

## *CFAR Society Minutes – December 1, 2005*

**Location:** Carriage House Inn, Calgary, Alberta

This was the inaugural meeting of CFAR, a Society of front-line liaison professionals. It represented the culmination of considerable effort following a vote on Sept. 30, 2004 when 40+ potential members voted to form an association.

The evening began at 4 p.m., and the first hour was used for registration and networking by attendees.

Craig Barraclough, acting manager for the Society called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. and Larry Veilleux of Golder Associates agreed to take minutes.

### **Background:**

Craig began with reminding the attendees about how we got to this point and reviewed the objects of the Society. The idea of a Society first originated with the EDGE group (an industry/gov't discussion group that has been meeting since the late 70's). EDGE members sponsored a seminar in September 2004, and 40+ attendees and guests voted unanimously to form some type of association. The reasons for this were to increase the credibility of the profession, assist members on-the-job through training and discussions on relevant topics, and ultimately increase their area of influence. By creating more credibility for the profession, we also hope to attract more young people to consider a career in Aboriginal Liaison work. These areas are now part of the 'objects' of the Society's application.

### **Need for Society Structure:**

The reasons why we needed a Society, its related discipline, and its by-laws were also discussed. Specifically, Craig reminded members that once we begin collecting fees, have a need to establish a bank account and a name; we will have potential liability, and therefore need a certain structure for the organization. By-laws will likely never be looked at unless a problem arises among members.

### **Initial sponsors:**

TransCanada, BP Canada, EnCana and Anedarko provided the sponsorship funds to help Craig do the initial work for the formation of the Society.

### **Interim Board:**

Several members present, and some not present who had indicated a willingness to stand as a Board member, were then nominated and elected to the interim Board. These are:

Art Cunningham - TransCanada	Rob Barber - Alberta EUB
Martha Kasal - AlPac	Michael Reid - Talisman
Kuni Albert - Golder	Bea Schadeck - Devon Canada
Larry Veilleux - Golder	Janet Janvier - EnCana
Cheryl Savoie - Alexander FN	

This Board will sit until the first AGM, which must be within 60 days of our fiscal year-end (March 31<sup>st</sup> – per by-laws). At the AGM, Board members (new or existing) will be elected for a two-year term.

**Survey results:**

Craig then reviewed the summary results of the surveys received by potential members. Most of the responses were similar, so don't require any changes. However, some areas require further consideration by the Board. It was agreed Board members (and any other members who wanted to) would submit comments to Craig in preparation for the first Board meeting (Dec 15<sup>th</sup> at Golder's office in Calgary).

**Question #1 and #2** asked about the name for the Society. Most members liked the acronym of CFAR (as in visioning), however some didn't like the idea of Centre. It was agreed to address this with the interim Board. Making the Society national was also discussed, but it was agreed we should get established in Alberta before trying to expand. Being registered in Alberta does not prevent members joining from other parts of Canada, but does minimize the initial legal requirements.

**Question #3 and #4** talked about the 'objects' of the Society. Everyone was supportive of the objects as written...both the survey respondents and members present at the meeting.

**Question #5** discussed membership fees. 50% of survey respondents supported annual fees of about \$250, while another 30% wanted smaller annual fees with per-meeting charges of about \$30-50. There was also discussion of Corporate and Associate fees, as well as non-profit or community/student fees. It was agreed to turn this item over to the interim Board.

**Question #6** dealt with managing costs. It was agreed the Society would try and use member facilities to keep costs down. This would include meeting rooms, light refreshments and possibly assistance such as office help (photocopying, typing, etc). Corporate sponsorships were also discussed. While this is a good idea to help kick-start the Society (a Gov't grant may also be a good idea), it was agreed the long-term objective of the Society should be self-financing through membership fees and other means of creating funds (e.g., possibly a raffle).

**Question #7** referred to the size of the Board and Quorum. It was agreed the Board should be at least five (5) people and the Quorum should be three (3) people, as per the draft by-laws.

**Question #8** asked who would be willing to stand for nomination, which is now completed.

**Question #9** asked how frequently we should have meetings. 90% said at least semi-annual or quarterly, and having an annual conference and review (likely around the AGM date) was also supported.

