



Strategic Framework for the Camden Conference -- 2014-15

Mission

To foster informed discourse on world issues

Core Values

- **ENHANCED UNDERSTANDING:** The Camden Conference is a non-profit citizens' forum that exposes participants to a variety of presentations on the topic of that year's Conference in order to increase knowledge, awareness, and understanding of global issues. It does so with a non-partisan agenda that deals fairly with controversy.
- **ACKNOWLEDGED EXCELLENCE:** The Camden Conference gives priority in its selection of presenters and facilitators to peer-recognized excellence, mastery of complex issues, and communication skills.
- **INCLUSIVITY:** The Camden Conference attracts and engages a diverse group of participants, including students, in an affordable manner that provides respectful interaction.
- **DYNAMIC EXPERIENCE:** Have fun; take pride in our intellectually stimulating Camden Conference.

Vision

The Camden Conference aims to guarantee its resilience by:

- Bringing people together in congenial settings for an annual weekend Conference and year-round community events that adapt over time to changes both in our community and in perceptions of global priorities.
- Attempting to include all people who wish to participate in the Conference in some manner.
- Growing by sharing our content -- for example through Community Events and media of all types -- while preserving the intimate and stimulating weekend Conference experience.
- Utilizing our content to enhance interest in global affairs among students, teachers and the broad educational community.
- Assuring secure financing while being an asset to our community.
- Increasing partnerships and links with libraries and other like-minded nonprofits in Maine and possibly beyond.

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Who the Camden Conference Aims to Serve

<i>Who We Serve</i>	ATTENDEES	MEMBERS/ BOARD/ ADVISORY COUNCIL	PARTNERS	STUDENTS/EDUCATORS	OTHER BENEFICIARIES
Definition	At both the February Conference and Community Events	Including all volunteers and employees	Local businesses, Corporate sponsors, Libraries, Speakers, Other non-Profits, Grant donors	Including also teachers, professors, schools and colleges.	Beneficiaries of our content, activities via website, media, etc., both in Maine and beyond.
Our Objective	We will strive to make some type of venue or other access available for as many as possible of those who wants to attend the February Conference.	Improve communications; dialogue	To develop as many partnerships as possible, in order to further our mission	Make the February Conference the best resource it can possibly be for promoting informed discourse on world issues within Maine's educational system.	

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Our Goals and Strategies for Achieving Them

<i>Overarching Strategic Goals</i>	HIGH QUALITY CONFERENCE	ADDRESS EXPANSION	MEMBERSHIP STRATEGIES	FURTHER STRENGTHEN VOLUNTEER BASE	SUSTAIN FINANCIAL BASE WITH POTENTIAL FOR GROWTH	EXPAND ENGAGEMENT & PARTICIPATION BY STUDENTS	IMPROVE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION
<i>Definitions</i>	Our highest priority as an organization.	Position the Camden Conference to remain a vital and highly appreciated organization in the Midcoast and broader Maine community.	Expand the number of our members and the amount of money we receive from them.	Find quality volunteers with the needed skills and willingness to pitch in and work on committees.	<p>Foster and sustain Development Committee capable of raising funds to cover the gap between Conference revenue and board-approved expenditures, so that admission charges for the Conference can stay at or near current levels. That Committee's top priority is member contributions, followed by support from local and broader Maine businesses and foundations and major gifts.</p> <p>How far we go beyond this in our quest for funds will be driven by financial needs for programs approved by the board and may include restricted gifts if the activities funded by those gifts have previous board approval.</p> <p>A careful balance needs to be maintained between the recognition and other motivation provided to donors and the independence and volunteer-driven nature of our organization. Programming independence is paramount, restricted only by our mandate to retain balance.</p>		

