



Minutes of LLI Council Meeting
April 19, 2021
Video Conference 9:30 a.m. - 10:42 a.m.

Council Members Present: Robert Beaury, Tom Esposito (ex officio), Carmela Gersbeck, Nanci Kryzak, Deborah Lanser, Jill Lundquist, John Mathews, Emily Michael, Cathy Reinis, Deborah Schwartz, Linda Stanley, Linda Still, Anne Sunners

Council Members Absent: Chuck Mishaan, Marge Moran

Also Present: Barbara Burns, Carol Goss, Felice Gelman, Jana Vengrin

Call to Order

President Nanci Kryzak called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and welcomed the guests.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Upon a motion by Emily and seconded by Linda Stanley, the minutes from the March 15, 2021 Council meeting were approved unanimously.

Motion: Upon a motion by Emily and seconded by John, the minutes from the April 12, 2021 special Council meeting were approved unanimously.

Executive Committee Reports

President's Report

Nanci announced that, with regret, she has accepted the resignation of Linda Still as chair of Membership Development, effective at the end of the May 17 regular meeting. She is grateful for Linda's service. Robert English has agreed to replace her as chair.

Motion: Upon a motion by Linda still and seconded by Jill, Council unanimously approved Robert English as chair of Membership Development, effective at the end of the May 17 regular Council meeting.

P&E has recommended that we cap the membership at 350 for 2021-2022, up from our current cap of 330.

Motion: Upon a motion by Robert Beaury and seconded by Jill, Council unanimously agreed to set the cap at 350.

Nanci reported that Bard will not determine the schedule for their fall semester until midsummer. We can not wait that long to plan for fall. We hope to be allowed to be able to deliver a few small in-person classes and some hybrid classes, but we have to plan for holding our classes on Zoom.

Motion: Upon a motion by Cathy and seconded by Emily, Council unanimously agreed to present the fall classes on Zoom, with the option to return to campus as opportunities allow.

Jonathan Becker has proposed bringing LLI members back to campus for a series of lectures by Bard faculty in May. The goal is to bring every member back to campus at least once this academic year. The lectures would be held at the Levy Center at Blithewood. We still do not have the details, and we are running out of time to handle the logistics, including MailChimp notifications, catalog, and registration. Moreover, we learned last week from Malia Du Mont, head of Bard's COVID Response Team, that every attendee would be required to fill out paperwork related to covid. Nanci has suggested that Jonathan consider a scaled-back program just for the 2020 members, so it would just be two sessions. Alternatively, an additional two sessions could allow our 2019 members to also attend. We have yet to hear back from him. Deborah Schwartz suggested pushing the program back until summer, but Nanci pointed out this could pose a problem with the presenters' schedules. We need to hear from Jonathan and respond accordingly.

Robert was uncomfortable with the idea of bringing people back to campus so soon. We don't know how many people we are talking about or how well ventilated the lecture space is. Nanci said that Bard LLI members can decide for themselves. Bard would not bring us into a space that would not allow for social distancing. Bard has carefully followed the state and CDC guidelines, and had only 10 cases. If members feel comfortable about attending, they can do so.

Cathy was concerned about the time crunch, since the first lecture would be held May 7. If we are going ahead, we should be writing our communications now. We have to be clear this is not a welcome back to campus, just to Blithewood for a short time. Deborah S noted that registration is another problem in such a short time. Moreover, members may already have commitments for May. It would be embarrassing if only a few people show up.

Jill noted that Nanci wrote to Jonathan twice last week, and we have pushed as hard as we can. We can wait for a day or two for his answer. But we should have something going out to the members no later than the end of this week. Nanci, Cathy, Jill, and Deborah S can make the decision as to when to tell Jonathan it's too late to proceed.

Nanci has signed and returned a letter of agreement between Bard LLI and the Mason Arts and Entertainment Advocacy Clinic, whose students are addressing issues concerning video recording in our classes. Their semester has ended and they will continue their work in the fall. Stephanie Semler, adjunct professor at the law clinic, recommended we contact New York Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts for legal advice concerning the New York State law about member privacy.

Nanci met with the directors of four local libraries, offering LLI's cosponsorship of the Community Read project. The directors rejected the offer, preferring to keep this as a library program.

First Vice President's Report

Linda Stanley said the Nominating Committee met one time to recommend Robert English as chair of Membership Development. The Election Committee met on March 30 to go over the election results.

The election results were as follows: Felice Gelman, Second Vice President; Deborah Lanser, Secretary; John Mathews, Member at Large; Carol Goss, Member at Large.

Motion: Upon a motion by Linda and seconded by Carmela, the election results were accepted unanimously.

