

Report 2012-2015
Ken Klein, CEAL Secretary

The central responsibility of the CEAL Secretary is to oversee the record of CEAL's activities. This is done through taking minutes for the Executive Board meetings and plenary sessions, and through archiving the agendas, programs and election tallies of the Board and Council committees.

My term as Secretary coincided with dramatic advances in CEAL's meetings. It once was the pattern, in CEAL annual meetings, for plenary sessions to be largely concerned with business matters and, perhaps, updates on issues of general interest to the membership. The real content of interest to members was concentrated in the committee meetings. Through funding from the Henry Luce Foundation, CEAL has been able to transform the content of its plenary sessions into content-rich programs centered on themes important to the full CEAL membership.

I wish I could claim that I had fully anticipated the implications these changes—which all of us, I believe, want to see maintained—held for my role as Secretary. Suddenly, the length and content of the plenary meetings had greatly expanded, far beyond my preparation or abilities to record adequately. I worry that CEAL has lost much of the lasting value of the keynote speakers' presentations and the many ideas they offered up because the Secretary did not record what exactly they said. And I doubt I really could have done justice to the speakers' presentations in a standard minutes-taking format.

That said, I suggest that it be made a regular practice to record all plenary keynote addresses, archive them, and make them linkable (mp3, podcast) through the minutes. This would extend the audience that could benefit from these presentations and be a better representation of the CEAL program than would written minutes that, at best, summarize the content or simply supply the titles and speakers' names.

In this connection, if at some point it was determined that this was of such value that presentations from committee meetings should also be archived in a systematic fashion, I would recommend that the Executive Board consider the possibility of creating a position of CEAL Archivist so that the Secretary's responsibilities not be expanded much more than they already are.

The archival duties of the Secretary, such as they are at present, consist largely of collecting and keeping in order the basic documents generated by the annual meetings and by the work of the Executive Board throughout the year. Here again, I could probably have been more systematic about this, but I hope I have not overlooked any key records.

I greatly enjoyed my term as Secretary and participation on the Executive Board during this sea-change period in the Council's growth as a professional organization. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to participate once again in the CEAL leadership, but am confident that I leave the Board in ever more capable hands.