



*ANNUAL*

*REPORT*

**MAY 17, 2023**



## ***PRESIDENT'S REPORT***

The past year was especially challenging for your Board of Directors. Meetings with the University of Alberta Faculty of Extension (now Continuing Education) held in May to September 2022 revealed that a partnership agreement to continue to hold ELLA's spring session on campus was being affected by major changes to the university budget and structure but we hoped would eventually be updated and signed. In October we were notified that the University of Alberta would not be renewing the partnership agreement. Thanks to the advocacy of the Board and many other members of ELLA, the University of Alberta agreed to make rooms available for Spring Session 2023, albeit on a rental basis. We would like to complement the U of A Facilities staff for their cooperation and responsiveness during the planning for this year's spring session. Kudos to the ELLA Program Implementation Committee for all of their extra work under short time frames.

Given the uncertainty and increasing costs that will be associated with access to space in future years, the Board opened up discussions with other potential partners. We were pleased to find that several of these partners are very interested in working with ELLA on areas of mutual interest beyond just access to space. These ideas will be discussed further in a strategic planning session in June 2023.

The learnings of the past few years led the Board to make a decision to continue to offer two main sessions per year - an online session starting in January and the traditional spring session in May. Working toward two sessions per year makes planning easier and appears to be our maximum volunteer capacity. Many members told us they value the opportunity to attend in the comfort of their homes, wherever that home may be. A successful Winter Session was welcomed by ....attendees.

I can assure you that we listen carefully to our members. In response to calls for more flexibility in pricing and number of courses at Spring Session, we introduced a new approach. Registrants may choose a bundle of two, three or four courses at different price points for each bundle, with the best value being the four course bundle. Since this is the first year we have had to pay for all classrooms and other spaces, this approach was both a financial challenge and risk to ELLA but we hope that the flexibility will be appealing to increased numbers of attendees. We look forward to your feedback on this change.

This past year, the Board made a decision to strengthen our accountability and efficiency by contracting with a Bookkeeper. After conducting a rigorous recruitment process we were pleased to welcome Shirley Zylstra to the position. We also are

completing the process of developing manuals for each committee with another specialized contractor.

I would like to acknowledge and thank those members who made donations to ELLA in 2022-23. Your belief in our mission is gratifying.

Most of all, I would like to thank my fellow board members who stepped up to support and sustain ELLA and make it an even better organization during a challenging year. Our committee chairs and members and session volunteers are essential to our ongoing success and once again, they did a wonderful job. Please consider becoming a volunteer - there are many rewarding ways to contribute!

It has been an honour to serve as your President and be part of this great team.

**Lynne Mansell**

President

## ***TREASURER'S REPORT***

ELLA is a not-for-profit association registered under the Alberta Societies Act, and is a registered charity recognized by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). ELLA is up-to-date regarding its statutory reporting to the CRA in order to sustain its charitable status. ELLA observes a fiscal year end date of September 30th.

### Discussion regarding the Fiscal Year period Oct 01, 2021 to Sept 30<sup>th</sup> 2022 (FY '21-'22)

The principal activities of ELLA during this fiscal year were to host:

- the 2021 Fall Online session of 22 courses during the period: Oct. 4<sup>th</sup> – Nov. 26<sup>th</sup> 2021
- the 2022 Winter Online session of 19 courses during the period: Jan. 17<sup>th</sup> – March 11<sup>th</sup> 2022.
- the 2022 Spring In-Person Session of 33 courses during the period May 2<sup>nd</sup> – May 20<sup>th</sup> 2022

### Highlights

- At October 1<sup>st</sup> 2021, the **net assets** of ELLA were \$267,013, and one year later (Sept 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022) were substantially unchanged, at \$270,752, (as cash or GIC's) reflecting ELLA's operating goal to break-even year over year.
- **Total revenues** for this fiscal period were \$176,237, up from \$158,089 the prior year.

