

FIVE COLLEGE LEARNING IN RETIREMENT PROGRAM

MEMO TO THE MEMBERS FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

MEMBERSHIP MEETING: TUESDAY, MAY 29 AT 10:00 A.M. AT THE RED BARN, HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE

At this meeting, our Curriculum Committee will be ready with the offerings for next fall. (Best assortment we've had yet, in my opinion.) Also there'll be an opportunity for discussion of our new administrative arrangements, which are a trifle staggering. Here's the story:

As you may know, it has been the plan from the beginning that the UMass Division of Continuing Education would handle our administrative needs only until we are on our feet and can manage ourselves. Some of our members have been feeling that that hour has arrived, and most of us have been looking forward at least to increased involvement of the membership in our affairs.

Well, it's happened! As of the first of July we will no longer function out of Continuing Education, but instead will be thoroughly on our own, though remaining under the aegis of Five Colleges, Inc. (Five Colleges will keep the books for our fiscal affairs, but we say where the money goes.) This development is a little sudden, to be sure, and we must expect some difficulties during the upcoming transition period. But we're provided now with the opportunity to control this venture as we see fit, to manage our own budget, set our own fees, and operate in every way as a self-supporting organization. We have matured, you see, in all senses of the word.

Our first thought should be to recognize the great debt of gratitude we owe to Judy Wardlaw, who will be leaving us regretfully. Without her enthusiasm and energy, it's hard to see how we could have prospered as we have. Fortunately, she has generously agreed to be available to us, on a voluntary basis, during the coming months when we certainly need her advice.

Meanwhile, there are lots of things that members can do as we face some immediate hurdles. We will need plenty of volunteer help, and we'll be looking especially to our Clerical and Communications Committee with new urgency. More than that, we need a single paid person to perform at least some of the services that Judy and Sarah have been providing. Your Council has been thinking of something like a ten-hour week, at a decent wage - manning a phone, arranging schedules, coordinating activities, etc. (A job description is in the works.) We could perhaps hire a suitable person from "outside" but personally I'd prefer to tap our own talented membership for this position. If you're at all interested, please let Judy know (at 545-0312) or me (549-0497).

Finally, we need a place to operate, for very shortly we will be literally homeless. At the very least we need a room and a desk and phone and some space for files and materials. (In the long run we're scheduled to occupy space in a new building to be constructed at Hampshire College, but that's a ways off.) We are pursuing one or two campus possibilities, but I'm not terribly sanguine. If you have any ideas, please let us know.

So we have a few problems, but I guess the main message is: There's a glorious future ahead for LIR.

Bill Gibson