

FIVE COLLEGE LEARNING IN RETIREMENT**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING****JUNE 12, 2014**

The regular meeting of the Council was held at the Five College Office, Spring St. Amherst, at 2:15 pm.

Present Council: Susan Beer, Dorothy Gilbert, Michael Greenebaum, Chris Hurn, Jim Harvey, Carol Jolly, Betsy Loughran, Ellen Peck, Jim Perot, Dean Poli, Jim Scott, Zina Tillona, Fran Volkmann, Gordon Wyse

Present Committees/Other: Ina Luadtke, Pat Jorzak, Betsy Siersma, Liz Tiley, Joan Wofford

President's Remarks: Carol introduced our new secretary Pat Jorzak who was previewing a Council meeting. She also thanked the retiring members Chris Hurn, Dorothy Gilbert, and Gordon Wyse for their service. Jim Harvey and Ellen Peck were also thanked for their three years as President and Secretary.

Minutes: The minutes of May 8 were approved as presented.

Vice President's Remarks: Michael thanked the committees which he has worked with this year. He will put the definitions of the committees, their members and their terms as an item on the website.

Treasurer: Betsy reminded us that the new fiscal year began on the first of May. We made this change because our income arrives mainly in May and June so it is logical to begin the year then. She is now trying out the final allotment of bills and income across this yearly divide. Since more receipts came in from Great Decisions, the \$2000 deficit she predicted at the last meeting may change.

Two events were different from predictions. The 25th Gala because of generous donations ended with a surplus of \$1300! The Great Decisions Program ended with only a small deficit of \$320. We will have the final yearly figures by October. Betsy reminded members that any outstanding bills should now come in for payment. Betsy is now using a new computer program which should give us more accessible records for the coming year.

We are anticipating buying new copiers/printers for the office. These will count as capital expenses, not as part of the operating budget. Jim Perot and Liz are now pricing out the possibilities.

Office Manager: Liz explained that our current categories of membership were causing confusion for new members. So far we have 15 new members and 15 trial members. Since trial members do not get preference in the seminar lottery, there was some confusion among the new members. She thinks we need to re-examine our membership categories. The curriculum

committee needs to decide how to make our priority system clearer to the members. In her written report, she also described a new process for scanning checks.

Committee Reports:

The Curriculum Committee continues to discuss the lottery system and the system of priorities. There was distress among the trial members who did not get priority in the lottery. To keep members happy, the system must be perceived as equitable. We also need to make sure that the language is the same in all descriptions of how the lottery works.

Betsy Siersma presented a written report listing the statistics of the latest enrollments. Our membership is only 224 which is low. A few new memberships are still coming in. Out of 27 seminars offered, 8 were lotteryed. Our current policy recommends that seminars must have 8 people to run. There are 5 seminars with fewer than 8. Betsy has asked those moderators to wait until June 30 before withdrawing a seminar since new people may come in and others on long waiting lists may decide to switch. Liz did send out an email saying that seminar places are still available.

Zina wondered if moderators could find out who is on a waiting list. Sometimes seminars can take on more people if there are only a few waiting. There are also cases of special needs people who may need special consideration.

Great Decisions: Fran reported that this year there were between 68 and 78 attendees each time. All of the speakers were given high ratings. The videos were seen as less satisfactory. There may be a question whether we need the videos from the Foreign Policy Institute. This year the program ran an ad in the Amherst Cinema for \$400. Since there was a small deficit this year, that ad may be dropped next year to save money. Fran thanked the committee for all its hard work.

Ad hoc committee on retirement communities: Joan Wofford presented a long written report on our relations with the various retirement communities in the area. (See written report). Over the last years, our seminars and other activities have gradually moved from the five colleges to the retirement communities. Some of this is due to parking, some to the space needs of the colleges. We now need to recognize the involvement of the communities and how we can be good partners with them. When Joan interviewed them, all but one were quite happy with our involvement.

One new idea that seemed to please all of them was that LIR could establish a speakers' bureau of members who can give talks to the various communities. We already do encore presentations in Applewood. These could be spread around to other communities. We would need a volunteer to run such a bureau and probably a small ad hoc committee. Talks can be a good recruiting tool. They could also be available to other groups in the community.

