**ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**

**DATE:** 3/15/23

**TIME:** 9:00 AM

**PLACE:** Zoom Only

**MEMBERS:** Joan Barry (Z), Bill Forbes (Z), James Keevan (Z), Ken Kerber (Z), Rosemary McCarthy (Z), Charlene Nemeth (Z), Patricia Segerson (Z), Lynette White (Z)

**NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, April 19 in Testa Rm. 155 at 9:00 a.m.**

**Purpose: Increasing Membership**

**Documents:** 3/15/23 Agenda, 2/15/23 Minutes (accepted as written), March 8, 2023 30th Anniversary Activities, WISE February (2/28/23) Financial Statement, Annual Fund Donation Report (3/13/23)

**WISE Goals for 2022-2023 Academic Year**

1. Define the structure of the WISE Advisory Council.
2. Clarify metrics for tracking membership, course enrollment and participation, and any other relevant measures for monitoring the health of WISE.
3. Recruit 90% of 2021-2022 fee paying members to renew in 2022-2023.
	* Maintain membership retention at 75% while upholding a 25% rate of lapsed and new memberships (11.16.22 Minutes).
4. Recruit 15% new members.
	* Organize a brown bag lunch and encourage members to bring a friend who is not a WISE member.
5. Establish a clear direction for future course offerings.
6. Evaluate and adjust course delivery options.
	* Zoom only, classroom only, hybrid.
7. Develop a sustainable process for fulfilling technology requirements.
	* Recruit and train additional course hosts.
	* Create a pool for course hosts and fill-ins.
	* Identify incentives for volunteering to be a course host.
8. Develop a 3-year plan for the financial viability of the WISE organization.
	* Initiate annual fund campaign in November with a repeat in March.

**3/15/23 Advisory Council Recommendations**

* Preference is for the realistic budget (instead of a stretch budget) with a concentration on achieving the goal of having a total of 300 members
* Recruit new members in April (churches, senior centers, libraries, etc.).
* Include an article from the Advisory Council in the WISE Bulletin.
* Continue recruiting Zoom hosts and class assistants.
* Update Advisory Council website page and post Advisory Council minutes.
* Develop a marketing plan to capture movement from idea to action to result; create and maintain current recruiting and marketing records as a way to measure progress.
* Change Zoom host announcement to leverage the time in order to share event and marketing initiatives:
	+ and to communicate the need for new members. We need to express a sense of urgency;
	+ include an idea in each announcement as to what can be done to recruit new members.
* Structure membership fees to make it advantageous to sign up for a full year:
	+ raise half-year membership to $175; or
	+ save $10 on a full-year membership, set at $340 for FY24.
* Schedule brown bag lunches after D Session.

**Executive Director’s Report**

* WISE currently has 246 full-time equivalents according to Wild Apricot graph.
* We’ve had a few lapsed members who have renewed.
* The Executive Director will continue to follow up on lapsed members.
* A new membership campaign will begin in April with presentations to churches, senior centers, libraries, etc.
* Joe Corn has a presentation scheduled for March 23 at the North Grafton Senior Center.
* The timing of any outreach will focus on summer courses, although D Session provides opportunities to communicate to existing members 3 ways to recruit new members; this can be accomplished in the class announcements.
* Jim is now in discussion with Assumption University to acquire storage for Zoom recordings.

**Membership Discussion**

* WISE needs to be expressing a sense of urgency concerning recruitment with a focus on summer and fall courses.
* We could offer a one-time promotional, offering a discount commensurate with selected courses; Wild Apricot would need to be adjusted to reflect this.
* The Advisory Council should be regularly informing members of their meetings. This can be accomplished by writing an article every month for the WISE Bulletin.
* Also, we can publicize Council meetings on the website.
* Recruitment communications need to be consistent.
* Include in announcements 3 ways members can recruit new members. With every class announcement, we can feature one way to bring in new members.
* We can also invite a Council member to make a brief presentation before class.
* There is an advantage to having full-time memberships. If we remove the half-year membership, then WISE receives all of its tuition money up front.
* WISE should also emphasize it is more than just courses; this is demonstrated by office emails that feature events on and off campus.
* Complete development of A Taste of Worcester before summer.

**Course Delivery Option Discussion**

No discussion was conducted at this time as WISE is gathering data in Session D, which will be used for future discussions.

**Class Assistant and Zoom Hosts**

* Make the distinction between class assistant and host now that we have in-person-only classes in D Session.
* Include Instructors in the distribution of class assistant and host instructions.
* Classroom announcements can be read out loud instead of featuring them on screen.
* An appeal will be made by week’s end for Zoom hosts and class assistants.

**WISE 30th Anniversary on May 23**

* Paul Buono (and Curtis Hall) is booked for a free concert.
* Ballrooms A and B are booked as well.
* Working on a guest speaker and the itinerary.

**Curriculum Committee Report**

* Summer courses will go from June 15 to July 17.
* We currently have 5 summer courses and hope to have 10.
	+ Paul Buono on Zoom
	+ Martha Chiarchiaro on Zoom on Tuesday and Thursday
	+ Helen Whall in person
	+ Rick Hendra 2-session in-person course
* Rick Hendra has withdrawn his course from Session D and is now translating it into a 2-session summer course.
* Joan Barry and Joe Corn will discuss a possible course at Tower Hill.
* We are looking to develop a fall course at the Hanover Theatre.
* Sondy Padow is looking into possible courses at the Historical Museum.

**Finance Committee Report**

The Executive Director submitted two draft budgets, one with a significant loss from operations and one at break even. He asked the Council, in advance of the Finance Committee seeing either draft, what their preference was for approaching the FY24 budget. Several of the Council members suggested the most realistic version should be used. There continues to be outstanding questions with regard to both submissions which will be pursued in advance of the Finance Committee meeting next week.

* Membership revenue increased by $2,475 between January and February 2023.
* An additional $1,205 in donations were processed in February, achieving only 62% of the annual goal for this nine month period.
* If we gain $5000 for summer courses, WISE will have a $29,000 loss.
* WISE is not on a sustainable path; there is a need to develop a 2-to-4-year profitability plan.