



College and University
Retiree Associations
of Canada

Associations de retraités
des universités et collèges
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Expanded Travel Opportunities for Retiree Association Members

CURAC/ARUCC has entered into an affinity agreement with Collette Vacations to provide members of our associations with access to a very broad range of international and national escorted travel tours at substantial discounts. The agreement was rolled out at the 13th Annual CURAC/ARUCC Conference in Kingston, Ontario, May 20 – 22, 2015.

There are three primary means of accessing the tours. **Electronic copies of the brochures describing the options are attached:**

1. Members and their families and friends now have access to an extraordinary range of tours on a substantial variety of dates at discounted rates. Remarkably, I count 190 tours serving all seven continents, including 8 tours in Canada, 32 in the U.S., 9 in Central & South America, 60 in Europe, 7 in Asia, 8 in Australia and New Zealand, and 6 in Africa and Israel. As well, there are 5 tours designed for families (Costa Rica, Italy, London & Paris, Ireland and “The Wild West & Yellowstone”), perhaps ideally suited to adventures with children and grandchildren. There also are garden holiday tours in Rome, South Africa, the U.S., the Italian lakes region, London (featuring the Chelsea Flower Show), the Loire, New Zealand, Portugal, Britain and Japan. The vast majority of tours are available on a range of dates, with some more limited, as devoted to particular times of the year (e.g., Christmas, flower season, river cruising season). The tours typically include travel, accommodation, meals and sightseeing accompanied by Collette tour guides, with these arrangements making travel convenient and comfortable. Particulars are available on both the attached brochures and at the Collette-CURAC website (www.gocollette.com/curac), with free extensive catalogues available to order on this website as well. More information would be provided by Collette agents by calling 800 248 8991, a telephone number dedicated to CURAC/ARUCC. For example, questions concerning whether the specific tour and date is available and the size of the group would be answered.
2. Member Associations could arrange group travel bookings for their organization on specific tours. The variety of possibilities is noted above. Details and Collette contacts are provided on the attached brochure labeled “group travel”. It will be exciting to learn which member associations take advantage of this opportunity.
3. As a third possibility, we have identified a specific tour that should appeal to CURAC association members. This would allow those of us with shared interests and backgrounds in Canadian colleges and universities to enjoy time with others with similar backgrounds. The tour would

not be exclusive to us, so there would be opportunities to meet other people. It is the 16 day Amsterdam to Budapest, June 10 – 25, 2016 “Legendary Waterways of Europe” tour, available to CURAC members and their families and friends. We have reserved space on a relatively small but very comfortable ship. There are many ports of call, excellent guided tours, excellent cuisine, unlimited beverages with meals, etc. My wife and I (Sydney and Ken Craig) are eager to take this tour and I have booked reservations for us.

The base rate for the tour, including air travel, Toronto return, is \$6,699. Arrangements can also be made from other departures (e.g., Vancouver departure would be an extra \$250) and upgrades are available. The price would be less if you were to book your own travel. The rates quoted on the attached brochure basically require 10 or more booking from our group. My best understanding is that this rate is very competitive with other river cruise companies, yet the tour is of better quality.

Price reductions are difficult to describe. The base is a 5% member benefit reduction on tours booked. As well, Collette periodically advertises price reductions over and beyond the above. For example, at present, they now have an offer that states “Save up to \$400 per person” (check out the website). As well, bookings of the river cruise described at 3. above, carry a \$250 per person savings for bookings in the immediate future. These reductions are also offered to family members and friends. Again, details are available through the telephone number provided above.

There are financial advantages to Member Associations. Collette will pay a commission to CURAC based upon each booking. People booking (members, family and friends) will identify the Member Association with which they are associated to Collette who will then advise CURAC of same. Member Associations will receive 25% of that income. Bookings made directly through Collette provide greater royalties, but members can book the tours through their travel agency of choice.

My general sense is that we have done well in negotiating this agreement. It was inspired by my (Craig) attending the annual meeting of our equivalent U.S. Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE) who have had an affiliation agreement with Collette in place for some time. It was clear that staff and academic retirees throughout the U.S. and their Member Associations have benefited from this agreement. Collette is a relatively large organization in this business since 1918 and they have long offered the remarkable range of tours described above to education-based groups. Our consultations concerning Collette with other Canadian organizations have led to positive reactions. Quality controls seem very much in place and their business is dependent upon providing excellent service. In surveying Member Associations this past year about their interest in this agreement, the vast majority were in support. There was some dissent—indications that there would be little uptake and questions about competing with travel tours arranged by alumni groups and other organizations. We noted that the tours we are offering would be over and beyond those made available by the groups that were mentioned and it is not always the case that our members would have access to these specialized tours. Basically, the tours described above extend the options available to members of Member Associations.

The CURAC/Collette affiliation agreement is very much dependent upon Member Associations recognizing and supporting it as a new member benefit. Making the above information available to members of the Member Associations is vital to the possibility of their taking advantage of the tours. There seems no down side to ensuring this information is available to them. Indeed, the information would extend the range of options available to them.

Bon voyage to all travelling this summer.

Ken Craig,
President, CURAC/ARUCC