



Minutes

Annual General Meeting

of Friends of the Centre for Christian Studies, Canada Inc.

Wednesday, March 12, 2025, 5:00-7:00 p.m. CDT

1. Opening

1.1 Welcome by AGM Chair: Sadekie Lyttle-Forbes, Central Council Chair

Sadekie welcomed one and all, and noted that video clips from students, entitled “CCS IS...” will be inserted during the meeting.

Central Council: Sadekie Lyttle-Forbes (Chair), Marcie Gibson (Interim Principal), Charmain Bailey (Program), Kathy Douglas (Staff Support), Linda Ervin (Member-at-Large), Jennifer Janzen-Ball (ex officio UCC), Lauri Ladd (Student Representative), Megumi Matsuko-Saunders (Alumna), Janet Nield (Recording Secretary), Ally Phillips (Incoming Student Representative), Karen Stuart (Treasurer), Cheryl Thiessen (Staff Representative)

Regrets: Eileen Scully (ex officio ACC)

For information only Central Council Alternates: Kristin Woodburke (Staff Support), Barb McGill (Alumna), Dawn Leger (Program)]

Staff: Scott Douglas, Marcie Gibson, Gwen McAllister, Janet Ross, Cheryl Thiessen

Regrets: Alcris Limongi

Students, Graduates, Former Staff, and Friends:

Steve Bailey, Patricia Baker, Carling Barry, Beth Baskin, Lisa Byer-de-Wever, Jen Carter-Morgan, Deb Deavu, Ken DeLisle, Ted Dodd, Tracy Fairfield, Siobhan Flynn, Nancy Ford, Jim Hatt, Barb McGill, Ian McLean (in-coming co-chair), Dorothy Naylor, Robert Osborne, Michelle Owens, Kristie Pilling, Irene Rainey, Tim Sale, Lori Stewart, Kathy Toivanen, Gloria Tozek

Regrets: Susan Butler Jones, Karlene Kimber (in-coming co-chair)

Motion Template MOTION: Moved by, and seconded by, that Council. CARRIED/Defeated

1.2 Worship and In Memoriam – Charmain Bailey

Call to Worship: we are called to gather, to discern, to celebrate, and to reflect on the work that has been done and still to do. Thanksgiving, and God calls us to faithfulness and courage.

A prayer of thanks for the Centre, for leaders, and those who serve. Guide our decisions, lead us to vision, compassion, and justice.

A song: “Keep your eyes on the prize! Hold on!” a traditional spiritual arranged by D. Moore.

Community building question for reflection:

How can we keep holding on to this learning community? What are things in your life where your head is telling you to walk away from, but your heart is telling you to hold on to? Do we walk away? Or do we reassess as to how to hold on for the things that are worth fighting for. Holding on to CCS, as we remember the following persons:

In Memoriam Grads, donors, and other friends of CCS who died in 2024.

Lily Chow	(UCC 1956)
Rosemary Draper	(ACC 1959)
Helga Ingeborg Elliott	(ACC 1973)
Lesley Fairley	(Former student)
Margaret Furneaux	(ACC 1961)
Beryl Holtam	(ACC 1961)
Ruth Hudgins	(UCC 1959)
Phyllis Isley	(ACC 1968)
Elinor Johns	(UCC 1961)
Ella Jones	(UCC 1963)
Jim Penhale	(UCC 1970)
Shirley Simmers	(UCC 1955)
Kay Wilkinson	(ACC 1959)

May we be faithful to the calling to wisdom and justice and compassion. Bless this time together, to strengthen ourselves to this purpose.
May we step boldly into the future with renewed purpose and hope. AMEN.

STUDENT VIDEO: CCS IS ... Learning together.

1.3 Acceptance of Friends

MOTION: Moved by Tracy F, seconded by Megumi M-S, that all those present, not already a Friend of the Centre for Christian Studies be made a Friend of the Centre. CARRIED

1.4 Agenda Review

MOTION: Moved by Ken D, seconded by Lisa B, that the agenda be adopted as distributed. CARRIED

1.5 Approval of Minutes of AGM April 3, 2024

MOTION: Moved by Linda E, seconded by Tracy F, that the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of April 3, 2024, be approved as circulated. CARRIED

2. Reports

2.1. Financial Report for 2024 – Karen Stuart and Gwen McAllister

Gwen began with a report on Development and donations received.

- Gwen reported 129,00 in donations, plus bequest/annuity 18,000.

- 23 congregations and a number of UCW's support the Centre
- 42% of donations are monthly giving - stabilizing our finances.
- Most donors and NOT alumni - less than half, but are connected through personal connections.
- 19 new donors this year. Six have died, and six have reduced their givings.
- Partnerships with other schools is an important direction.

Gwen asked for questions or comments:

- Comment that the postal strike affected the year-end appeal. So, donors were phoned and emailed, and donors adapted. In January, \$20,000 was received as a result of a mailed appeal, and applied to 2024.
- Were there any statistics on support for specific programs (a plan initiated by Lori Stewart), especially the Eco-justice Circle? Response was that it was a successful way to enable people to support something that resonated with them.
- Kathy D extended thanks for Lori's past work, and Gwen's having picked up the work, with good success.

STUDENT VIDEO: CCS IS ... scary at first, but it comes together in a beautiful way.

Karen presented a graphic of the financial state of CCS, as the audited reports are not available at the time of the meeting. The endowment and bursary funds both had strong gains in 2024, with large capital gains.

The graphic is appended to these minutes.

2.1.1 MOTION: moved by Linda E, seconded by Michelle O, that 1) the 2024 financial reports be received for information; that 2) Rawluk & Roberts, Chartered Professional Accountants, be appointed as auditor for the year ending Dec. 31, 2025; and that 3) the current signing officers remain in effect until replaced by Central Council. All three sections are CARRIED

STUDENT VIDEO: CCS IS ... the place you find your people!