Linda Stanley has completed the annual member survey and Cathy has edited it. The additional survey question proposed by the Who, Us? Class of 2020 was included. The survey will be sent out on May 17 with a final response date of May 30. Deborah S said after May 17, it should be moved from the Council folder to the forms folder, where everyone can see the results. The survey will be sent out by MailChimp with a message.

Action point: Nanci will send Linda the message from last year. Linda will update the message and complete a MailChimp request form for Deborah S.

Second Vice President's Report

Cathy thanked Deborah S for the extensive work she did updating the workflow documents, and she asked Linda Stanley to document the workflow from the current Nominating Committee and Election Committee.

Secretary: Correspondence

Deborah Lanser reported there was no correspondence.

Treasurer's Report

Robert presented two budgets, one for March 2021 and a tentative budget for FYE June 30, 2022 to be presented for member vote at the annual meeting on May 14.

Motion: Upon a motion by Deborah Schwartz and seconded by Emily, Council voted unanimously to accept the March 2021 budget.

Motion: Upon a motion by Linda Stanley and seconded by Carmela, Council voted unanimously to approve the tentative budget for FYE June 30, 2022..

Standing Committee Reports

Admin/Infrastructure

Deborah Schwartz reported that the catalog for SummerFest is missing some information, but she expects it to be ready for distribution by the middle of May. Susan Christoffersen is working on setting it up for the website, and it will be in ProClass.

Action point: Anne Sunners asked Deborah to come to the next Curriculum meeting to be sure the producers and presenters are aware of the materials needed for the catalog. Deborah S, Anne, and Cathy will meet separately to discuss the waiting list and who should be registered before classes start.

Cathy reported that the March newsletter had an open rate of almost 70% by the members. The next newsletter will be published May 7.

With regard to registration, Deborah is working with David Barnes of ProClass to find ways of keeping each instructor's name on one line. A new version of ProClass will be released in another month or two. Deborah doesn't know when we will get it. The user interface for the back end will be more user friendly. We may eventually be able to use ProClass for class evaluations.

We may be able to use authorize.net to process payments through ProClass. Deborah expects to get the id and password needed to automate the interface between ProClass and the Bard merchant bank. She will do a video about how members can pay for their renewal.

Nanci and Susan have worked hard on a revised organizational chart for the website. The committees/teams contact list will soon be revised.

Curricular and Special Programs

Anne reported the committee is planning on testing the technology that can be used for outdoor QQhybrid learning classes so that everyone is connected.

Governance

Nanci said that the new 2nd Vice President, Felice Gelman, will oversee a review of the bylaws after July 2021. She encouraged Council members to sign up for the CCE newsletter.

Membership Development

Linda Still said she is looking forward to having Robert English resume his role as chair of the committee. She thanked Donna Warner and members of the Sustained Leadership Development limited group for all their hard work. Barbara Burns said she is concerned about the impact that not being on campus has had on volunteerism. She has had little or no response to her invitations to attend Council meetings.

Robert English is working on an informational page for promoting LLI membership, which can be distributed to local libraries. But our best promotional tool is word of mouth.

The mentor program will start up again after the new members have been admitted.

Program Support

Carmela reported that the spring 2021 classes on Zoom have been successful. The 24 session managers will provide feedback after the last class of the semester. We have 33 Zoom licenses,

which Carmela would like to renew. We are also getting a webinar license for the annual meeting.

The hybrid team will do field testing and rehearsals for the hybrid class at Olana the week for 4/21 for Skip Doyle's hybrid class in May. Sometime after June 1, the team will visit classrooms on campus to assess our technology needs for hybrid classes held there.

Once we are back on campus, we will need to recruit someone to replace Martha Nickels for Hospitality.

Planning and Evaluation

Jill said that P&E recommends limiting SummerFest to LLI members because of the logistical difficulties of registering nonmembers and collecting their fees.

Motion: Upon a motion by Jill and seconded by Emily, Council voted unanimously to limit SummerFest to members only.

The Who, Us? Class of 2020 submitted an abbreviated proposal addressing concerns they heard from Council members at the special Council meeting. The document can be shared with LLI Committees.

Jill read the proposed amendment to the mission statement:

Bard Lifetime Learning Institute (LLI) provides educational and social opportunities for our members to share their love of learning and to exchange ideas and experiences. *LLI is an inclusive organization which welcomes members of all backgrounds. We are committed to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion at the institutional and interpersonal levels through our membership, courses, leadership, and culture.* LLI offers non-credit and non-competitive courses and other events under the sponsorship of Bard College. (Italicized sections are suggested additions.)

Deborah S commented that this has been a painful and divisive issue for us on Council and P&E. She would like to have more one-on-one conversations between Council members and members of the Who, Us? class.

