

Yannis

Report to Council, August 14, 2003

I. New Members of Curriculum Committee for Council Approval

The following people were selected by lottery from those who volunteered for the Curriculum Committee. With the approval of Council, they will serve a three-year term ending in 2006: Dan Cukier, Alex MacColl, Maureen Moore, Gillian Morbey, Diedrick Snoek, and Harley Unger.

People Bumped from First Choice Seminars

At the time of the lottery in June, three people who had selected Buddhism as their first choice were lotteried out. Since then, one person has replaced someone who dropped out. Eleven people were lotteried out of the Italian Renaissance. This leaves a total of 13 people who did not get into their first choice seminar. If they do not get in, then they will be placed in their first choice seminar in the spring, ahead of others. There are waiting lists for some seminars based on second and third choices.

Encouraging New Moderators

Of the 34 moderators and co-moderators for this fall, six are first-time moderators. The committee is continuing to explore ways to encourage people who have never moderated a seminar to do so. One of the most effective means seems to be to bring people in as co-moderators.

IV. Different Formats for Seminars

We are also continuing to encourage different types of seminars and different time-frames. For the fall, Exodus sessions will last 2 1/2 hours, two seminars (Diversity of Operas and Hawthorne/Melville) are experimenting with a joint session on the novel and opera Billy Budd, Jane Austen will span two semesters and involve both novels and films from the novels, and Intermediate Computer Usage required on-line registration. The Summer Seminar on Short Story writing sessions have lasted 2 1/2 hours and a second session of seven weeks has begun that will end after Labor Day. The committee approved a similar short story writing seminar for the spring at its meeting on August 7.

V. Seminars for Spring

The deadline for proposals for the spring is October 27. The committee has already reviewed three proposals and approved one. Another half-dozen or so ideas for seminars have been discussed with the committee but proposals are not yet in.

VI. Registrations for Fall Seminars (see attached)

VII. Dates for Fall Events

September 29

October 16

October 27

December 7

December 8
Fall seminars begin
Moderators' Reception
Deadline for proposals for Spring, 2004
Holiday Open House and Catalog Distribution
Last week for most seminars

5CLTR Council Meeting August 14, 2003

1). Curriculum Committee:

Dottie Rosenberg reported that eleven people had expressed interest in the six vacancies of the committee. According to established procedure, a lottery was

There was a suggestion about retaining the names of these people for future vacancies or other committees that might need help. k m would like to have the names for his files.

Gillian Morbey reported that the various summer programs were on the whole well-attended and enjoyed by members. No-shows for the free programs were a problem that needs to be looked at.

Eleanor Shattuck relayed a request from a member to publish a story which he had written. After some discussion, we reiterated the position that the function of the newsletter is to disseminate information about the organization and occasionally share some material, edited for brevity, which has been developed in seminars.

Naomi will discuss with the 5CLIR coordinator the question of whether membership in LIR constitutes "enrollment in the 5 colleges" as defined by PVT A. In the past we have encouraged seminar participants to use the buses where possible rather than private cars. I t would be helpful to know whether they are still free.

Diversity Task Force. Jim Harvey, chair, distributed a report from this ad hoc group, Recommendations of the LIR Diversity Committee. Naomi led a discussion of the five suggested steps; Jim's group will be asked to propose specific language for item #1: "make a clear policy statement and put it on the website and in the newsletter." Council members recommended that

"diversity" be a topic for the "Conversations" (formerly Conversations over Coffee) program. A discussion among members with inter-racial, or other "diverse" grandchildren seemed appealing also. We agreed that person-to-person contact is probably the most effective way to achieve a more diverse LIR membership.

The "Conversations" program will be reformatted to encourage more participant conversation rather than presentation of information.

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September 11

Chuck distributed copies

of the Annual Report-2003 to all Board members. He would like to see a regular format adopted for this annual report and recommends including financial statements as well. A copy will be send to Marie Hess, the Five College Coordinator.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LIR DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Members: Wayne Cowan, Jim Harvey, Suzanne Lehman, Sanat Majumder, Doris McKethan, Dave Moriarty, Howard Parad,, Diedrick Snoek, Naomi Yanis

We met on August 1, 2003 and September 5, 2003.

We identified the following kinds of diversity to be discussed:

1. Ethnic
2. Educational background, Intellectual level
3. Preferred style of classes/seminars — i.e. lecture, peer learning etc.
4. Economic
5. Political opinion
6. Sexual orientation
7. Nationality and culture

A number of questions were raised:

1. How diverse do we have to be?

2. What are the signs of our non-diversity or homogeneity?

3. What is so good about being diverse?

Some points made in the course of discussion:

1. Just as diversity in biology is important, so also a learning environment would profit from diversity as well. In that way assumptions and points of view are challenged and enriched. For example someone who was "different" in some way would sometimes see things from a different point of view that would not occur to others. We need to "keep our doors and windows open for good ventilation of diverse ideas".

