

Veritas Update 1 – Fall 2012
The Strategic Review Report “The Road Ahead” – Implementation

Background

In the summer of 2011, the General Council of the Royal Military Colleges Club of Canada created a Strategic Review Steering Committee to address the broad issue of declining engagement within the Club. The Committee undertook a year-long, 3-pronged research project, including:

- A written survey of top civilian alumni associations in Canada, plus military academies in USA and Australia, plus web-based research on best practices, trends, challenges, and opportunities;
- 30 in depth interviews with our constituency, representing all categories of members, lapsed members and non-members;
- An on-line survey, well publicized in advance, with 2660 responses (4-5 times the normal response for similar surveys), with all major categories of members and non-members well represented.

The project culminated in a 120 page report entitled “The Way Ahead”. It concluded with a Vision for the future of the Club, and a series of almost 30 concrete recommendations, falling broadly into 3 categories, namely:

- Club Organizational Structure & Governance
- Member Programmes & Services
- Communications

The Vision – “That the RMCCC is the most powerful alumni club in North America.”

This vision implies a strong engaged alumni association, representative of all who attend the Colleges. It acts on their behalf, not only in self-interest terms, but also in promoting the value and the values of Canada’s only leadership university in the interest of the public as well as the members and the Colleges. The Club will be active in pursuing “the best and the brightest” and will itself become a reason to join RMCC.

Success will be measured by the quality of graduates and their engagement in the Club, by the high standards and adequacy of resources of the College, by the public support for its values and purposes, and by a healthy and respectful attitude by DND and successive governments.

The Club will have focused on the emerging generations while honouring the fellowship aims of the Club Constitution. The Class will be the focal point of connection to the Club, College, and its values, and there is much that the Club will have done to greatly enhance and strengthen this core group.

The strong engagement of graduates will continue to promote the institutions and values that shaped them as leaders and productive citizens. Member participation in a variety of new programs and services will be high, and members will have access and participate through a variety of self-selected channels. Under a comprehensive communications strategy, all members will be linked to the ongoing affairs of the Colleges, cadets and the Club.

The Club will have moved away from cumbersome governance, and will be characterized by effective leadership from members in partnership with staff.

Recommendations

Key recommendations to bring this Vision into reality include the following:

A) Organizational Structure and Governance

Review our Governance Model, looking at:

- Definition of “membership” and categories of membership
- Size and composition of GC and EC
- Official recognition of the role of the Class President and Secretary
- Terms of office for the Officers of the Club
- Official linkages between the Club and the Colleges, and the Club and the Foundation

Clearly define the functions of the Club’s National Office, and the role it plays in the direct delivery of services to the membership versus the role it plays supporting the Branches and the Classes.

Structure our organization so that it is less reliant on the Branches and more dependent on the Classes in the engagement of the membership and the delivery of programme and service offerings.

Create a 4th year 4 bar liaison position in the Cadet Wing HQ to be a member of the GC, and ultimately to become Class President or Secretary of the graduating class. This would help build a strong connection to the Club amongst the Cadet Wing.

Make club membership automatic, not voluntary, perhaps paid for with automatic payroll deductions like mess dues.

Create Associate Membership category for parents of cadets, to raise public awareness and engagement with the college, increase College advocacy, support funding, and help track down lost ex-cadets. Programmes and services should be defined for this group.

Negotiate a resource sharing agreement with the Colleges covering administrative staff, funding, technology and space, in view of the value the alumni association provides the Colleges in terms of reputation building, recruiting, advocacy, and funding.

B) Programmes and Services

Develop programmes, services and linkages which cater to busy younger members, and members not living close to an established branch. This might include such items as credit or non-credit courses (military, leadership, etc.) via distance learning or webinar format.

Create a Business Networking and Career Transition Programme, making use of existing programmes like Treble Victor, Canada Company, True Patriot Love, Veterans Affairs and DND.

Provide training and support to the Branches to offer services relevant to all generations within their catchment area. Support could include elements like a national speakers' bureau.

Provide training and support to the Class Presidents and Secretaries to better communicate with and engage their classmates.

Develop a suite of financial benefits (e.g. insurance) for our members, perhaps linking with the US military colleges.

Re-examine the value proposition and format of the Reunion weekend.

Re-examine the value proposition for the gift shop, including consideration of the on-site CANEX.

Involve ex-cadets in community activities, including speaking engagements, recruiting for the Colleges, etc., to raise the profile of the Colleges.

Develop a suite of services catering directly to the cadets while they are at the Colleges. This could include a mentoring programme with ex-cadets, the linking of cadets with Branch activities during the academic year and during vacations, and/or the direct linking of Club Branches to College Squadrons.

Create an ex-cadet "CUSO", where ex-cadets can band together to offer consulting services on a volunteer basis to communities and countries in need.

Restore College and ex-cadet Heritage programs as instrumental in educating cadets, prospective cadets and families, and graduates on what our values mean when acted upon in action or in civilian life.

C) Communications

Develop a clear value proposition for the Club, and communicate it to all members.

Establish an Advocacy Committee to provide a significant external advocacy role.

Establish a Communications Committee to develop a strategic communications strategy catering to our multigenerational diversity internally and our various stakeholders externally, focusing on messages and media, including social media.

Create a centralized portal on the Club website for branches and classes.

Create regular columns for all the smaller sub-groups of our membership (cadets from CMR and Royal Roads, Masters Degree students, UTPO/UTPNM, RETP, etc.) in all of our regular communications vehicles (e.g. VERITAS and e-Veritas).

Increase the profiling of our members in our communications. Business success should not be the only criteria for member selection.

Create a centralized member list management function at the National Office. This would include assigning a permanent email address for all members.

Create a Standing Committee to be responsible for public relations, and proactive and reactive advocacy to all stakeholders and the public at large. This would be in partnership with the same College function.

Create a forum for the members at large to engage and express their opinions on issues affecting the Colleges.

Communicate to our membership a summary of this report, and our action plan to address the issues raised.

Actions

The report was unanimously endorsed by both the Executive Committee and the General Council of the Club in August 2012. Furthermore, the General Council directed that an Implementation Team be created to act on the recommendations of the report.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference of the Implementation Team are as follows:

1. Develop a priority list of the plan recommendations accompanied by an impact analysis (resources and staffing).
2. Develop an actionable implementation plan for each of the recommendations.
3. Ensure that all recommendations that could be quickly implemented are put into action in year 1.
4. Evaluate ways and means to provide funding for the items which appear to be unaffordable by the Club.
5. Report regularly to the EC and the GC.
6. Communicate the plan and progress to Club members regularly.
7. Complete the project by August 31, 2013.

Next Steps

The Implementation Team is currently being created under the leadership of 9143 Bruce McAlpine. It will consist of 13 members, including a chair and three 4 member teams, with each team responsible for one of the 3 categories of recommendations.

Building on the report itself, every effort will be made to have broad generational representation on the teams, and to include representatives of disenfranchised groups within the membership.

Consistent with our Vision, it is our desire that the rejuvenation of our Club be an open, fully embraced process by the membership at large. Please feel free to express your thoughts through your Branch, your class, the national office of the Club, or directly to the Implementation Team at

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Submitted by: Reg Watts & Bruce McAlpine, Co-Chairs of the RMCCC Strategic Review Steering Committee