



29 January 2020

Dr. Katarina Popovic, Secretary-General
International Council for Adult Education

Re: My nomination for the position of Vice-President for North America

Dear Dr. Popovic:

I am honored to be nominated for the position of Vice-President for North America of the International Council for Adult Education. By this letter, I am confirming my interest in the position and outlining my reasons for wanting to contribute to the continuing work of ICAE.

I have spent my entire professional career as an adult educator, most of it as a professor involved in the preparation of adult educators to work in a wide variety of practice settings. I have been very fortunate to work for the past 38+ years at the University of British Columbia because of its long history of research and teaching in adult education and strong commitment to international engagement. Although born and educated in the US, my worldview has what I consider a distinctly Canadian character.

I have been a long-time, active member and participant in the meetings of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education (CASAE), the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE) and the Adult Education Research Conference (AERC). I have also attended meetings of SCUTREA in the UK, ESREA in Europe, ICAE in Montreal, and Researching Work and Learning (RWL) in Denmark and China.

For eight years I served as Senior Associate Dean and was responsible for the Faculty of Education's international engagement activities around the world including a collaborative teacher education program in Dadaab Refugee Camp, Kenya, various research and programmatic partnerships, and exchange programs in China, India, Europe and Africa. In addition to my role at UBC, I hold the title of "Distinguished Professor" at the International Institute for Adult and Lifelong Education in New Delhi and was awarded an honorary doctorate from Linköping University in Sweden for my role in developing the online Master of Education in Adult Learning and Global Change (ALGC) with partner universities in Sweden, South Africa and Australia.

At this stage of my career, I would welcome the opportunity to represent North America within the leadership of ICAE. I have the full support of my institution to carry out the responsibilities of this role and have access to resources for travel when meeting face-to-face justifies the burning

of fossil fuels. As I reviewed the mission of ICAE prior to preparing this letter, I was struck by the resonance between the ICAE mission and recent writing I have done on the role of adult education in addressing the critical “wicked problems” of our time—growing inequality, erosion of human rights, persistent poverty, worsening climate crisis, assaults on democratic institutions, and so on. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and related strategies provide guidance, but I believe that the central role adult learning must play in addressing these problems is not yet adequately recognized or appreciated. I believe that collaborating with other adult educators around the world and developing broad-based coalitions to address these problems is our only hope of saving the planet.

I am also very pleased to be working at a university that was ranked 3rd in the world (2019 Times Higher Education World University Rankings) for impact on the SDGs via its research, outreach and stewardship. This also explains our ongoing commitment to social and environmental justice and the institutional support available to me if I am elected to this important role.

Again, I am honored to be nominated by ICEA and COLLO and will be happy to serve if elected.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Sork', written in a cursive style.

Thomas J. (Tom) Sork
Professor, Adult Learning and Education Group

Cc: Marcie Boucouvalas
Daniel Baril
Ronald Cameron