

## **2024-2025 Seniors College Reports**

### **President's Report:**

I am pleased to present the President's Report for Seniors College of PEI for the fiscal period from July 2024 to June 2025. This report includes updates from our standing committees highlighting their activities, achievements and contributions throughout the year.

We are fortunate to have had a dedicated team of Board members. As a working board, each member actively participates in one or more of our committees.

An important component of the College is the invaluable work of our part-time coordinator, Tory Kennedy, who skillfully manages the College's programs and coordinates its policies. Her primary responsibilities span organization, program development and administration ensuring the smooth operation and growth of the College.

This year has been another very active year for the college as highlighted in the following reports.

We started the year with only 329 members but are pleased to note that we are now at 400 resulting from many efforts to strengthen our membership base.

As of registration in September 2024 we were able to offer 132 classes.

We have been able to offer participation for some sessions through ZOOM internet connections and using Google Workspace have been improving our communications, meeting planning and record keeping.

In the year we were able to start a newsletter that seems to be enjoyed by all. We have strengthened our outreach activities using FaceBook, and mailing campaigns and have continued to maintain strong support of sponsors.

We were able to control our expenses to result in a current year surplus allowing us to build our surplus to \$ 67,892 or approximately 78% of our annual expenses expected.

It has been a successful year and the coming year looks very good.

**Program Committee:**

**The Program Committee includes Valerie Robinson, Shirley Pierce, Lisa Kessler, Helen Bernstein, Karen Rose, Ruth Thorne, Carol Horne, Judy Rose and Coordinator Tory Kennedy.**

**On registration day in September 2024, we signed up 329 members. We offered them 132 classes, of which 25% were new. Twenty four (24) courses were delivered in Kings County and seven (7) in Prince County. Feedback shows that our members remain engaged and pleased with the course curriculum we have been able to offer. One challenge we have faced in recent years is the continuing decline in membership numbers. (We are happy to report that we were able to reverse that trend in September, 2025 when the number of members had increased by 25% to 400 members which was our goal number).**

**We continue to regularly survey our members to gather feedback on specific courses, but also to gather valuable information on their interests, concerns and preferences. This feedback is always reviewed and incorporated into our course curriculum and decision making.**

**Surveys tell us that most of our members prefer to attend courses in person, but they appreciate having the opportunity to attend virtually when possible. We continue to increase our offering of Seniors College PEI courses that are delivered remotely and those that have been recorded and made available 24/7 on our website. In 2024-25, we added 5 “Empowering Seniors thru Exercise” videos to our website. Also, we have maintained our relationship with Tantramar NB Seniors College which provides our members with additional**

access to online courses as part of their membership.

Our members tell us that they join Seniors College because they have a love of learning and want an opportunity to meet people. We try our best to make both happen!

Website Technology Committee chaired by Mary MacPherson also included Kate Gordon (until November), Ruth Thorne, Tory Kennedy, and Alkarim Sachedina joining the Board in November and co-chairing the committee with Mary.

Although member numbers for 2024-2025 were lower than expected course registration in September went well and without any major website issues.

With a letter of recommendation from Seniors Citizens Federation we received a grant from the Province of PEI Seniors Secretariat. The funds were used to produce five (5) exercise videos where the theme was Empowering Seniors through Exercise. The objective was to promote Seniors College and showcase some of the types of courses offered. Between September and February, the videos were posted on our Course Registration System, shared publicly on our website News, and on Facebook. They were made available to the Seniors Citizens Federation for sharing. The videos are currently available to members via the Pre-Recorded Courses option on our Seniors College website under the Courses menu.

At last year's AGM, we reported that WSA Solutions advised Seniors College in October of 2023 that the company was changing their business model and would no longer be supporting our website. We are very pleased and happy to inform the members that WSA has agreed in October of 2024 to continue supporting the Seniors College until at least April 2026.

In January we experimented with the idea of providing hybrid sessions. This would allow members to attend either in person or participate virtually using Zoom from anywhere – provided they have access to the internet and the Zoom application. Five (5) sessions of Island Way of Life through Industries and Island History courses from January to March were made available in hybrid format from Stratford Emergency Services Centre. The experiment was successful, and

feedback received from members who used the virtual option was very positive. These classes are once again being offered as hybrid sessions during the upcoming Winter semester.