Nanci added that this is an important, far-reaching proposal that deserves proper consideration about how to move forward and its possible impact. She noted that the timeline for consideration of the proposal has been short, with the initial discussion in Council occurring just a week earlier. Council members may need more time to consider the wider impact.

Anne noted that members come to LLI to learn, and the Who, Us class wants to provide a learning experience. Curriculum can keep the proposal in mind when developing courses. But we have just had a brief time to consider the proposal, and we need to think about it carefully.

Emily said she sympathizes with the intentions of the proposal but wants to move carefully. Various members have expressed concern that adopting this proposal may affect our courses,

culture, leadership, and membership. Someone in Curriculum would have to be responsible for developing courses that address the diversity issue. She wondered how members would respond to efforts to sensitize them to inherent racism. Committees would have to commit to an antiracist focus. She recommended delaying action and thinking carefully about how to implement the proposal. Another special meeting of Council may be necessary to discuss this further. She concluded this proposal represents a change in the orientation and goal of LLI. Do we serve as an organization that provides education and social opportunities? Or are we sensitizing members to their inherent racism?

Robert agreed we need more time to examine the proposal.

Carmela had the opposite reaction. We already are inclusive, she pointed out, and we are not looking to change our courses. Many are already including some piece of diversity. Racial history and issues can be addressed when they arise naturally, in context. That is already happening.

Linda agreed with Carmela that we should not be afraid of opening ourselves up to greater diversity.

Nanci recommended that Council members take more time to consider this proposal and delay voting on it until another special Council meeting early in June. That will give us time to do our due diligence. The Who, Us? Class can perhaps help draft an agenda. We will not present this at the annual meeting, as originally planned.

John agreed we need to take more time. There are two proposed additions to the mission statement. The first, which welcomes members of all backgrounds, is not problematic. The second sentence promotes an agenda that requires more thought and more careful wording.

Jill said that P&E agreed to support a DEI team with a chair. It would be important to have a Council member as the chair or co-chair.

Motion: Emily moved that we delay further discussion until a Council meeting in June. Robert seconded. Tom thought we need more than just another Council meeting to get a sense of what the membership feels about this. The motion did not carry.

Motion: Robert moved that we start the conversation about racism and the mission statement at a special Council meeting in June. Emily seconded.

Discussion: Linda Stanley said the issue is how to get a primarily White organization to include people of color. That's a big issue that needs a lot of time and effort, with a task force committed to working on it. Jill said that when we return to campus, members who are interested in these issues can discuss them in person. Linda Stanley pointed out that we do have a question in the annual survey to assess member interest. Members also have the opportunity to volunteer for a task force. Emily said the issue is whether we want to change LLI in the way that is proposed. We have to ask what would be an effective way to get member opinions on this proposal. That is

an issue for the special meeting. Jill thought we were conflating everything in the abbreviated proposal, which contained nothing about consciousness raising. Linda said this is the issue of our time. We need more information and resources to add to our conversation. The question is how we go forward.

Vote: Upon a vote, Robert's motion did not carry.

Revised Motion: Emily moved that in June, we hold a special meeting of Council to begin discussion of the revised mission statement and the general proposal of the DEI Initiative presented by the Who, Us? Class of 2020. Linda Stanley seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Old Business

Deborah Lanser read the proposed revision to policy FIN 06/10, with changes highlighted in red:

FIN 06/10. LLI Council establishes need-based scholarships to LLI members for partial or full coverage of annual membership fees. The **amount** of said scholarships shall not exceed the cost of registration fees per individual, and the cumulative amount given shall not exceed **\$2000** per year. **New and renewing** members who wish to apply for said scholarships shall petition the Council President, in writing. The President shall be authorized and empowered to award such scholarships, at his or her discretion, **and the payment of such scholarship shall be made directly to LLI on behalf of the member(s).**

Motion: Deborah Schwartz moved to approve the revised policy, and Emily seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Nanci had asked Council members to review a draft agenda for the annual meeting. She recommended deleting the section about the DEI Initiative, but she will mention it in her report. Rehearsals for the meeting will start soon.

Jill noted that the Who, Us? Class had proposed having a special workshop for Council. We usually have a special workshop for Council in July for the new members. Just having another meeting will help move us forward. She will bring this up at the May P&E meeting.

Nanci thanked Felice, Barbara, and Carol for attending the meeting.

Adjournment

Motion: Upon a motion by Cathy and seconded by Anne, Council members voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 11:40 a.m.

The LLI 2021 Annual Meeting is Friday, May 14, at 9:30 a.m.

The next scheduled regular Council meeting is Monday, May 17, at 9:30 a.m..

Respectfully submitted,
Deborah Lanser
Secretary