with our registration system and reduced class sizes because of Covid restrictions, contributed to long wait lists for classes.

Follow up discussions with our service provider, WSA Solutions, resulted in the following changes during the past year:

- Removed the “Add to Cart” step when registering for a course;
- Implemented a requirement for a unique email address for all new member accounts;
- Instituted user testing by the committee prior to registration and other significant technical changes, and
- Seniors College is now the administrator responsible to “Open” courses on registration day.

In addition, multiple duplicate and dormant member accounts were removed from the system to keep member data current.

During the year, technical committee members assisted with new Provincial Coordinator training and other technical activities including movement of delayed

session courses, and intermittent technical support. The Committee also provided support to Facilitators who delivered courses on-line via Zoom during the winter semester.

And finally, the committee has been working with WSA Solutions to determine requirements in advance of the launch of two projects happening in the 2022/2023 year. We will be reporting on those projects at next year's AGM.

### **Marketing Committee**

The Marketing Committee chaired by Pat MacAulay also included, Shirley Pierce, Stephen Connolly, 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 the return of classes in the fall of 2021, the suspension of face-to-face classes for the 2022 winter semester, the launch of online courses for the winter semester, and the return to classroom teaching in the spring. The Committee through email and social media and with the help of news stories and interviews on CBC (radio and TV) was able to ensure that members received the latest updates via as many channels as possible.

In August of 2021, Gary MacDougall, former editor of the Guardian, wrote two articles about the return of Seniors College after our abrupt closure in March of 2020. These stories 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 for the continued use of social media, and "free" publicity wherever possible to advertise to existing and potentially new members.

### **Finance**

The Finance Committee is chaired by our Treasurer, Kate Gordon and also includes our Secretary, Brenda Campbell and President, Pat MacAulay.

While the previous two years were financially challenging, I am happy to report that we ended the 2021/2022 year with an operating surplus of \$6,212 versus an operating deficit of \$22,245 for the previous year. Our Treasurer, Kate Gordon will present a more detail explanation of our financial position in her report.

## **Concluding Comments**

The resiliency of Seniors College through the pandemic has been very reassuring. The fact that the College survives 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 remained positive and understanding through the many challenges of the past two and half years. We wouldn't have a College without you.

This is my last year as President and I will be serving my 6<sup>th</sup> year on the Board as Past President. I cannot say enough about the individuals who have served and continue to serve on the Board. Their hard work and dedication through some very difficult times was inspirational. I am very grateful for all the support I have received during my tenure as President. (Although they tell me it was only two years, it felt a lot longer.)

As I look at the new slate of candidates for the Board, I am even more confident that Seniors College will continue to thrive.

Thank you. It has been a pleasure to serve you.