2. For the most part, new people come into the group through friends, which can be a way of limiting diversity, since "birds of a feather flock together". It was suggested that we need to have ways of reaching out, perhaps using the "Ambassador" approach of Elder Hostel to reach out to different kinds of people, or perhaps increased publicity in a variety of places. As individuals we need to be welcoming and all of us need to work on expanding the variety of friends that we have. As a group, we need to create a "comfort level" for various types of people who may not be in the majority in LIR. Would, for example, a "Bush Republican" feel welcome? Are we secure enough in our own points of view to allow a different one?

3. Program content can be a way of encouraging diversity. For example having a course dealing with issues of sexual orientation would send a signal that LIR is open to gays and lesbians. Similarly course content that deals with issues of race and class may be a signal that we as a group are open to all races and classes.

4. It was pointed out that individuals have different comfort levels:

- Some have no discomfort with a lack of diversity
- Some have some discomfort, but not enough to change
- Some have stronger discomfort and are motivated to do something to change the status quo.

We then turned to an assessment of the present state of diversity in LIR. We felt that it is entirely possible that some may feel discomfort being a member of a small minority in a number of ways:

- Ethnicity/Race
- Education level
- Social class
- Points of view on politics and other controversial issues.

We feel that LIR is already doing a number of things to increase the comfort level of those who are "different", but that perhaps more could be done.

Accordingly we suggest several ways in which LIR could be more of diversity noted above:

1. Make a clear policy statement and put it on the website and in the newsletter.
2. Find new ways of reaching out through advertising and other means of getting in touch with a larger circle of retired people, stressing person to person outreach. Members should be encouraged to invite those who are different from themselves as well as those who are similar.
3. Perhaps open up the discussion of diversity to the larger group — perhaps through "Conversations over Coffee".
4. Take a look at course content to make sure that it appeals to a variety of points of view and interests.
5. Find ways of helping members be aware of the need for openness via newsletter articles, "Conversations over Coffee", and workshops on topics such as "Dealing with Differences".

October

Newsletter: the editors were complimented on the recent edition highlighting new members. It was suggested that they include the website address for the 5 College calendar which replaces the printed version we used to receive.

November

The practice of leaving Friday mornings open for the Great Decisions programs received endorsement from Council. Seminars of a few weeks duration can be accommodated in the Friday morning time slot, preceding the Great Decisions series. In view of the continuing difficulties in finding locations for seminars, the Curriculum Committee proposed accepting an offer from the Easthampton Lathrop Village to host a seminar, no strings attached. Unanimously approved.

The Committee has been asked to approve a seminar which would involve the LIR participants meeting for a session with a class at Northampton High School. Council members supported the proposal.

Jerry Rosenthal observed that, generally speaking, innovations in LIR programming should be endorsed unless there appears to be a serious conflict with established policies.

Council approved having Karen provide token gifts of appreciation to her College campus contacts during the holiday season. It was agreed that on a trial basis, beginning

January 2004, the office will be closed for official business on Fridays. This will allow Karen to have uninterrupted time to work on business during busy times and provides time off as the work load allows to compensate for increased office coverage during the summer.

December

In reviewing the two-year trial period, the curriculum committee endorses starting the second semester in mid-February. They also recommend combining the annual meeting and catalog distribution in one meeting in the Spring without a pot-luck. This new arrangement would not start until Spring 2005.

Elizabeth raised two issues in informal proposals: (a) we should encourage **short series of seminars during the five month period between regular LIR semesters to provide more options for learning opportunities for members**

and (b) we should think of ways to make use of the free third Thursday of the month formerly allocated to Conversations over Coffee to allow for informal interest group get-togethers. This latter idea was not practical as Naomi expects there will be more one-time events scheduled on this day. There was some discussion about using Saturday mornings for interest groups or workshops. As for (a) there was much discussion with

encouragement from members of the curriculum committee and council members who had taken part in a summer series in the past, and negative comments regarding the imposition of additional work on the office staff and the lack of air-conditioned meeting rooms. Since summer seminars would logically come within the purview of the curriculum committee, Dottie will consider whether the idea should be encouraged and how.

January

) Karen asked for a determination on a question. Some of our members, who had gone associate at the beginning of the year, wanted to take courses the second semester. What would be the proper fee under the circumstances? The Finance Committee is recommending that the fee be \$100 in addition to the \$25 associate fee previously paid. The reasoning was this. A member who pays \$175 for a full year at the beginning of the year, and then takes no seminars in the spring is entitled to a refund of \$50. This recommendation would equate the two scenarios. We ask for your vote on this question.

