

**FIVE COLLEGE LEARNING IN RETIREMENT  
MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING  
DECEMBER 12, 2013**

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

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

**Present Committees/Other:** Marybeth Bridegam, Joan McKelvey, Liz Tiley, Sara Wright, Naomi Yanis, Sheila Klem, Joan Wofford

**Minutes:** The minutes were approved as presented.

**Preview:** Jim Harvey reported that there was close to record attendance. The cost was the same as last year. There was only one complaint about the schedule change to Saturday. There were several complaints, however, about the catalogue listing the seminars alphabetically since some people had trouble figuring out when each seminar was being held.

The Council also wanted to thank Nina Scott and the Daily Hampshire **Gazette** for the fine article with pictures about our Preview.

**Treasurer: (see sheets and finance committee report)** Betsy pointed out that this year has a tight budget. The Preview and the Memorial Service are underfunded and we will have extra expenses for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. We do have money put aside, so there will not be a problem funding this year's activities. In Feb. the finance committee will meet to discuss whether we need to raise dues next year.

The good news is that our endowment fund has grown since the stock market has gone up.

The finance committee was not happy with the proposal to make scholarships less than 50% of the dues. They felt that 50% is enough. Now someone has to apply to pay less than that. They liked keeping that policy. Perhaps we could change the language of the application to make it seem less demeaning.

There was much discussion about scholarships/member assistance:

- We should do some fund-raising and promote bequests.
- In the registration form we have a way to contribute to the scholarship fund—perhaps we need to separate this from “unrestricted” giving.
- Too many separate funds are hard to manage; we are now consolidating funds.
- A newsletter article should explain all the options, especially for new members.
- Liz should be the contact person for those needing scholarships but she should not be put in the position of the one deciding who gets what.
- We now have only 19 people who get assistance. This is not a large percentage. Giving scholarships does not take money away since without them people just would not join.

- If our dues increase, we may get more scholarship takers. If the scholarship fund increases, we can handle that.

This discussion will continue in the next months.

**Office Manager:** Liz told us that 8 people have rejoined; 12 are new trial members; 6 have joined for the spring at \$135. New members will have the option to participate in the Winter activities. The Winter Programs have had a great response. Two have over 60 sign-ups!

Word has now come that the office will be moved by the beginning of May to the lower level of Neilson Library. Retired faculty offices are there as well as a lounge area which we can use. There are 6 visitors slots in the Green Street parking lot but parking may still be a problem.

Liz would like to move sometime in March since April is a busy month with registrations and the lottery for the fall.

**Curriculum Committee:** Michael Greenebaum made two related proposals which the Curriculum Committee is still discussing:

1. We need to change the way we describe “presentations” so as not to intimidate people who are nervous about talking in front of a group. We need to make clear the balance between presentation and discussion.
2. We should eliminate the section in the Operations Manual called “Special Status” and leave it up to the moderators how to handle the issue of diminished abilities to participate.

There was much discussion of these two issues:

- Since we have a policy of “no auditing,” the special status was put in to accommodate those who have been fully participating members but have then had setbacks. They are not counted in the number in the seminars. This status allows some people to continue to participate or at least make a graceful transition. It was put into the manual to alert moderators about the possibilities of accommodating people, not to make anyone feel like a second class citizen.
- The Curriculum Committee would like suggestions from Council about how they can better word the descriptions of what “participation” in seminars means.
- How much of a block is the word “presentation” when soliciting new members? We really can’t be all things to all people; some people will never like to “present.”
- If we eliminated the “special status” category, would that put too much pressure on moderators to decide what to do in individual cases? Don’t we need a spelled out policy?

Chris asked about scheduling. Now the deficit of seminars is on Tuesday afternoon. Liz replied that seminars are spaced according to moderators’ priorities. In the schedule we could have space for up to 30 seminars if that is what is wanted.

Dean asked about the alphabetic listing in the catalogue. There are more requests about place than about titles.

**Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Celebration:** Sheila Klem gave us the date—**Wednesday April 23 from 5:30 to 9:30 at the Hampton Inn**. The first hour will be cocktails in a separate area followed by a dinner with some kind of entertainment. The Member Services Committee is going to meet. They will take on the job of organizing this event as their yearly activity.

On Dec. 2 there was a 5CLIR presidential summit meeting with 10 past and current presidents. There was a lot of musing -- looking back on our history and forward to the future.

From the past:

1. The important role the office manager/program coordinator has played in LIR.
2. How the infusion of technology has changed the way the office is managed.
3. The editing of the newsletter by the office manger instead of by volunteers.
4. The administrative changes in our relationship to 5CInc.
5. In 2005 the Next Steps retreat allowed for an extensive self-evaluation of the organization. The speaker pointed out our uniqueness as a peer learning organization rather than a lecture-based group.
6. In 2006 the institution of "special programs" morphed into a special part of the organization.
7. In the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of 1999 encore seminars gave continuity to our program.
8. In 1999 the "Great Decisions Program" began which added a more public voice to our programming.
9. In 2006 the "trial membership" was instituted to increase our membership.

Looking to the future:

1. We need to continue to cultivate our rapport with 5CInc., perhaps sharing our catalogue and newsletter with them.
2. As our office shifts, we need to reevaluate how we use the office.
3. As we grow and have established a fund for the future, we will need to think more about active fund-raising.
4. We need to consider our dues level and continue to be sensitive to the issue of economic diversity.
5. Our presence on the campuses is changing as is our use of retirement community facilities.
6. Do we need more affiliation with other LIR organizations, even though our peer learning model is special?
7. As we continue to plan trips, we also need to consider our coordinating with outside programs like Road Scholar.

For this year's celebration, Sara will update the written history which she wrote for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This might go on our website. We will have an ongoing slide show and perhaps photos taken of the group. Chuck Gilles is planning a series of graphs and charts showing our growth and where people live. We may even have LIR lanyards for our name cards

Commented [E1]:

Sheila is taking suggestions for what to do at the dinner. Henny Lewin and Joan McKelvy will also take collect ideas.

**Other Business:** Carol asked again how we should count a year since associate members must have been full members for a year before they can have associate status. We have thought of a year as fall-spring, but there is no real reason not to count spring-fall as a year.

Jim Harvey wondered if we contemplate raising dues for full members, should we also consider raising them for associate members?

Liz has put the registration for spring on line. For new members this is hard since we do not take credit cards. Anyone registering on line needs to send a check separately.

No newsletter in January and no Council meeting.

The Memorial Program will be on January 2 at 10 at the Amherst Alumni Club.

The next Council meeting will be February 13, 2014.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ellen Peck, Secretary