

January, 1995

Addendum to Governance Section, by the president:

My impression is that the majority of LIR members this year are satisfied with the way LIR is run. Feed-back has been generally positive - and infrequent. As long as the curriculum is well organized and stimulating, the special events and meetings well planned, and the social occasions lively, there are no complaints. Karen handles registration and other office routines smoothly, the committees are all functioning effectively, and Council is reasonably harmonious. We have a most hospitable sponsor in Five Colleges Inc. We're financially sound, although running behind last year in income. Even parking hasn't been a headache so far. The unevenness of seminar presentations, which has been of concern from the very beginning, hasn't seemed to improve much but it certainly has not gotten worse over the years. Innovations in programming have been undertaken and the sky hasn't fallen. So I hear no clamor for change, except from an occasional charter member who fears that the quality of the curriculum has deteriorated over time. And I hear no clamor for significant change in the governance structure, although need for fine-tuning is voiced from time to time.

There has been ongoing discussion in Council and in the TF and Coordinating Committee on differing points of view about whether we should be a dynamic or conservative organization. In general, the concerns about governance are as follows:

1. We need a way of nominating candidates for Council that will assure us that we are getting candidates who are well qualified and committed. But also, we need to guarantee a fair and open process that will give those who want to run a chance to do so.
2. The nominating process for officers should never fail to secure at least two candidates for each position. Strategies for helping the membership become acquainted with the candidates before the election date should be devised and carried out.
3. "Broad member initiatives" to make changes in existing regulations and by-laws, such as referendums, should be possible. However, achieving simultaneously the flexibility needed to make member-initiated change and the stability needed to steer a steady course is not easy.
4. Committee chairs, on whom the health and vitality of LIR depends, should be accepted, by By-law change, as full participants in all Council deliberations.
5. There should be ongoing effort to open up governance activities to all interested members. Council meetings might be open to the membership, etc.

I have observed this year that members seem to be as much affected by perception as by reality. If they perceive that Council is member-friendly, then they respond with trust. Attitude and atmosphere created by the Coordinator, officers and Council seem to be potent indicators of how well we're doing. Simple, fair, logical regulations suffice to keep us on track. The membership seems to want to be bothered with nothing more.