

*As approved November 13, 2024*

**Senior Scholars at Queens  
Board of Directors Minutes  
October 9, 2024**

**Board Members Present:** Jane Howard, Steve Lauer, Jack Gill, Glenn Paton, Barbara Devinney, Len Norman, Steve Gilbert, Carlos Glender, Aimee Hite, Pam Nemecek, John Koch

**Others Present:** Bill Griesmyer, Jim Gronquist, Gordon Haymond, Patty Kahle, Allison Myer-Tucker, Ken Orenbach, Kristan Smith, Nancy Stancill, Bill Thomas, Jin Wang

**Call to Order:** President Jane Howard called the meeting to order at 2 p.m.

Secretary Barbara Devinney reported a correction from Kathy Gray to draft minutes for the September 11 Board minutes to reflect that the Curriculum Committee will seek an alternate venue for PUMC’s Scout BBQ Friday once that date is known. With that correction, the minutes were approved.

**Queens University Report:** Allison Meyer-Tucker described highlights of October programs at Queens with the theme of “Democracy in US: Promoting Civil Discourse.” A democracy arts exhibit is at the Sarah Belk Gambrell Center. A Preyer Lecture Series program is scheduled on the history of the Brooklyn community, with Monique Douglas from the Brooklyn Collective. A Distinguished Leaders in Action fireside chat with Peter Browning and Dr. Will Sparks is also planned. Information will be posted on the SSQ website. The Student Engagement office is assisting with voter registration and promotion of voting.

**Nominating Committee:** Len Norman reported that the Nominating Committee met on September 30 and unanimously approved to recommend to the Board the slate of Officers and Directors for 2025. Board member Carlos Glender is recommended for Second Vice President. For the three positions for At-Large Directors with three-year terms ending in 2027, Carol Kesmodel and Alan Matthews are recommended for renewed terms, and John Romano is recommended for a new term. Len asked for a first vote on the slate at this meeting, with a second vote at the November meeting, and this was unanimously approved.

**Treasurer’s Report and Finance Committee:** Glenn Paton reported a record number of renewals year to date. From his report of October 1, the current cash position of \$5,798 is strong. \$2,500 was received in dues in September, slightly ahead of the total for comparable month of 2023. Two certificates of deposit will be renewed on October 10, the smaller one for four months and the one with \$10,000 for seven months. Another CD of \$30,000 will mature in November. There is adequate liquidity to cover expenses for the remainder of the year and the start of next year.

**Webmaster & Email Committee:** Aimee Hite will be able to make more updates to the website once the cast is removed from her hand next week. She will be meeting with a representative from the Shepherd's Center for potential web developer resources.

Bill Griesmyer acknowledged several bounced emails. Jane said the team will be meeting to prepare next Monday's email to the membership.

**Curriculum Committee:** Steve Lauer reported that all speaker slots are filled for the remainder of 2024. Kathy Gray has made significant progress in confirming speakers for 2025, and several Great Decisions speakers are confirmed. The committee discussed a possible booking of two speakers, one from the Raptor Center and one from Parrot University, which promotes adoption of birds needing rehoming. This would be a follow-up to the January presentation on bird intelligence.

Steve is also on the Wildacres Committee and would like to have a retreat program on oral history, following up on Studs Terkel and Mark Larson's oral histories, pairing Mark with someone from one of the southeastern tribes to talk about Native American oral history. Mark and Laura Little both like the idea, so this is a possibility for 2026.

**Social Committee:** Nancy Stancill described plans for the December 4 Holiday Luncheon at Maggiano's. The facility could accommodate up to 150 people. Jane will start promoting it in the weekly emails, and the committee will start accepting reservations on October 18.

Jane mentioned the Lunch Bunch has planned an outing on October 18 at Calle Sol at Apex SouthPark, which can be registered for online. A total of 31 members have registered so far for the October 22 field trip to the Sullenberger Aviation Museum.

**Marketing & Cultural Diversity Committee:** Patty Kahle reported that 13 vendors will be participating in the October 11 expo, with special thanks to Don Campbell for recruiting them. On October 4, representatives from AAUW and the League of Women Voters participated in the mini expo. She has met with representatives of the Mecklenburg Council on Aging, the local Alzheimer's Association, and the UNCC Gerontology Department for participation in future expos or as speakers.

Patty also contacted the NC Retired Governmental Employees Association to encourage their members to participate in Senior Scholars. The SSQ program schedule has been posted in the South Charlotte weekly online paper, and an article was published in the SeniorsEngage website for Charlotte. She will try to post information on a Focus Facebook page for healthcare professionals. She is also working with Aimee on updates to the website.