- 906 persons purchased **memberships** in FY '21-'22, up from 853 the previous fiscal year (but still modestly short of the 974 memberships sold in FY '19-'20).
- **Donations** received in FY '21-'22 were \$1,826, down from \$4,140 for the prior year. There is no particular explanation for this, as ELLA was a passive solicitor of donations in both years.
- ELLA received \$16,500 in FY '21-'22 as the second year and final installment of the City of Edmonton Community Investment **Grant**. The funds were applied to offset the costs of operations.
- An audit of the Sept 30<sup>th</sup> 2022 financial statements was performed in November 2022 by duly appointed ELLA members. The auditors reported that the statements fairly and accurately represented the financial affairs of ELLA at fiscal year end. The **auditors' report** was submitted to the Board, and a motion-to-accept by the Board was made and carried at the December 12<sup>th</sup> 2022 board meeting.

During this fiscal year, the Finance Committee, under the co-ordination of ELLA's Treasurer, Debbi Wallace, included Connie Fu, Riz Suleman, and Jimm Valentinsen.

#### Discussion regarding the fiscal year 2022-23 to date.

The principal activities of ELLA during this fiscal year to-date have been to host:

- the 2023 Winter Online session; 21 courses offered, and 19 courses ran during the period: Jan. 16<sup>th</sup> – March 10<sup>th</sup> 2023.
- the 2023 Spring In-Person Session of 45 courses offered during the period May 1 – May 19<sup>th</sup> 2022

#### Highlights

- In the October – December 2022 time period, the Treasurer and Finance Committee modus operandi, and the people involved, substantially transitioned, as per the plan indicated at the last Annual General Meeting. As of November 1<sup>st</sup>, ELLA engaged a part time bookkeeper, as a paid contract position, to perform the routine accounting and reporting functions previously performed by the Finance Committee. A new treasurer was appointed, succeeding the retiring Debbi Wallace, although Debbi has graciously agreed to remain available in an advisory role. The bookkeeper has deep experience with ELLA in a variety of financial and other roles, making ELLA's transition very smooth to the new financial management framework.
- Choosing Feb 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 as a good observation date in the interlude between Winter and Spring Session, at that time:

- operating surplus year-to-date (YTD), ie net of liabilities, was \$9,061
  - donations YTD were \$3,440
  - membership revenues YTD were \$15,850 (634 members)
- Financial Planning Considerations as at Feb 28<sup>th</sup> 2023
  - ELLA aims for a net operating surplus at Sept 30<sup>th</sup> 2023 to be \$0
  - No grant funds expected in this Fiscal Year for use to offset operating costs.
  - U of A facility rental costs for Spring Session will increase by \$10,000 this year, and are likely to rise further at this rate for the next several years.

Respectfully submitted,

**Richard Brommeland**

Treasurer

[treasurer1@my-ella.com](mailto:treasurer1@my-ella.com)

## ***BOARD RECRUITMENT & DEVELOPMENT***

### Board Structure

The Board of Directors consists of ten Board members including: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer (the Board Executive), Past President, and five members who serve as Chairs of key committees. These are Operations (formerly two committees, Administration and Information Technology), Marketing/Communications, Program Development, Program Implementation, and Volunteer Recruitment and Recognition. (The Board Recruitment and Development Committee is chaired by the Vice-President).

- Vice Chairs are in place for committees
- Purpose and Function descriptions and Terms of Reference are in place
- A Code of Conduct for Directors and Committee Members is in use

### Board Recruitment

A new Treasurer (Richard Brommeland) was appointed in fall 2022. The past Treasurer, Debbi Wallace, has been extremely helpful with continuity and transition.

Our Secretary was unfortunately unable to continue on the Board due to family issues, and her resignation was reluctantly accepted this spring. Many thanks to Pam Corkery

for her many invaluable contributions to ELLA. We are fortunate to have the services of Gertie Dean (familiar to you as a recent Past President) as Interim Secretary.

We have two vacant positions as of this report, Vice-President and Secretary.

### Board Development

There is a strategic planning meeting scheduled for Wednesday June 14 2023. The Board and some selected guests will attend. We will use the services of an experienced ELLA member as facilitator.

As President Lynne Mansell has outlined, there are significant challenges (as well as opportunities) to be addressed as our organization moves forward.

### ***2023/2024 Board of Directors***

The following slate for the Board of Directors for ELLA 2023/2024 is presented for approval:

President - Steve Chambers

Vice President - (vacant)

Treasurer - Richard Brommeland

Secretary - (vacant)

Past President - Lynne Mansell

Operations - Dianne Eustace

Marketing/Communications - Deborah Forst

Program Development - Harry Wagner

Program Implementation - Lynne Moulton

Volunteer Recruitment and Recognition - Fran Galbraith

Respectfully submitted,

**Steve Chambers**

Vice President and Chair, Board Recruitment and Development

**MARKETING/COMMUNICATIONS**

The Marketing and Communications Committee increases awareness of the ELLA organization and the high caliber educational opportunities that we offer. Our target audience is adults 50 years plus.

