

SOAR January 2022 Newsletter

The SOAR Board met via Zoom on Wednesday January 12. Plans for a partial reopening were discussed. 24 classes have been scheduled for the Spring 2022 semester (March 7 to May 6), of which 19 will be in-person and five via Zoom. So far, we are permitted to have socially distanced and masked classes on the SUNY Potsdam and St. Lawrence University campuses. Attendees must be vaccinated per regulations at the two campuses. Please consult the SOAR website www.soarnorthcountry.com to keep current with the rapidly changing situation.

SOAR will be required to provide proof of vaccination to university authorities for all attendees. The mechanics of the registration process (which now includes proof of vaccination) are extraordinarily complex, especially without an administrative assistant to staff the office. The technical details of collecting and reporting remain to be worked out. In any case, it will be laborious. Please consider volunteering when the call goes out.

If we are permitted to hold in-person classes, help from our members will be an important step in reopening. But additional problems remain if we are to return to offering the range of opportunities that members were accustomed to. During the pandemic, our Zoom courses have, of necessity, been almost entirely academic. Many members who preferred art classes, exercise classes or other activities have not been served. However, we are planning such courses for the coming spring semester and even more for Fall 2022.

Because of reduced expenses, SOAR has been able to operate without charging membership fees for two years. Once again, there will be no charge for our Spring 2022 classes. But as and when we reopen more fully, we will need to restaff the office and incur other expenses. Rebuilding membership and thereby generating income will be highly challenging. Also, the world is different from what it was 20 years ago when SOAR began. For a variety of reasons, people may be reluctant to join or rejoin. Nevertheless, the Board of Directors remains optimistic.

We live in a very different situation from two years ago, but we all value SOAR and will work hard to restore the organization to what we were before Covid disrupted our lives. With your help we will continue SOARing!