**Question #10** referred to minimum number of attendees to confirm a meeting. It was agreed that meetings would only be held when a minimum of 16 members committed to attend.

**Question #11** asked for future topics of interest for meetings. There were variations on the theme, but most could be put into one of the following categories (in random order):

- Best practises and success stories
- Consultation guidelines and Government policy.
- Legal updates and related issues (such as Métis rights).
- Credibility, training, and accreditation related topics
- Community capacity-building and business opportunities.

**Question #12** dealt with how members might be willing to assist the Society. Most agreed to assist in researching or arranging a meeting topic or guest speaker, and assisting in communicating with members. This will be an area for the Board to delegate some member resources (see Board priorities, #4).

**Question #13** asked if members supported the draft by-laws. A few felt reluctant to have a Society, however 85% supported the by-laws as written.

The last question asked members if they had any other items they wanted discussed or ideas to consider. Responses included the following:

1. Have a periodic newsletter for members.
2. Have an annual conference, including an annual review of the perceived performance of the Society.
3. Ensure we identify the clear benefits of membership and potential accreditation.
4. Vary the location of meetings, as a minimum between Edmonton and Calgary, but hopefully elsewhere, such as Fort McMurray or Grand Prairie – as long as there are 16 committed members attending.

**Next steps:**

After another short break for networking, the interim Board and remaining members met with Craig to discuss next steps and had some discussions around the intent of the Society. It was agreed the unique purpose of this Society was based on helping an individual increase their effectiveness and credibility through sharing/networking with the other professionals and attending meetings with expert speakers on focused topics or development (personal training) areas. Whether representing a community, industry or the government, all front-line liaison professionals face very similar challenges, so it is up to us to understand that and help each other resolve those challenges. While the group may be somewhat resource-company driven at the moment, (as those companies tend to put more effort into this area, and have greater contact with the more remote First Nation communities) it is not intended to become another CAPP-type organization. It must include a strong cross-section of community-based professionals to be successful, and members must all work at ensuring political agendas don't get in the way of good networking.

Cheryl Savoie indicated that she was co-ordinating a F.N. Economic Development Officers' conference at the grassroots level, and there may be a good opportunity to try and involve the Society.

**Future accreditation and training steps:**

Other discussions covered possible use of existing training venues and curricula, and it was agreed we weren't going to re-invent the wheel if there are existing tools meeting our needs. This could include Native Studies at the University, CANDO courses, etc.

**Board priorities:**

The priorities of the interim Board were outlined, including:

1. Finalizing the Society name. At this point, after some discussion, the members voted to call the Society the **CIRCLE FOR ABORIGINAL RELATIONS**, and thus keep the **CFAR** acronym. Board members will sign the application Dec 15<sup>th</sup> to register the Society's name.

**Board priorities cont'd:**

2. Need to elect people into officer positions (e.g., Chair/Vice-chair, Secretary, Treasurer) to manage various aspects of the workload.
3. Craig advised he was prepared to be the Manager of the Society, but felt it required someone who had an incentive to ensure activities didn't get replaced by other priorities. Therefore he is prepared to offer his services for a discounted rate of \$400/day (\$50/hr.).
4. The Board needs to focus on the following priority areas:
  - Memberships
  - Finalizing survey items (e.g. membership fee structure)
  - Communicating with members (e.g., e-mail, newsletter)
  - Fundraising
  - Marketing, i.e., promoting the Society
  - Accreditation efforts (probably longer term)
  - Creating a mission statement and/or clearly defined benefits of having Society

**Other member comments:**

- Members need to be committed, particularly at this stage to ensure we achieve results in an appropriate time frame.
- The early stage will require an investment of time.
- The Board needs to get to know each other, learn to work together.
- The Society may want to look at a Web site and/or data base in the future.

The current financial situation will be better known in a few days, once the bills are in, however it is estimated there should be about \$1,200 - \$1,500 in the bank as a result of TransCanada's generous sponsorship of \$2,000.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:15 with a commitment by Board members to provide Craig with feedback on some of the survey items prior to the next Board meeting at Golder Associates Ltd.

***Next meeting: December 15<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. – Golder Associates Ltd.- room location to be confirmed. Address: 940 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW Calgary.***

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***Minutes prepared and submitted by:***

***Craig Barraclough***

***Acting Manager CFAR Society***

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