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<i>Short-Term Initiatives (2014-15 Conference year)</i>	<p>1. Organize a great 2015 Conference on Russia Resurgent.</p>	<p>1. Investigate, plan and possibly execute pilot streaming expansion models for: --Long-time Conference members who are housebound; --Members who have contributed substantially but cannot attend the Conference in person; --Overflow venues adjacent to our existing ones in the event the Conference sells out; -- Students and faculty in a course based on the Conference theme for whom we might not have space or scholarships at the Conference.</p> <p>2. Broaden Community Events outreach through more library programs in Maine, especially in communities where the Conference sees an opportunity to grow interest, attendance and membership. Facilitate an accessible online “bulletin board” or email exchange that allows libraries to see what each other is doing.</p>	<p>1. Capture contact information for first-time participants in the Conference itself and for other Conference and Community Events, with the aim of growing the percentage of Conference attendees -- currently about half -- who are members.</p>	<p>1. Develop a handout card that asks for volunteers. This card can be included with mailings, made available at events, and sent as an e-newsletter. All committees will be listed, but with a “disclaimer” that not all have openings at the present.</p> <p>3. Emphasize the need for our own volunteers to actively recruit new ones.</p>	<p>1. Identify and pursue one or two new revenue streams, such as travel packages or a major gifts program or planned giving or business membership, etc.</p> <p>2. Conduct Membership Direct Mail campaign and initiate stronger phone follow-up to increase membership contributions.</p> <p>3. Development Committee should produce a policy, for board review, on criteria for soliciting, accepting and managing planned gifts or bequests. The volunteer-managed nature of our organization will limit the complexity of fiduciary responsibilities we can take on, and should be kept in mind when developing policies on these matters.</p> <p>4. Clarify and possibly alter membership timing and possibly also memberships versus donations.</p>	<p>1. Increase the percentage of those students attending the Conference who are in courses on the Conference theme. To do this, launch a pilot with high school teachers who will teach a course to students on the CC theme, and bring students to the 2015 Conference: Expanded CEP Pilot.</p> <p>2. Increase student/adult interaction, starting with more adult attendance at the student Saturday night event during the 2015 Conference.</p> <p>3. Maintain the number of high-school and college educators and academics on the Education Committee.</p>	<p>1. Shift the emphasis at CC board meetings somewhat from committee reports to discussion of issues on which full board attention would be beneficial. Committee reports should go out digitally before meetings and only those parts of the contents that require board action, or which the chairs wish to emphasize, should be discussed at the meeting.</p>

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<i>A Long-Term Actions (2015 and beyond)</i>	<p>1. Select topics of high interest and develop programs with compelling, world-class speakers.</p> <p>2. Broaden topics to include some that are not focused strictly on foreign affairs but on other issues of broad global significance. The 2014 Camden Conference, "The Global Politics of Food and Water" is a good example of a high-interest topic concerning the environment and food production.</p> <p>3. Recruit 2-4 new Program Committee members each year who are experts in the Conference that is being organized. The new people can be recruited from multiple sources, including past speakers and summer residents.</p>	<p>1. Consider other venues for streaming the full February Conference beyond the Midcoast, with the key consideration being strong community interest as demonstrated through an independently managed Community Events program and other involvement in Conference activities by the prospective venue. Use Portland as a model when considering other venues.</p>	<p>1. Consider Special Events for members who are at or considering moving to higher levels of giving and/or the summer population.</p>	<p>1. Use task forces to involve members, previous board members, advisory council members and others with a history with the Conference to address single goal-directed issues that cross committee lines or have long-term significance. .</p> <p>2. Further explore ways to provide appropriate and uncomplicated incentives to volunteers.</p> <p>3. Recruit a volunteer coordinator or volunteer committee chair and establish a volunteer committee that can work on recruitment.</p>	<p>1. Draw up a policy, to be made public, dealing with the type of funding we seek, under what conditions.</p> <p>2. Re-evaluate corporate sponsorship and membership benefits – can we provide more?</p> <p>3. Evaluate seeking a sponsorship for the entire year’s community-events-related donations to libraries, with the understanding that they will have limited exposure but no role in selection of speakers.</p> <p>4. Develop a plan to encourage CEOs of major Maine companies and senior education officials to buy tickets to the Conference.</p> <p>5. Development Committee should annually review funding sources to determine whether some should be dropped and others added or expanded.</p>	<p>1. Provide resources and recognition for demonstrated student productivity around CC issues.</p> <p>2. Expand academic and funding partnerships with Higher Education and High School administrations.</p> <p>3. Consider increasing financial support for students attending the Conference to encompass housing, meals, and transportation. This should be contingent on raising dedicated funding for this purpose, and even then undertaken only keeping in mind the extra logistical resources this would require during Conference week.</p>	<p>1. Develop a public relations strategy aimed at providing higher national and international visibility for the Conference.</p>



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<i>No Longer Doing</i>		We will not actively pursue growth for its own sake.		Stop committee membership for those who don't contribute or attend meetings.	Stop soliciting sponsorships for individual community events.		