

# **Central Okanagan Photographic Society**

## **Member Feedback Initiative**

March 16, 2015

### **Overview**

The Central Okanagan Photographic Society has a rich history, dating back to the 1960's. Since that formative time, the creation and expression of photographic imagery has undergone substantive change. In parallel, the Society has evolved and has consistently adapted to the evolution of the art and practice of photography. The “act” of taking pictures, creating images and interpreting the “meaning” of photographs is a complex process now imbedded in our culture. The “making of pictures” is available to almost everyone and could be considered a common method of enhanced communication in our digital age. Because of the accessibility to technology for the purpose of recording imagery, the photographic experience is likely represented by far more diverse perspectives than in the past.

If the Society is to continue to evolve to meet members diverse needs, we require an ongoing process for soliciting member feedback. It is paramount that a feedback process would be able to capture the diversity of perspectives held by members of the Society yet provide meaningful information for the executive and membership.

### **Guiding Principles and Assumptions**

- The Society membership and executive are comprised entirely of volunteers who share an interest in photography. Consequently, all members should understand that the success of the club depends upon engagement of the membership and the volunteerism of leadership.
- Members and executive would like to see the club succeed and evolve. Everyone is employing their best efforts to make that happen.
- The Society has a diverse membership with diverse interests. Members have various reasons for joining the Society and may be desiring various outcomes. A highly functioning Society will welcome multiple perspectives and interests.
- Communication skills and styles amongst Society members are quite varied. It is important to understand that a particular perspective may not be shared by others and that the direction and evolution of the Society will be accomplished through a process of “competing” priorities and availability of resources (including volunteer time and financial resources).
- Members and executive desire a Society that is engaging, provides opportunities for learning and one that responds to the evolving needs of members.
- The Society will be a richer experience if it is comprised of members with diverse skills, interests and levels of experience.
- The member feedback initiative will be grounded in the philosophy of mutual respect. Change and evolution of the Society must build on a positive view of all members. Improvement in a quality experience with the Society results from effective and respectful communication and personal leadership.

- The member feedback initiative should be utilized annually however, it may evolve and change as the Society gains experience with the process.

## **Goal**

- The overall goal of the Central Okanagan Photographic Society membership feedback initiative is to improve the experience of membership in the Society.

## **Objectives of the Feedback Process**

- Elicit the perspectives of members and executive in regard to the experiences of membership in the Society
- Assist the Society executive to understand what aspects of current Society activities are valued by members
- Assist the Society executive to understand what aspects of current Society activities are less valued by members
- Elicit the perspectives of members and executive in regard to what improvements could be made to current Society activities in order to enhance the membership experience.
- Gather feedback from members and executive to identify and prioritize new activities for the Society to pursue.
- Based upon information gathered during the feedback process, provide recommendations to the Society executive and membership in support of an enhanced membership experience.

## **Process**

A variety of processes will be used to gather information and perspectives. Any member who wishes to provide input will have an opportunity to do so. Any documentation recorded from feedback processes will be reviewed by the interviewees to be sure the documents reflect what was said or meant.

### **Focus Groups**

Focus groups are used to gain a more thorough understanding of an issue(s). They help us to understand how people think or feel. They can also help us to understand why certain opinions are held. Focus groups can also assist an evaluator to discover unanticipated ideas. The information gathered through focus group interviews can also assist in the development of survey questions if broader input is required.

- 1-3 focus groups will be conducted to get a more in-depth understanding of member perspectives
- Each group will be comprised of 4-8 members
- The group facilitator will be seeking diversity within each focus group. Consequently, interested participants may be screened in regard to photographic experience, length of membership, gender etc.
- Each group will be facilitated by the same individual to ensure consistency
- A recorder will document the discussion.

- Information shared in the focus group will be confidential but will be summarized as a whole
- Participation will be voluntary and will be conducted at a location of mutual agreement

### **Member Survey**

A survey is useful if input is required from a large number of individuals. Surveys tend to provide simplistic responses. They are most effective if the evaluator understands a particular issue(s) and wishes to assess what individuals think about that particular issue.

- A survey may be developed based upon the outcome of the focus group sessions. It would be distributed to all members and responses would remain confidential.

### **Individual Interviews**

Individual interviews are particularly useful to probe for a deeper understanding around a specific set of issues. Especially if the issues are controversial or there is some sensitivity related to particular possible responses.

- Individual interviews may take the form of in-person or via telephone.
- An interview tool will be employed.
- Individuals may be asked to participate due to their particular experiences with the Society.
- Individual interviews may be extended to past members.
- Information shared in an interview will be treated as confidential & anonymous but will contribute to an aggregate report.

### **Confidentiality and Anonymity**

- There will be one facilitator for the entire feedback initiative. The Executive Committee has arranged for Tom Fulton to be the facilitator. Tom has had extensive experience in group facilitation and research methods.
- The facilitator will lead each focus group and will conduct individual interviews. The names of individual participants will be held in confidence by the facilitator. This is straightforward with individual interviews and surveys. During focus groups, participants will of course, be able to recognize each other. However, prior to participation in a focus group, participants will be asked to agree to keeping participants identities and the discussion in confidence. Focus groups may have a recorder present. That individual will also agree to the confidentiality agreement.
- Information collected through focus groups and individual interviews will be summarized in a report for the COPS executive. No information in the report will be traceable to any individual. It should be noted that not everything stated in an individual interview or focus group may be reported. The report will focus primarily (but not necessarily solely) on shared, common issues.
- Any questions or concerns related to the feedback process may be directed in confidence to Tom Fulton, either at a COPS meeting or through an email to [feedback2015@copsphotography.org](mailto:feedback2015@copsphotography.org).

## Participation

Any member wishing to provide input into the Member Feedback Initiative will be able to do so. Initially, focus groups will be convened and members will be encouraged to participate in them. However, if members are unable to or do not wish to participate in a focus group, individual interviews may be arranged. Individual interviews may be conducted in person or via telephone. It is anticipated the focus group meetings will take approximately one to one and a half hours. Individual interviews will likely take between 20-45 minutes.

To participate in a focus group, please send an email message to [feedback2015@copsphotography.org](mailto:feedback2015@copsphotography.org) and **include your responses to the “application” questions below**. Focus group interviews are usually more effective when there is some diversity within the participants. Your responses to the questions below should assist the facilitator to create some diversity within the groups.

Individual interviews can be arranged by contacting Tom Fulton via email to [feedback2015@copsphotography.org](mailto:feedback2015@copsphotography.org).

Gathering information through focus groups & individual interviews can be quite time consuming. Usually, after a number of focus groups and individual interviews are conducted, the information reaches a point called “data redundancy”. This means that little or no new information is gained through additional focus groups or individual interviews. When and if that point is reached, focus groups and individual interviews will be suspended. If it is clear additional members wish to have input, a survey will be developed and circulated to members.

Current COPS executive members are not initially eligible for participation in focus groups or individual interviews. A separate focus group with executive members may be conducted and individual interviews may be available. Past executive members are eligible to participate in focus groups or individual interviews as they are considered “members”.

### Focus Group Participant “Application” Questions

1. Name
2. Age in years
3. Gender
4. Number of years engaged in photography
5. Number of years a COPS member
6. Preferred availability (Mon-Fri mornings, Mon-Fri afternoons, Mon-Thurs evenings, Weekend days)