



# The Fellows Gazette

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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I write with a somewhat heavy heart that due to the uncertainty of the health crisis we currently face the Board of Directors recommends that the 2020 annual meeting of the College of Fellows be canceled. While there is much conflicting information in terms of the impact of the coronavirus, it seems the best course of action is to err on the side of caution in order not to put Fellows in harm's way. One thing we have learned so far is that many of the confirmed cases are among those who attended conferences. It behooves us, therefore, to avoid gathering in a closed environment for extended periods of time.

As a result of this action, there are many logistical matters to which we must attend, and the board is working on those at this time. At the top of that list are our commitments to the River Inn and the Cosmos Club. There will undoubtedly be some financial obligation on our part, but hopefully the nature of the situation will foster a reasoned response on their part. Much more complex is the relationship with the Kennedy Center and KCACTF. That relationship has a difficult history, and much effort in recent years has helped forge a better relationship. We must do what we can to make sure this decision doesn't create a setback on that front. Next on the list is addressing the investiture of new Fellows into the class of 2020 and how our decisions will affect a potential class of 2021.

It is our recommendation that the class of 2020 be formally admitted *in absentia*. This is a departure from the norm, but it seems to be an appropriate response. All this really means is that those scheduled to be invested in 2020 will be Fellows immediately. We will still want to formally welcome them at our next meeting by reading their citations and having them sign the membership book, but we will get their medallions to them in time for those who want to wear them at the next formal event that calls for such regalia (e.g., university commencements—if those are held this spring).

Because we will carry forward eight 2020 Fellows into our 2021 meeting, our recommendation is that we admit a class of 2-4 Fellows as the class of 2021. As many have observed, this class size was the norm for most years of our existence. Foregoing admission of a new class is not desirable, so we believe this is a better way to proceed.

We understand that some of you have already made travel arrangements, and we hope you will be able to find some satisfactory accommodation with your provider. That appears to be a fluid situation, and we can offer no help on that front.

One immediate response to this decision has been the idea that our 2021 meeting might be enhanced in some way in order to make up for the lost year. We will be happy to consider any ideas you have in that regard.

I regret being the bearer of this news, but we feel we must proceed responsibly and with caution.

Respectfully,

Dan Carter, Dean