Goal: To increase awareness of ELLA, and awareness and attendance at ELLA Spring Session and winter online sessions.

Marketing Initiatives

ELLA and Spring Session were promoted as follows:

- Sage Guide, Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council Directory and newsletters, Alberta Seniors Retirement Guide, Alberta Prime Time, ELLA Newsletters, Edmonton and area Libraries, over 80 groups and organizations who provide seniors programming in the Edmonton area and over 40 Community League Newsletters.
- ELLA Website – <https://www.my-ella.com>
- Postcards and Posters were distributed throughout the City at various businesses and organizations
- Paid Advertising
- CBC Radio and traditional media bulletin boards
- Social Media – twitter, facebook, Instagram – posts and advertising campaigns
- Internal – email blasts and newsletters to past and current membership
- Bridge Banners
- Bountiful and Old Strathcona Markets and numerous in-person presentations to various groups

Thank you to all the Marketing Committee members (and other volunteers) who contribute their time, skills, and talents.

Respectfully submitted,

**Deborah Forst**

Chair, Marketing and Communications

## ***OPERATIONS***

With the approval of the membership at last year's Annual General Meeting, the Administration and IT Committees merged into one unit: the Operations Committee. It has been an engaging task to create one manual from the work that has been done by two committees. Another significant change was the dissociation of ELLA from the University of Alberta. Operations successfully found new ways for our members to communicate with a new email address and a new telephone number.

The use of Google Workspace continued to expand. Operations created and updated Google forms for use by the Program Development and Volunteer Committees. Google Jamboards were created and updated to show how each of the ELLA committees are involved in the process of offering online and in person courses to its members. To allow art students to share their work with the instructor and fellow classmates, the team created an account with Artsonia, an online repository of student art. The possibility of creating an ELLA YouTube Channel is also being explored.

A number of volunteers from both committees stepped down from their roles because of the changes that occurred and those remained have worked very hard to upload products for sale on the website, monitor our new email ([support@my-ella.com](mailto:support@my-ella.com)) and our new web-based telephone (825-901-0515), and respond to concerns from our customers.

The Operations team and the website developer created a timeline and framework for Spring Session registration but, despite best of efforts, the system froze. However, after several hours of troubleshooting, the website successfully registered more than 250 people that day.

I would like to once again offer a heartfelt thank you to everyone on the Operations team for their dedication, patience, and diligence.

Respectfully submitted

**Dianne Eustace**

Chair, Operations Committee

## ***PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE***

The Program Development Committee has had an active and productive year. We did experience some delays resulting from a number of post-Covid challenges in ensuring appropriate space was still available and accessible for the traditional Spring session as well as some uncertainty about the size of session to plan for. However, sixty-six



courses, each with a fabulous instructor, have been recruited since last summer. Twenty-one courses were presented during the Winter 2023 online session which ran from January to March. Forty-five courses were planned for an in-person Spring 2023 session. The winter online sessions were very successful with over 90% of members rating the sessions as good or very good.

The work of the PDC starts in June immediately following the Spring session. Committees in Humanities, Science, Wellness and Leisure and Fine Arts and Art Instruction work together to use information gathered from ELLA members to reach out to instructors and develop courses for the ELLA membership. In addition, a committee works to put together a series of noon hour presentations on a wide range of topics that run during both the online and in person sessions. PDC depends on suggestions and ideas from membership and we are never disappointed in the wide variety of ideas and suggestions to work on.

The evaluation procedures and processes have resulted in much more detailed information collection. The evaluations committee upgraded or re-worked their forms and processes in order to gather the additional information we felt we needed. The evaluation information is now used not only by the subcommittees to inform course and instructor selection but is now also used by the board in decision making regarding the sessions themselves as well as providing important feedback to instructors.

Noon Hour Programs (NHP) have been offered free of charge to the ELLA membership at large as part of the ELLA membership benefits. A decision to offer all NHP via Zoom increased accessibility. Eight presentations were offered on Fridays during the Winter session and a further eight during the Spring in person session offering a wide variety of speakers and topics.

