Poetry Society of Colorado

March 21, 2021

Greetings Poetry Society of Colorado members.

Introduction to the Poetry Society of Colorado Strategic Planning Process

The PSC Board values each of your opinions and ideas about the organization's future as we cross into our second century. The board of directors of PSC endeavors to engage in an inclusive and interactive process of developing a strategic plan for the organization. The process is expected to continue through much of 2021, although there is no deadline for its completion.

A working subtitle for the document is "Vision for Our Second Century."

This process will take time, but it will be time well utilized. As the next several months go by, there will be multiple opportunities for all members to participate, review drafts of documents, ask and answer questions, and provide feedback. Everyone's participation is strongly encouraged and genuinely valued.

Process Overview

The process will be divided into phases, which are described briefly below:

**Phase I: Aspirations**. Gain a general sense of what the organization would like to aspire toward in the years ahead. This will be done by asking a series of general, open-ended questions and aggregating the results into forward-looking, aspirational statements. This phase will also include a "SWOT Analysis," which stands for "Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats." Competing and returning this questionnaire are both parts of Phase I of the process.

**Phase II: Goals.** Draft and refine goals that work toward the aspirations. These should be clearly-stated and generally outline how each aspiration will be achieved. Draft goals will be presented to the members for feedback and refinement.

**Phase III: Action Plans.** This is where the planning process gets more granular by articulating estimated timelines, people needed, resource expectations, possible partners, etc. Action Plans will also be developed in close partnership with the membership (and committees, as appropriate) and will be refined over the course of time.

**Phase IV: Finalize and adopt the PSC Strategic Plan.** This may be a multi-step process, including reviewing and refining drafts, and ultimately presenting the document to the membership for a vote to adopt the document.

**Phase V. Implementation.** This will be done in accordance with the guidelines developed and adopted in the Strategic Planning document. Actual implementation steps may be modified as appropriate, of course.

**A Few Things to Keep In Mind**

1. The Mission Statement of the Poetry Society of Colorado is as follows:

PSC's mission is to promote the study, writing, and performance of poetry in Colorado by offering a wide range of workshops and events throughout the year.

1. This is the first time that PSC has done something like this, to the best of our knowledge. Although the path toward its accomplishment is fairly clear, please know that some adjustments may be made along the way.
2. There is no target date for the Plan. This is not a "PSC 2030 Plan" or any other date. It is aspirational and forward-looking in an ongoing fashion. It is not the sort of document that states what we will be by a particular year.
3. This is the process of developing a guidance document that will be used to shape and influence our actions moving forward, not a blueprint stating exactly what will happen and when.
4. Not every comment, wish, or desire will be incorporated into the final document. The idea is that the Plan will be a written reflection of the aggregated vision of the organization. As such, specific ideas will need to be merged with others, and predominant themes will be expressed.
5. The Plan will be a dynamic, flexible document. Over the course of time, it can and should be reviewed, amended, and even re-written entirely on occasion.
6. The PSC Strategic Plan will in no way supplant the bylaws of the organization. It should, however, serve as a guide to how new bylaws are written in the future and how existing bylaws are modified over the course of time.

Instructions

Should you choose to participate (and we most eagerly hope that everyone does!), please take your time to thoughtfully answer as many of the questions below as you would like. Expound on your ideas, share your aspirations for the organization, and outline your vision for what the Poetry Society of Colorado could become in the years ahead.

We ask that all responses to this questionnaire to be returned to Martin Postma no later than *Friday, April 16, 2021*. Please send them as a MS Word document attached to an email to the following address: rotarymartin@gmail.com If you need more time than this, please let Martin know when you anticipate being able to complete your responses. You are also welcome to contact him with any questions or ideas that you may have about the process.

Questions

Please take some time to respond to the questions below. They are intentionally open-ended and flexible. The questions are designed to elicit your ideas for what the Poetry Society of Colorado could be in the future. If you have ideas that do not apparently have a place beneath any of the questions, you are strongly encouraged to share them anyway. The last question invites all perspectives, ideas, and aspirations to be expressed.

There is no obligation to answer every question, and there is no limit on the length of replies.

Question Group I: SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)

The idea of a SWOT Analysis is to assess an organization's current status and its anticipated abilities and constraints associated with moving forward. Strengths and Weaknesses are generally current-focused items, whereas Opportunities and Threats are more commonly forward-looking elements. The completed SWOT Analysis offers a “snapshot” of key ways that we see our own organization and is able to serve as a baseline of understanding moving forward.

1. Strengths. From your perspective, what is PSC good at, where do we excel, and what traditions serve us best? How does PSC stand out from other organizations?
2. Weaknesses. Please share ways that you think PSC can improve. What can we do better?
3. Opportunities. What are PSC's best prospects moving forward? In what ways can we enhance and expand the accomplishment of our mission?
4. Threats. What do you see as limitations to PSC's ability to advance in the years ahead? What significant challenges do you see for the organization in the years ahead?

Question Group 2: Internal Focus

1. In what ways would you like to see the PSC's meetings change over time?
2. Given the experience we have had over the past year meeting remotely due to the Covid-19 pandemic, what thoughts do you have about the format of meetings once the society can function normally (in-person) again?
3. How can the PSC better engage its members?
4. Do you envision a different approach to contests? If so, please explain.
5. How could future poetry workshops be improved?
6. Currently, the PSC exists on a subsistence budget, bringing approximately the same as it spends in a typical year. What, if any, financial aspirations do you envision for the organization?
7. In what ways could the PSC enhance the social experience of its members?
8. Do you envision a better way for PSC meetings to be conducted?
9. Do you wish to see PSC host/organize meetings or other events for members (and guests or potential partners) in addition to the regular monthly meetings? If so, what sorts of things would you like to see? What would be necessary for the organization to sustainably support such activities?
10. In what ways do you think PSC should modernize or update its image, practices, and/or programs?

Question Group 3: External Focus

1. As a Colorado nonprofit organization with the word "Colorado" in its title, how can PSC do a better job of engaging people from all parts of the state and all components of society?
2. Do you envision PSC building relationships with other literary organizations? If so, for what purposes?
3. What, if any, relationships do you envision PSC building with colleges and universities – and for what purposes?
4. Do you envision PSC becoming an organization that actively reaches out to non-literary organizations (service clubs, community recreation facilities, scouts, churches, active adult centers, other types of artistic groups) to build relationships and promote writing and sharing of poetry to the general public? Please elaborate on how such relationships might be built and supported.
5. What thoughts do you have about PSC's future engagement with youth?
6. In regard to the previous four questions (16-19), what would it take for PSC to become an organization that has a membership willing to dedicate time, talent, and resources necessary to support the relationships/partnerships that you envision?
7. What ideas do you have about PSC's future membership? Would you like to see membership grow substantially?
8. In what ways can and should PSC change to attract and welcome a membership which is more representative of Colorado’s population?

Question Group 4: Big Ideas

1. If PSC were to become the recipient of a substantial financial gift, $20,000 or more, for example, what ideas do you have for PSC to utilize those funds? How would your response be different if the amount were $200,000+?
2. Do you envision PSC hosting an annual conference, festival, or other event? If yes, what would it take for the organization to build its capacity to be able to do something like this?
3. In your opinion, why do we do what we do? What drives us to gather, share, and learn together? What inspires the members of PSC? What special “things” do we bring that make us unique?
4. As you read the Mission Statement of the Poetry Society of Colorado (reprinted above), what thoughts do you have about its adequacy and appropriateness for the organization moving forward?
5. What other ideas do you have about the future of the Poetry Society of Colorado?