To assist in managing the day-to-day Board business more efficiently, we have started using Google Workspace. This provides a host of functions like email addresses specific for Seniors College (e.g. member@seniorscollege.ca), cloud storage, shared calendar, and more. Our historic documents like minutes of meetings were being managed by individuals using thumb drives and distributed to board members via email attachments. Board members had to use their personal email accounts for board business. Switching to Google Workspace allows storing all electronic documents securely in a central location and are accessible to all board members. Generic email accounts for the Executive have also been added, which allow for easy transition and continuity when board members change their responsibilities. Since we are a non-profit organization, Google is providing the Workspace for Nonprofits at no cost. If we were to purchase this service, it would cost approximately \$3,000 per year.

### **Marketing and Communications**

The Marketing and Communications Committee, led by Shirley Pierce, included members such as Steve Connolly, Mary McPherson, Judy Rose, Carol Horne, Alkarim Sachedina, Helen Bernstein, and Lisa Kessler.

Over the past year, their main goals have been to raise awareness of Seniors College, attract new sponsors, maintain existing sponsorships, and keep open lines of communication with our members and the community.

#### **Online Outreach and Promotion**

A significant part of our marketing efforts has been online. We regularly send emails to members, post updates on our website, and share news on Facebook to promote registration, sponsors, the Annual Art Show, and various events and classes throughout the year. Additionally, we shared information and photos through local Facebook groups such as “We Love Prince Edward Island” and “PEI

**Good News Only.” In August 2024, before registration, we ran two Facebook sponsored posts targeted at Islanders aged 55 and over.**

**Looking ahead, we are planning an ambitious social media campaign to boost awareness and engagement leading up to September registration and throughout the 2025-2026 academic year.**

#### **Newsletter Development**

**To combat declining membership and better engage our community, we launched the Seniors College Newsletter in March. The first issue received a 100% open rate! It included sections like “Did You Know,” details about a new partnership, and features on our Honorary Member Olive Bryanton and our sponsors. We plan to publish several newsletters each year to keep members informed and connected.**

#### **Postal Campaigns:**

**We also prepared plans to distribute brochures via Canada Post to targeted seniors living in specific residential areas of Charlottetown and Cornwall, aiming to reach more potential students.**

#### **Sponsorship and Partnerships:**

**This year, we welcomed Audiology PEI as a Bronze Sponsor. Our other sponsors include: ● \$10,000 Gold Sponsor: Rotary Club of Charlottetown ● \$5,000 Silver Sponsor: St. Dunstan’s University Board of Governors ● \$2,500 Bronze Sponsors: Lawton’s Drugs, Provincial Credit Union, Cox & Palmer All sponsors receive publicity on our website and Facebook page. We also send photos and short descriptions to The Guardian for additional exposure. Some Bronze Sponsors hosted courses related to their businesses, which our members enjoyed. We are proud of the support from these sponsors and hope they will continue their partnership with us in the future.**

#### **Community Engagement:**

**We recognize that many seniors are unaware of Seniors College. To increase our visibility, we made presentations at various organizations, including the**

Charlottetown Library Learning Centre, the Federal Retirees' branches, PEI Seniors Federation, and local clubs. We participated in the "Join A Club" event for new immigrants, attended the Senior Islander of the Year ceremony in Summerside, and sent congratulatory notes to recipients linked to Seniors College. Our outreach extended to multiple communities and groups, such as Stratford, Charlottetown, Cornwall, Summerside, Kings County, the Haviland Club, PEI Seniors Federation, and Holland College Retirees. Many of these groups shared our messages in their newsletters, and we distributed posters and brochures at various events, including our Christmas Tea and promotional activities.

#### **Media Coverage and Publicity:**

We prioritize free publicity whenever possible. The Guardian has been very supportive, regularly publishing photos of our sponsors and articles of interest. In summer, Gary MacDougall, former editor of the Guardian, generously wrote two feature articles about Seniors College, including a story about our Honorary Members Clarence and Shelley Ellis. Additionally, we received valuable exposure from CBC Radio and CBC Compass, with interviews by Matt Rainie and Jay Scotland, as well as public service announcements aired locally and across the Maritimes. We also sent announcements to radio stations CFCY and Ocean 100.