ELLA is extremely grateful to the many creative and dedicated volunteers who served on the sub-committees of the Program Development Committee. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude! Program chairs for 2022-23 were Gay Maddin - Humanities, Lynne Lechelt - Science, Karen Caesar - Wellness and Leisure, Sandra Tulloch - Fine Arts and Fine Art Instruction, Judy Loutit - Noon Hour Programming and Lynne Moulton - Program Implementation and Evaluation. These committees work together to identify instructors, develop programs with them and provide them with feedback from participants. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude!

**Harry Wagner**  
Chair, Program Development

**Gay Maddin**

Vice-Chair, Program Development

***PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION***

For the Program Implementation Committee, whether it is the in-person or online programming, there are always new challenges to learn from, along with great colleagues who collectively roll up those sleeves to *get the wheels under the courses*.

Spring Session 2022 saw ELLA return to delivering an in-person session. Planning a session with COVID looking over one's shoulder was humbling. There was a lighter number of ELLA courses on offer, with only the Noon Hour program and AGM to make up the other activities. But there was a first as the Noon Hour presentations were delivered via Zoom Meeting. A remote presenter and audience, with a 'live' gathering along with members viewing online within the Education Centre and Enterprise Square.

Winter Session 2023 was again a combination of courses and a Noon Hour program; all being delivered using Zoom Meeting. Although technical issues were encountered - Zoom platform multitasking, devices not talking to our website, and member's connectivity issues with their personal devices, there was a clear demonstration that ELLA members, instructors and the PI Online group have become increasingly familiar with the technical side resulting in course delivery becoming *almost* routine.

An ongoing challenge is the recruitment of members to take up the role of Course Host. We made a slight change in role name from Course Facilitator, more to align with new terminology related to video conferencing. This also provided an opportunity to further develop the role with less emphasis on the technology. There was modest success with introducing members to the role at information sessions held last November. Adding more practical application during the January Course Host orientation sessions along with a longer presence of the Course Schedulers during the classes did result in a higher number of positive comments from those who fulfilled the course host role. Most memorable was a recommendation to fellow members to take on this opportunity as 'it is not as scary as you think'.

Rehabilitating our program manual continues, as long as there is a technical component, there will be ongoing tweaks. Review of role descriptions, fine tuning work flow and related processes along with committee member skill development are integral to 'our work'.

Spring Session 2023's program will in part be a return of a somewhat more familiar ELLA – similar yet with differences. And another first with a 'hybrid' Annual General Meeting – live presenters and audience along with the remote audience.

The Ambassador role has been reviewed and revised to encompass more than the in-person session. There will be a more robust presence than last year, as many have volunteered to join the Ambassador Crew.

Thank you to the Program Implementation members who have volunteered their skills, knowledge, energy and time - Gwen Harris, Walter Archer, Cynthia Bujold, Debby Shoctor, Linda Deary and the fabulous Course Hosts.

Respectfully submitted,

**Lynne Moulton,**

Chair, Program Implementation

**William (Bill) Cook,**

Vice Chair, Program Implementation

## ***VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND RECOGNITION***

The Volunteer Committee has been actively involved in developing both Recruitment and Recognition of volunteers in supporting a strong and vibrant ELLA.

Recruitment of volunteers has been conducted online through the website, bulletins, email and questions on course evaluations. Also recruitment occurred during Spring Session 2022. We are looking forward to discussing volunteering with ELLA, face to face during Spring Session 2023. ELLA members will be available to discuss opportunities and duties with all members.

Volunteer Recognition has included the organization of volunteer thank you emails, information about volunteers in emails and newsletters. A Volunteer Picnic is being planned for June 1, 2023. Be on alert for your invitation.

A Volunteer Survey was conducted in January 2022. As reported earlier, opportunities for change were identified and acted upon.

We will be conducting another Volunteer Survey in September 2023 in order to continue to improve our operations.

A huge thank you to the members of the committee for their enthusiasm, initiative and willingness to learn!

Mary Fairhurst

Ann Babb

Liz Luchko

Ruth Vander Woude

**Fran Galbraith**

Chair, Volunteer Recruitment and Recognition Committee