Currently we allow residents to attend special programs at their communities. Residents can also **attend one** session of a seminar meeting in their space. We also give a discount for Great Decisions. This year we donated \$100 to the residents association of Lathrop, Northampton, since we use their meeting room for many functions. We need to think of other

ways in which we can be partners. One problem has been that moderators of seminars in the communities have not always exercised the courtesy due from guests. We all need to be more conscious of this requirement.

LIR began using only the facilities of the colleges. Over the years the college scheduling needs have changed and so Hampshire and Mt. Holyoke cannot give us a commitment of space until after our registrations are set. Michael is going to meet with representatives of the five colleges in the fall to talk about scheduling and parking at the colleges. We do now pay for other locations: Grace Church, the Amherst Woman's Club, Amherst Media, Arcadia, and Hitchcock Center. These run about \$100 per semester per seminar. We cannot afford to pay for many other venues.

New Business—Membership Categories:

The rest of the meeting was a long discussion of our various membership categories, whether they need to be changed, and what the options for change could be. **The procedure** for making such changes is that **the Council** makes a recommendation, **the membership** is surveyed, and then **the Council** votes on changes. The Council does not have to wait for the annual meeting to make such changes. Michael would like the Council members to think about the possibilities and then email him during June. We will then need to formulate a way to survey the membership, possibly with some sort of ballot.

The main issues are with the membership **categories of trial, half-time, and associate**. (See the pages from our operations manual which describe these categories).

1) **Trial Memberships**. Currently these are for one semester, one time, with no lottery priority, no voting rights, and a cost of \$90.

These encourage new people to try us out at a low cost. The problem is the lack of lottery priority which is confusing. Often people do not get into the seminars which interest them and then they turn away.

2) **Half-year memberships**: Currently these are available **only initially in the spring**. They give full rights and cost \$135.

More and more people want these in the fall too or ask that they be available every year. The members who are particularly interested in this change often are unavailable for an extended period of time either from sickness or from long travel plans. They don't want to pay for a full year when they will be here only part of the year.

The **advantages** of changing this category might be to attract more members or to keep more members who anticipate being here only part of the year. The **disadvantages** might be 1) undermining the committees which require full membership and run all year, 2) undermining the financial basis of the organization by removing some full-time memberships. 3) Planning might be difficult because membership numbers would change each semester.

3) **Associate Memberships**. Currently these are available only **to former full-time members**. Associates take no seminars but can attend other functions at a cost of \$90. This

category was put into effect to retain members who temporarily could not fully participate in the seminars.

Some people have asked to start as associate members and do our activities but not the seminars. This change might attract more new members but might undermine the seminar structure by tilting the emphasis away from seminars and toward other programs and activities. It could make LIR more like the area senior centers which offer all sorts of programs but not educational seminars. Right now there are very few associates, but having more could undercut us financially.

Apparently there is also a **\$50 rebate** possible if a full-time member has to drop out of seminars for some reason.

Options that were suggested by various people:

- Keep these categories as they are but explain them more often and more clearly.
- Get rid of the rebate.
- Simplify the system by having only full and half-year memberships for either semester. (Dean Poli)
- Eliminate trial memberships.
- Have initial trial membership for one semester only and then a half-year membership for the rest of the year. (Fran Volkmann)
- Eliminate associate memberships
- Keep associate memberships as they are--only for former full members
- Allow associate memberships from the beginning but with increased cost. (Dorothy Gilbert)
- Allow half-year memberships either semester but make them more than half-price to compensate somewhat for the loss of full memberships (Susan Beer)
- Whatever the changes, make clear to the members that dues support the whole organization and all of its programs, not just the seminars.

In thinking about possible changes, keep in mind our financial picture, how important committees are, what the balance is between seminars and our other programs, .and what kind of members the organization wants to attract. Let Michael know your preferences

Carol Jolly dismissed the meeting by thanking all the Council Members for an eventful but successful year.

Next Council Meeting will be in August.

Respectfully submitted, Ellen Peck, Secretary