#### **Additional Activities and Events:**

Our marketing and member engagement efforts included hosting a Christmas Party at Belvedere Golf Club, collaborating with Wendy Chappelle to reach potential members in Prince County, and securing funding from the Seniors Secretariat. We produced five promotional exercise videos in partnership with the PEI Seniors Citizens Federation, which we shared on Facebook and with over thirty seniors' clubs across the Island. Other activities included planning a July Strawberry Social, applying for grants to host community meals, encouraging members to "Bring a Buddy" to classes, and capturing photos at the Seniors College Art Show for promotion.

#### **Acknowledgments:**

**The Marketing and Communications Committee has worked tirelessly to promote Seniors College and increase awareness about what we offer. Their dedication is sincerely appreciated.**

### **Financial Report**

**Treasurer, Sandy Anderson, resigned just after June 30, 2025, year end and Peter Benson acted as interim Treasurer.**

**Seniors College of PEI engaged Arsenault Best Cameron Ellis, Chartered Professional Accountants to prepare our annual financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2025, under a “Compilation Engagement Report”. This is NOT an audit as it was not considered required and would be prohibitively expensive.**

**Revenues were down by \$ 6,419 with \$3,880 resulting from fewer members in that year.**

**Costs were able to be controlled with website costs being less than prior year (when a major revision was made) and other costs were able to be controlled. We ended the year with a surplus of revenue over expenses, getting the college closer to a planned reserve. Unlike governments that can run deficits or organizations with buildings and such assts, the Seniors College must maintain a reserve to be able to fund its operations.**

**Generally, the plan would be to maintain a reserve equal to approximately the expected costs for the following year.**

**The Seniors College, as a not-for-profit organization, does not qualify for any rebate of Harmonized Sales Tax (HST). Consideration of applying to become a Charitable Organization to be able to qualify will be reviewed.**

**Full copies of the financial statements, if desired, can be made.**

## **Organizational Development Committee Report**

The Board of Directors of Seniors College of PEI consists of a minimum of 9 Directors and a maximum of 15 Directors who are all elected for a term of 2 years on a staggered basis.

Board members must be fully paid members of Seniors College and any member in good standing is eligible to stand for election to the Board of Directors.

In addition to the elected Directors, the Board also has ex-officio Directors including the Provincial Coordinator and a representative from the University of Prince Edward Island.

The current Board at the time of preparation of this report consists of 13 members including the following officers:

**Peter Benson – President**

**Shirley Pierce – Past President**

**Betty-Lynn Burdett – Secretary, and**

**Peter Benson – acting Treasurer**

Sandy Anderson (Treasurer) and Steve Connolly who were elected at the last AGM resigned from the Board during the year.

Board member and election details will be provided later.

## **Annual Organizational Development Committee Report**

*July 2024 – June 2025*

### **Committee Members:**

- Chair: Maureen Sinnott
- Betty-Lynn Burdett
- Peter Benson
  
- Karen Rose

### **Overview:**

The Organizational Development Committee has continued its work throughout the year in alignment with the College's *Strategic Plan for 2024–2029*. The College is now in its second



year of implementing the plan, which includes key recommendations and identified opportunities. The committee works closely with both directly responsible and implicated committees to ensure effective execution. Regular progress updates are provided to the Board, and this work will continue over the next five years.

### **Key Accomplishments:**

**1. Policy Development:**

The committee successfully developed and obtained Board approval for two essential policies: one regarding privacy and another focused on information sharing. These policies are in accordance with the College's governance and operational standards.

**2. Board Member Nominations:**

In accordance with the College's constitution, the committee ensured a full complement of Board members for the 2024–2025 year. This included confirming current Board members who wished to stand for re-election for a second term, as well as recruiting nominees to fill vacancies created by retiring members or those whose terms had expired.

**3. Annual Nominations Process:**

The committee prepared and presented the nominating report at the Annual Meeting, which included a slate of Officers and Directors for election for the 2024–2025 term. Nominations from the floor were invited, and the election was successfully completed.

### **Ongoing Work:**

The committee will continue to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan, monitor the execution of assigned recommendations, and ensure the development of necessary policies and procedures. Regular updates will be provided to the Board, ensuring transparency and accountability throughout the implementation process.