February NO Action

March

That the "5CLIR Funds" policy statement be accepted.

The motion passed unanimously.

Moved by Jim Scott

Second by Chuck Gillies

That a \$5,000 Capital Fund be established.

The motion passed unanimously.

The balances in the several funds were reviewed.

Moved by Jim Scott

Second by Chuck Gillies

That the balances in the Memorial Fund and the Membership Assistance Fund be restored to their original balances as per Five College Inc.'s records and superceding 5CLIR's action last year.

The motion passed unanimously.

Nick complimented the Five College Inc. staff with whom he has worked on financial matters.

April

By-Laws Changes. A paper with proposed 5CL1R by-laws changes dated

April 8, 2004 prepared by Jono Hanke and Chuck Gillies was distributed. The report also included an amended mission statement.

Moved by Jon° Hanke

Second by Peg Bedell

That the proposed 5CLIR By-Laws Changes submitted by the committee by accepted.

Motion passed unanimously.

Moved by Chuck

Second by Jim

That the mission statement of 5CL1R include language as follows:

"To implement this mission we... believe that a diverse membership is central to a rich and stimulating learning environment therefore we strive to provide a welcoming atmosphere to all."

May

There was considerable discussion on a recommendation by the committee to set minimum class sizes — 8 for seminars, and 6 for workshops — not to include moderator(s).

The committee will also advise on suitable cut-off dates for reaching the minimum class number.

Moved by Jim Scott

Second by Chuck Gillies

That the recommended class size minimums be approved as policy, along with cut-off dates to be determined by the Curriculum Committee.

All approved except Ginny Senders who abstained.

The Meet the Moderators meeting is set for May 26th

. There was a discussion on procedures for appointment of new members to the Curriculum Committee. In the past there has been a lottery if more people apply than there are positions for. In order to assure that members do the necessary work, a written memo on the duties of Curriculum Committee members was recommended. It was agreed that in the case of too few applicants, chairs can recruit.

There was a discussion on making token donations to various seminar venue

hosts. Karen has sent letters of thanks to Rock Ridge, Lathrop and the Northampton Health Center. Dotty Gorra added that members of seminars meeting in off-campus locations might add their personal thanks to their hosts. Council approved sending \$100 to Hitchcock Nature Center, Historic

Northampton and Historic Deerfield. On a separate motion Council approved sending \$100 to the Jones Library.

Naomi reported that the audio-visual committee is planning to buy a document camera for under \$500 which works with the digital projector and is more convenient and cheaper than an opaque projector.

Permanent headquarters: Naomi recounted a recent meeting of the LER executive board with representatives from Hampshire College who are looking for an expression of interest from us in using space at the over-55 age condominium housing they are planning. She itemized the ways in which we might use space: 1) seminar space which would be for our exclusive use, 2) lounge space, for us and the community residents, 3) office space for which, at the minimum, we would have to pay for overhead. She asked Council members to think about this proposal and be prepared to discuss it in detail at the June meeting. A memo summarizing the April 22 meeting, along with a "think piece" by E. Armstrong, will be provided Council members ahead of time.

Maximum Number of Course Offerings per semester: In the process of approving the courses for next fall, the Curriculum Committee felt the need for guidelines for the maximum number of offerings in one semester. Too many offerings results in a dilution of participants and the possible cancelation of courses. Too few offerings results in many "lotteried" seminars and participants are excluded from courses. There is also the issue of diversity of course offerings as well as the total number of offerings. Who should make these decisions? Council or the Curriculum Committee? The Curriculum Committee feels it is the one to make this decision.

June

Annual Report: Committee reports are mostly in and a summary will be issued shortly. On the suggestion of Dotty Gorra, a copy of the document of 5CLIR incorporation will be included to serve that this report will find its way to the desks of the five college presidents

"Slavery and its Legacy"

Chuck distributed a memo (attached) describing the background and current plan for a special program to begin January 2005. His committee is in discussion with some prominent speakers who are being asked to participate. There will be no charge for attending the program; it is viewed as a public service by LIR in support of its diversity initiative. The memo includes three proposals which were adopted (with changes) as follows:

1) Moved that \$1000 of the surplus funds earned in Great Decisions over the last couple of years and now contained in the Program Reserve Fund be transferred to the Memorial

Fund for possible use in the Slavery and its Legacy program.

2) Moved that \$1000 in the Memorial Fund be designated to be available to support the

Slavery and its Legacy program.

3) Moved that 5CLIR. will support this program with appropriate office resources as necessary.

On a motion by Chuck, seconded by June Guild, all approved.