2.2. Planning and Governance Committee Report – Linda Ervin

Last report of this committee, as we move to the new governance model. The report is appended.

2.3. Hope Actualized! Strategic Planning Report and Update – Scott Douglas and Marcie Gibson
Process, future priorities, governance changes, staffing model changes.

- "Who is CCS?" CCS is unique; faith-based with overlaps in the secular world; mostly UCC, historic ties to ACC, staff intensive process, more than content delivery.
- Look for: financial sustainability; intercultural needs given the changing society; denominational decline; need to be nimble in response to changes.
- Future of CCS: nobody knows what the future holds.
- Could we: increase enrollment; but doubling the number of students does not create financial sustainability.

- Increase donations? Donor base will shrink as the donors “age out.”
- Are there alternative income sources? What do we have? We don’t have physical resources, as does (for example) the Sandy Saulteaux Centre.
- Can we become degree granting in addition to diploma and certificate.
- Can we access grants and funding?

Is this a problem that can be solved? We will...

- build communication, flexibility, focus, action - governance and staff that enable this. What will Central Council do, and what will Staff do? Responsibilities for operation/marketing/program = Staff; and responsibility for oversight for finances/governance/the community of CCS = Central Council
- explore partnering for degree-granting and reduce overhead.
- work on marketing, fundraising, recruitment diversification.
- look for signs of traction by 2026, or start thinking about a “good end” that uses our resources well.
- implement a new staffing model: principal will include development (full-time), Scott’s position expanded to include recruitment and marketing (full-time); new administrator to include financial responsibilities (full-time). Two full-time staff, Janet and Alcris, and Marcie at half-time.

Questions:

- Terms of office of Central Council - two years, renewable twice (to six years).
- Regarding the difference between Staff Support and Human Resources - Marcie explained.
- How has CCS been thinking about the issues of national and international importance, and the diaconal gifts that are so relevant at this time? How does the church respond to our times, and how can we use the diaconal skills that can be brought to bear?
- How do we continue to attract young students?
- Is 2026 too soon to make the decision to wind down? Structural and strategic changes take time. But we must check in 2026, because we cannot wait “too long.” This is so that our resources can be put to good use. It’s a “check the temperature” time. We must be able to follow through with the students we have, to the completion of their studies.
- What are the metrics for this 2026 check? Comment that the Strategic Plan is not substantively different from 2019. Deadlines are good and an affirmation that 2026 is a good deadline.
- Emphasis on cooperation and partnerships with other schools, so that we are not operating in silos. And the importance of degree-granting.
- How to “explain” diakonia, and how CCS is seen from the “outside.” This is a challenge denominationally, ecumenically, and with the world at large.

STUDENT VIDEO: CCS IS ... expansive learning, a brave and beautiful space to learn that which is highly relevant to the changing context.

2.4. By-Law Changes; Rationale and Discussion

- All information is appended to the Minutes.
- Marcie presented the by-law changes as were distributed in advance of the meeting.
- They are being made to reflect the changes to the governance model.
- The changes came out of the strategic plan.
- They have been reviewed by the office of the Acting Primate of the ACC, Archbishop Anne Germond, who is happy to offer the concurrence of The Anglican Church of Canada to the changes to the CCS Bylaws as proposed.
- Noting that a formal letter will be forthcoming from the Office of the Primate.
- The changes clarify denominational affiliate roles and requirements, particularly regarding quorum for AGM, and Anglican membership in Central Council required for quorum.
- Note also the clause that permits the ACC to appoint as official denominational representative (ex officio) someone other than an ACC staff person, as there is no national staff role dedicated to theological education in the ways that existed ten and more years ago.
- The changes remove the Executive of Council; and the requirement of committee representation on Council.
- Language is updated.

2.4.1. MOTION: moved by Ken D, and seconded by Irene R, that the CCS “By-law Draft Changes to Review” as of March 2025, be affirmed and adopted as of this meeting. CARRIED.

2.5. Nominations Report: Tracy Fairfield

2.5.1. MOTION: moved by Tracy F, and seconded by Ken D, that 1) nominations for Central Council 2025 be closed; that 2) the slate of nominees for Central Council for 2025 be approved; and that 3) the slate of nominees for Committees be approved. CARRIED

STUDENT VIDEO: CCS IS ... the place you don't have to explain “diaconal” over and over again, diagonally!

2.6 MOTION: moved by Jim H, and seconded by Kathy D, that all reports received during the meeting be accepted. CARRIED

3. New Business: there being none the meeting continued.

4. Expression of thanks:

Sadekie expressed her thanks for being part of CCS and gratitude for the privilege of being both a Co-chair and a Chair of Central Council, through the tenures of four principals, including Michelle Owens, Ken DeLisle, Alan Lai, and Marcie Gibson; as well as several co-chairs.

5. Interim Principal's Message and Expression of Gratitude: Marcie Gibson.

- Gratitude for all the contributions to the Centre, including from the staff, the volunteers, the students.
- Thanks to all who presented parts of the meeting.

- A particular thanks to Cheryl as she prepares for retirement, after her many years of service to the Centre. Cheryl is a gift to the Centre.
- A great thanks to Sadekie for her leadership, vision and commitment, upon her resignation from Central Council.

6. Closing Prayer offered by Sadekie

7. Adjournment of meeting at 8:18 ET

Appended to the Minutes:

- 1. Financial Graphic as presented by the Treasurer**
- 2. Planning and Governance Committee Report**
- 3. By-Law Changes as had been distributed**
- 4. All financial reports for the Year ending December, 2024**
- 5. Nominations Report**