She asked about the possibility of making SSQ members aware of the Shepherd's Center's Adventures in Learning programs. Jane said it was previously decided that promotions of other programs would be limited to those of Queens University.

**Membership & Directory Committee:** Pam Nemecek reported 147 renewing members and 67 new members since June, for a total of 208 paid members for 2025. With 720 members for 2024, the total membership is 928. More renewals for 2025 are expected at Friday's meeting.

Pam monitors emails sent to *info@seniorscholars.net*. A persistent concern is how to sign up for Zoom access to Friday programs. She will include instructions in the upcoming Monday email to the membership on the three steps involved. There was a suggestion to number the steps on the JotForm application, and Pam will communicate that to Ben Eubanks.

**Wildacres Retreat Committee:** Steve Lauer reported that "Brain Health" is the subject for the spring retreat. One of the two speakers will be Meg Johnson of the Queens Music Therapy, and he is in touch with the UNCC Gerontology Department for a second speaker. The retreat dates are Monday, April 28, to Thursday, May 1.

Hurricane Helene damaged roads to Wildacres, but not the buildings. Following discussion of a donation to benefit the staff of Wildacres, Steve Lauer will be talking with Laura Little, who is in touch with Phil Blumenthal, to assess the need. Any recommendation for funding could be decided via email vote with Board members in advance of the November meeting.

**Wolfe Hall Setup for October 11 Meeting.** John Koch described the table layout for Friday's expo, indicating that space will be tight.

**Technical A/V Committee:** Jack Gill said the team is still using the backup projector, with no word on when the church's new projector will arrive.

He described the Executive Committee's discussion on challenges in using Zoho and DropBox and reported there was consensus to establish a Task Force to understand the two applications and consider the feasibility of consolidating into one to simplify users' lives. Steve Lauer will chair the Task Force, assisted by Jack Gill, Aimee Hite, Gordon Haymond, and Steve Gilbert.

Zoho is a customer relationship management (CRM) application used for storing speaker contacts and presentations, but probably would not be effective for storing all the other files we have which just need to be kept in cloud storage. DropBox has worked well for us although there is a question of whether we are really allowed to have multiple users accessing it. Steve Gilbert advocated for possibly getting a Team Account even though there's considerably more cost involved. The task force will research the costs and check on possible nonprofit discounts.

The task force will also look into the feasibility of storing the speaker and presentation information in DropBox instead of Zoho, for instance keeping it in an Excel spreadsheet as Kathy Gray has suggested. There is currently some duplication of data in the two programs, and we are paying \$276 per year for Zoho. There is no rush to decide, as Zoho is paid up through August 2025.

Aimee mentioned the need for training with the constant turnover in volunteers. The platforms frequently change their protocols, which add to the challenges. The SSQ DropBox subscription is now a team account that costs \$15 per user per month.

Steve Gilbert described charges for the Benchmark email marketing platform to his personal credit card and his desire to be reimbursed and to have the account charged to the SSQ credit card. Benchmark moved to a monthly charge in July, which wasn't recognized for a time as a recurring monthly charge. Aimee will change the credit card information to the SSQ account. Others with access to the Benchmark platform are Kristan Smith, Bill Griesmyer, and Chris Pouler.

During discussion of whether one person needed to oversee all the technology accounts, Aimee described the budget spreadsheet developed by Jin Wang listing all the technology accounts, their costs, when payments are due, and the volunteer responsible for each item. She shares the budget with Glenn as Treasurer. The spreadsheet identifies who the responsible user is for each software application.

Aimee noted that the Benchmark program no longer qualifies for a free account. She will add the \$420 annual cost to the spreadsheet. She will ask if paying the \$35 monthly cost annually and being a nonprofit would reduce the cost. Jin said the current designated owner of the account is Jane, as President.

**Old Business:** On the matter of avoiding copyright infringement liability for speaker presentations made available on the SSQ website, Aimee is looking into the possibility of password protection or a gateway for designated users or members. A limited number of presentations would be available to the public for marketing purposes where copyright infringement is not in question. The 1<sup>st</sup> VP as Chair of the Curriculum Committee would be responsible for approving the postings.

**New Business:**

Executive Committee meetings. Following action taken at the October 2 meeting, Executive Committee meetings will be held at the call of the chair. This will allow focus on the leadership responsibility without duplicating information presented at Board meetings. Decisions could be made via group email or Zoom chat, as needed.

Review and Update of Operating Procedures and Bylaws. Barbara is chairing an ad hoc committee with Pam and Len to recommend updates needed to the Operating Procedures and Bylaws. She encourages edits and contributions to the draft document she emailed to Board members. Jane would like to have this finalized by December.

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 13, 2024, at 2:00 p.m.**

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 3:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Barbara Devinney, Secretary