

Seniors College of Prince Edward Island

President's Report for the 2016-2017 College Year

Annual General Meeting

November 18, 2017

Seniors College continues to provide a broad range and varied program of courses for our membership who range in age from 50 to 90 plus. Predicated on the ideal that we never stop learning, Seniors College of Prince Edward Island has grown from a modest beginning of three courses to over 105 courses in Queens, Prince and Kings counties this past year.

I would like to sincerely thank our current volunteer Board of Directors of Seniors College and our coordinator, who continue to make this possible on a yearly basis. Martha Ellis, our provincial coordinator, is critically important to our success, as she deals with the day to day matters in a very effective, efficient and supportive manner.

I also want to thank perhaps our most unsung volunteers, the many skilled facilitators, who so generously continue to share their knowledge and expertise with our members. These facilitators make it possible for Seniors College to provide such a wide variety of exciting courses.

The 2016 – 2017 year has been a very sad and challenging one for Seniors College with the sudden loss of our President Barbara Mullaly. Georgina Clow, past president assumed the role of President to complete the 2016-2017 year.

The Board continued to work on our 2015-2017 strategic goals. The majority of the goals have been completed while some work needs to be done to complete the remainder.

The Strategic Goals included:

1. Develop a tight brand image for Seniors College- what are we? Why are we a treasure? A New Horizons grant allowed Seniors College to develop a new website with the ability to add news items, and complete many upgrades to our registration system. We also created a Facebook Page. With the registration system upgrade completed we are beginning to explore how various types of data retrieval from the online registration system will assist in continuing to work toward this goal.

2. A - Develop a detailed plan to put the Seniors College profile in the community through varied formats (media and other)

B – Increase Seniors College Communication with members on a regular basis- Much of the work on these objectives has been completed. A year- long Communications and Public Relations plan was developed to detail paid media, free announcements and notices to be used. Our Facebook page has proven to be popular with our membership and facilitators. Emails are regularly sent to members to outline news and any upcoming events. A members' Christmas Social was held again last December which proved quite popular.

C – To explore community partnerships and to broaden understanding of Seniors College –
Discussions were held with the Minister of Education, Deputy Minister and the Public School Branch to try to access classroom space for Seniors College in the Public School System. This did not materialize as spaces during the day in the public schools were not available. Information meetings continued to be held with various groups to make them aware of Senior College and to explore partnerships in line with our mandate.

3. Continue to invest in our on-line registration system - Our on-line registration system has functioned very well over the past four years but as with all technology continued upgrades and maintenance is a constant need. It is not only a system for member course registration but it is an important administrative tool. The system enhances communication with members and can provide helpful membership information useful in planning for the future. This past year upgrades were done to view courses a week at a glance, to add pictures to highlight facilitators and courses, to display term dates when printing member course lists and updating the wait list numbers when someone is assigned to a course.

4. A – To develop and implement a Sustainable Financial Plan by April 2016 – The majority of the work has been accomplished. The financial policies were completed and approved by the Board May 29, 2017. The Financial Committee under the leadership of Mary Brodersen can be commended for their work in this area.

5. Maintain Current Organizational Structure for the next couple of years 2015- 2017 - We moved from 2 large committees (programs and operations) to five smaller ones: programming, publicity and membership, financial management, technology and organizational development. This change stemmed from the final objective in our 2012-2014 strategic plan “to investigate an appropriate organizational structure”. This structure continues to be working productively as the work of the College is better accomplished in the smaller committees.

6. Increase the number and variety of courses offered by Seniors College within the next 3 years – The Program Committee was able to offer 109 courses in 2016-2017 with over 20% new offerings. This continues to be an ongoing challenge as the College tries to balance finding new topics and facilitators that will be of interest to our members. An additional challenge is to find courses that will also appeal to our members in Prince and Kings County. The number of courses in 2016- 2017 by county include:

Queens - 86

Prince- 14

Kings – 9

In offering new courses it requires restaging some of the previous courses. The wide variety of courses in art, computer, literature, language, music, spirituality, politics, history, health, photography and bridge continue to draw a varied number of participants. This year as a result of suggestions from both members and facilitators classes were shortened from three hours to two hours. In some instances due to various commitments, facilitators are only able to teach four to six sessions rather than the traditional eight sessions. For 2016-2017 the Program

Committee introduced 12 short courses that were 4 weeks or less in duration. These short courses proved to be very popular with members.

7. Develop and implement a three year plan to increase membership in Prince and Kings to ensure provincial scope for Seniors College in PEI – This objective continues to be a struggle. Some of the ground work has been done including meeting with various groups in both counties but a complete plan has yet to be finalized.

Membership in Seniors College continues to remain strong particularly in Queens. This past year a total of 441 members were registered with 385 in Queens, 36 in Prince and 20 in Kings. In the 2016-17 year, in addition to course offerings, the Board was again able to arrange some extra benefits for our members. In partnership with CAA a travel series was held to explore the various options for travel and destinations around the world.

The College continues to remain in a good financial position. In late spring 2016 we received a \$12,000 New Horizons grant which allowed us this past year to enhance user interface and add management tools to our on-line registration system. The grant also allowed us to create a Facebook page, develop a new public page and begin to provide tools to extract information from the registration system that will guide our decision making. The Board will continue to explore ways that these on-line tools can support our mandate.

For the third consecutive year the College had the CAAL Management Group conduct a third party review our books at year -end. We are happy to report that all is in good order and there is a small surplus of \$5597 at the end of the 2016-17 budget year.

Seniors College's continuing challenge is to find better ways to serve a rapidly increasing and changing cohort, while working with the financial realities of the present day. It is an intricate juggling act to choose what to offer, where to offer particular courses and how to match those to available venues. Venue costs continue to rise and all do not offer the same level of technical support some facilitators require. Some are not as accessible as we would like for our members with mobility challenges.

Finally, I want to recognize and thank the following Directors who are retiring from the Board for their contributions to Seniors College: Linda Patterson-Gibson and Maureen Pendergast. Their wisdom and hard work on behalf of the membership will be missed.

Respectfully submitted,

Georgina Clow