THE CLASSICAL ACADEMY OF ARMS

REVIEW BOARD MEETING

Thursday 18 February 2021 at 6:00 pm Eastern Time

Meeting was called to order by the Director at 1800 Eastern Time. Present were:

* Walter Green, Classical Fencing Master CAA – Director
* Eric Thompson, Maitre d’Armes USFCA – Review Board Member
* Kathy Vail, Moniteur USFCA
* Christian Olbrich, Classical Fencing Apprentice Instructor

Excused due to technical difficulties were:

* Paul Geraci, Maitre d’Armes USFCA – Review Board Member
* Chris VanSlambrouck

The minutes of the meetings of 19 November 2020 and 7 January 2021 was approved as read.

The Director reported that USA Fencing and the United States Fencing Coaches Association continue to work toward integration. The agenda of the 24 February special meeting of the USA Fencing Board of Directors indicated the United States Fencing Coaches Association should operate under the umbrella of USA Fencing through integration or some other arrangement. A Task Force of 4 USFCA members, 3 members from USA Fencing, and 2 members of the Athlete’s Council has been formed to consider merger or integration. This creates significant concern that the Academy’s arrangements with the United States Fencing Coaches Association may be severed and that our ability to work with modern fencing coaches may be compromised.

The Board formally approved the inclusion of stakeholders as members of the Review Board. New stakeholder members of the Review Board are:

* Student Representative – Christian Olbrich
* Historical European Martial Arts – Chris VanSlambrouck
* Female Fencing Coaches – Kathy Vail

The Board approved a statement of what we can best evaluate in our credentialing examinations:

The Classical Academy of Arms evaluates the performance of candidates for credentialing in the foil, sabre, and epee as taught in established schools of fencing in the period 1880 to 1939, as based on period texts and other contemporary sources.

Strategy: It is time to develop a strategy for the Academy to address how we are going to move forward over the coming years in key areas in which we have opportunities and threats. All Review Board members are encouraged to consider these issues and make recommendations in the next two months.

* The near-term strategic threat – the possible disappearance of the United States Fencing Coaches Association or the redirection of its focus under USA Fencing represents a potential threat. We had considered membership in USA Fencing as a club, but that seems unwise due to the centralization of control over coach development. There are two options that we have identified: (1) AAU membership which would provide insurance, assistance with tax filings (if we purchase the most expensive membership), and other benefits, and (2) direct membership in the AAI, possibly in their armed combat methods category. *[As of 19 February, Maitre Gil Pezza has agreed to contact Maestro Giovanni Rapisardi, President of the AAI, on our behalf. Calls to the AAU have not been returned due to staff working from home, or maybe just inefficiency.]*
* Recruiting for candidates including diversity and inclusivity – finding and recruiting students interested in classical fencing who are white males is difficult enough. The difficulty increases by one order of magnitude to find women who are interested, and another order of magnitude to recruit fencers of color or fencers with disabilities.
* Coach development content – we need to maintain and exploit our memberships in the United States Center for Coaching Excellence and the International Council for Coaching Excellence and to engage with other sources of coach development information to ensure that we remain on the cutting edge of this field.
* Teaching, training, evaluating – we need to expand the number of members who have a variety of online teaching skills to both teach and evaluate student performance. We are too reliant on a single active teacher. To be able to handle growth we need a larger pool to work with.
* Digital strategy – We are effectively a micro-degree program. We deliver instruction online, we use badges to recognize and validate credentials, we use micro-learning in our continuing education program postings and the new Flash Card initiative, and we use micro-teaching with projects in our courses. We should continue to incorporate new teaching methods with new technology solutions to provide first-class training anywhere in the world.

New sections to be added to the *Program Manual* have been distributed for comment:

* Open Badges – updates and expands our policy on award of Open Badges, a digital icon that can be used in a variety of ways to confirm award of our credentials.

* Important Definitions – to provide common definitions for specific terminology used throughout our program.
* Program Evaluation – establishes a program evaluation process using a combination of standard models and specific subjects relevant to our operations.

Any comments for inclusion should be directed to Walter Green as soon as possible.

Additional sections will be forwarded for action by e-mail.

Issues on the agenda carried forward for action by e-mail, both of which address an accreditation guideline about providing support for graduates:

* Our current policy is that only credential holders who are not engaged in a course are required to do 12 hours of annual continuing education. First, should we stay at 12 hours (one proposal for the USFCA-USA Fencing integration that we have seen requires 16 hours). Second, should everyone (except stakeholder representatives) have to do continuing education (we offer a variety internally, flash-cards, the technical blog, website CE, the podcast)?
* Second, we have an annual self-assessment we are asking students to complete as to their development of skills and their improvement plan. Should this apply across the faculty and evaluators as well?

The meeting was adjourned at 1850 Eastern time.

Walter G. Green III

Classical Fencing Master CAA