

Report by the President (Karen Sharp) Delivered at the Annual General Meeting of Calgary Association of Lifelong Learners. 21 October 2019

- I have two comments as a preamble to the President Report. First I want to thank all of the Board members who have served with me this year. Your passion for the organization and your dedication to your responsibilities has been wonderful. CALL is so dependent on people such as you to carry out its responsibilities. Several of you are continuing for a second year (or more) in your role. And a few of you are stepping back. Melvin and Maryvonne have been active Board members for several years and are stepping back this year. In each case, they have volunteered to continue on the committee to mentor and support the board member next stepping up. Ron and Barb have completed several years on the Board – but are each stepping into a new role. We re-use and recycle that great experience.
- Next I want to remind you how far CALL has come in its short life. When we started the fall season in 2011, there were about 115 members. We are more than 10 times that now. We are over 1200, heading for 1300.
- And growth in programs has kept pace with membership
 - There are now nine topic areas for which CALL presents a speaker each of the main months of the year.
 - There are over sixty interest groups, in which members register and continue a series of learning meetings
 - And we have had two major events that do not fall within those two categories – the Climate Change Conference and the Uke Fest (which technically fell in the 2019-2010 year).
- Now, you may be aware of the growth of programs, as you see it on the website. The AGM is an opportunity to talk a bit about the business of CALL, behind the visible and valued service offerings.
- The simplest way to provide an update is to follow the structure of our strategic plan covering 4 important topics. Overall, we confirmed a commitment to the current model, year-round offerings of innovative, affordable and independent learning opportunities. We agreed on some actions to address some pressure points.
- The first major topic is Growth. We will continue to grow as new members are added and will attempt to provide sufficient programs for member involvement. We will not limit growth. Growth is good for CALL, bringing new members who become new volunteers and continue our cycle of learning. However growth brings challenges.

- One example is the volume of work handled by the treasurer, more than a 10 fold increase. Shortly there will be a request for a bookkeeper to share the load of the treasurer's work.
- Another example is communication across our wide array of activities.
- The board does not want to be an impediment to the day to day activities of the organization. However, the Board is very aware of its responsibilities, which have grown with the size of CALL, and with gaining charitable status under the CRA.
- To carry out its responsibilities, a Board must either make the decisions, or define policies and boundaries and delegate to let others make the decisions. The board is slowly travelling on a path to being less hands on and more of what is described as a policy board.
- The changes to the bylaws that were approved at last year's AGM were accepted by the Province. Those changes slimmed the number of people on the Board and shifted the creation of committees to the Board, rather than defining them in the bylaws. Now there is one director for each of our responsibilities. We know that people travel and sharing the work is only sensible so areas can be co-lead. Where there co-leaders, one is the director and one is the alternate. Even more than before work is done away from the board meeting by committees of that director, AND critically important CALL members. So when we get to the nominations time on the agenda, please remember that behind each of these directors there needs to be a committee.
- After Growth, our second area of strategic decisions was Programming. Programs will continue to run as offered by willing volunteers. We will rely on volunteer interest and will not attempt to offer a set curriculum.
 - We decided to better track those members who are not able to join popular groups, and we will try to facilitate overflow or parallel sessions. Tracking enrollment also helps us show the success of our educational programming. And it will allow us to demonstrate to the CRA that we are an educational organization. While we may have a lot of fun educating ourselves, we are allowed charitable status because we are educational, not for the fun.
 - We will further evolve the board structure to improve communication and alignment with some of our large and complex program offerings. On this topic, you will see a new position on the board – Director for special programming.
- The third area of strategic discussion was Venues. We will continue to add venues to our venue roster, and to deploy those as efficiently as possible.

Venues are our largest cost and growing as a portion of membership fees. I have a graph to show you a little later to illustrate this.

- Two of our core venues are possibly changing in cost or availability by late 2020. We will also define our evolving needs to be ready by 2020 to add even more venues to our roster.
- We explored a suggestion that CALL buy or lease a whole building to accommodate more of our programs and even be available for drop-in times. As appealing as it might be to have an expanded *home base*, the cost would prompt large increases in membership fees. We chose not to go that route.
- The independence and affordability of this current model of delivering CALL continues to make us very dependent on year round recruitment of volunteers and matching them to needed roles and tasks. This fourth major topic, the board discussed and rejected both enforced volunteering and also incentivizing volunteering through a two tier model. We decided not to do either of those things. We will continue our quest to convert *Members To Volunteers*, to make CALL's whole volunteer-based organization more sustainable. In support of this, we implemented two changes this year.
 - Melvin established an adjunct list of individuals who have been heavily involved in CALL in the past to call on for names suggestion.
 - We are also putting more effort into recruiting members for committee of the board.
 - Thirdly, in the spirit of transparency, the board decided to invite member to attend our board meetings. We plan to continue that this year. You are welcome to attend any board meeting, and we expect to advertise this for a couple of meeting in the spring. We enjoyed the visits of several members to our board meetings this year. Yes, we hope that people who come will have an interest in working on board or committees.
 - The membership committee is also planning for coffee parties for new members to start expectations on the right foot.

These 4 topics wraps up the president report. Thank you for the honour of servicing CALL as your president this year. I have great confidence in the team of volunteers who have allowed their name to stand to serve on the board for the 2019-2020 year.

Before asking for a motion and vote to accept the presidents report – do you have any questions?

