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# The Canadian Heritage Arts Society

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On Saturday, June 22, a lively group of faculty, donors, volunteers, staff, present and former board members and Founders met at the Canadian College of Performing Arts, to discuss the future of the College and the Canadian Heritage Arts Society (CHAS).

The afternoon was skillfully facilitated by Rebecca Hass, who has been a faculty member at CCPA and presently works at Pacific Opera Victoria. We are very grateful to Rebecca for sharing her time and expertise with us.

Attendees moved around among four discussion tables during the session. Topics covered included governance, philanthropy and advocacy, community engagement, facilities and miscellaneous other topics that were raised by participants.

For those of you who were able to attend, thank you for your enthusiastic participation and your commitment to CHAS and the College. If you couldn't be with us last month but would like to know more about the conversations that took place, summaries of each of the "table topics" are attached.

Many people, including a large number of alumni, completed the online survey that was distributed before the event. The information collected through the survey is a rich resource and provides us with significant insights on many issues affecting the College. Thanks to everyone who took time to respond to the survey.

This was the first time that the Canadian Heritage Arts Society had hosted a Town Hall and we learned a lot from the experience. The transcripts of our collective conversations will be used to inform future decision-making and will be carefully considered during our annual Board Retreat in August.

If you have comments to make on the summaries, or on the event itself, we would love to hear from you.

In the meantime, best wishes for a happy summer and we look forward to seeing you next season. It's going to be a great one!

Barbara Greeniaus  
Board Chair



## **TOWN HALL REPORT** June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019

### GOVERNANCE

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The following 2 issues were discussed at the Governance Table (both of which arose from discussions at CHAS's last AGM):

**1) Should CHAS's purposes in its constitution be amended to include the word**

**"heritage"?** There was consensus that there was no pressing need to amend CHAS's purposes in its constitution to include the word "heritage". While the word "heritage" does appear in CHAS's name due to its early programs like Experience Canada (which were focused on Canada's cultural heritage), the lack of any explicit reference to "heritage" in its purposes does not seem to be creating any practical problems today. It was also pointed out that language in the current purposes such as "to preserve and promote arts and culture" are broad and general and should allow CHAS to continue to draw on and celebrate Canadian heritage in its programming (and apply for heritage-related grants) consistent with its name.

**2) Who should be members of CHAS?** There was consensus that there were various issues associated with the current membership rules set out in CHAS's bylaws and that at least some of those rules ought to be changed. There was not, however, consensus on what the rules ought to be changed to. There seemed to be substantial agreement that the concepts of having non-voting members and/or imposing membership dues were ideas worth exploring to streamline membership. CCPA students, for example, could be made non-voting members, where they would receive all members communications and could attend general meetings if they wished but would not have the right to vote. There was divided opinion on whether faculty and staff should be voting members, with some saying they should be as they bring an important and unique perspective to CHAS governance while others expressed concern about the potential conflict of interests of those groups when acting as members as well as the potential for them to act as a powerful voting bloc. If membership dues are imposed (there is authority to do so in the current bylaws), it was suggested they be a low amount (such as \$10 or 20) and even then that consideration be given to waiving the dues for certain members such as first year alumni (if alumni are to continue to be voting members).

### FACILITIES

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The Facilities table came away with questions summed up by "it's a chicken and egg sort of thing", the answers depending on variables such as enrollment numbers, long term lease, partnerships, location.

Wanting to keep a high percentage of graduates in the industry the College enrollment should not increase past what the industry can sustain. Having more students helps the budget but if there aren't enough jobs for alumni, enrollment will decline. Small and elite might be the goal.

If the magic number is 70-75 students, the space at St Mary's is adequate but not in its current condition. There isn't any practice or private space, there is competition for studios, and administrative space is tight, as is storage. The architectural charette resolves many of the current trouble spots and through careful scheduling it should be possible to do much of the restructuring without relocating for the construction period.

A variable, as long as we are tenants, is the stability of the landlord. The Anglican diocese may keep the property as an income stream or they may decide to liquidate the asset. With an estimate of at least \$5M to renovate St Mary's, feasibility requires a significantly long lease; 10 years would be a bare minimum. The incumbent worship leader is committed to our partnership but the College shouldn't make concrete plans based on a person who is not the decision maker.

Sharing a building with other performance organizations might result in competition for practice and performance spaces while our current partners are not similar and don't compete for space or time. If CHAS owned a building one or more mortgage-helper partners would be essential.

Having partners seems to be a good idea for programming as well as costs. Exploring curriculum options with VCM, Camosun, UVic and Royal Roads can increase our visibility and give our students access to the services of larger institutions.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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Community Engagement at the College should work to raise brand recognition, find creative partnerships that offer reciprocal learning, and put the College in front of new audiences. It should engage audience, engage students (prospective & current), engage donors, and engage neighbors. We must strive to push beyond partnership boundaries of "traditional performing arts", geographic boundaries of Oak and Victoria, and language boundary of English. We must celebrate and support diversity, and make our spaces accessible to audience and students (mobility/sight/hearing accessible).

Biggest challenges are transportation (audience's to College, alumni/students to spaces - bus partnership?), and administrative capacity & infrastructure limitations, eventually will need a full-time dedicated position.

It's worth considering if CHAS logo should be used on any programming or if this confuses things, and instead focus the general public on the work and mission of the College, knowing that community work is also about our alumni.

## ADVOCACY & PHILANTHROPY

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The most reoccurring theme of the table discussions seemed to be better needed engagement with donors and volunteers. The use of Third-party fundraising, such as a local clubs using their fundraisers to raise funds for the college. The possibility of using volunteers to create a larger fundraising group, such as the Friends of the Museum model used at the Royal BC Museum was also brought up.

As for donor engagement, the common theme was needing to keep donors energized. The best advocates for the college are the students, their emotional experiences, sharing their stories with the community will interest donors and can set the organization apart from other “arts” organizations in town. People who are “touched” by us are more likely to support us.

Ideas to explore:

- Vancouver Playhouse’s most successful events were breakfast events
- Local parades and night markets are a way to increase local visibility, preferably with small performances
- Fluevog Event
- An event similar to Ballet Victoria’s David Black’s house event
- Include a “opt-In Philanthropy fee” to ticket pricing ie. Would you like to add \$2.00 to support the student food bank?

## OPEN TABLE

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Although some participants came to the Open Table to continue conversations from their previous table (mostly membership), some other topics were raised.

The most significant discussions were about providing support services to students. The importance of health services; support for students with counseling services; information on transportation; and housing. The possibility of involving students through a Students’ Society was raised. It was also suggested that a summer student could be tasked with creation of a brochure, listing community resources for the kinds of services that students require.

A partnership with Camosun College was proposed, allowing our students to benefit from Camosun’s existing student services. The possibility of becoming a degree-granting institution (through a partnership) was discussed, as was the importance of transferability of credits with Capilano and Douglas. The discussion also touched on the importance of students getting more experience outside of CCPA through internships with local theatres.