

THE OBSERVER
JUNE 10, 2019

ISSUES FROM TOWN HALL

On Tuesday June 4, 61 IRP members, including nine from the Advisory Board, attended a Town Hall to discuss recent developments in our schedule for the Fall and Spring 2019-2020 and in our identification of alternatives for the future.

Registration for the Fall 2019 has been delayed because we need to identify two additional classrooms to accommodate the planned study groups. The need has arisen because TNS bell schedule no longer provides us with classrooms for the early afternoon on Friday and SPS can provide only two classrooms each day Monday through Thursday. We are working with TNS to identify the two additional rooms and expect to announce a revised grid and the start of registration very shortly.

The eight summer study groups are proceeding successfully at TNS as more than 80 members have registered.

The Admissions and Mentoring Committees announced that ten new members will start in the Fall and mentors have been assigned to all of them. Based on recommendations made by last year's Task Force, a Town Hall meeting for newer members held last semester, and meetings with the chairs of Orientation, Mentoring, and Admissions, the Advisory Board has approved a Plan for New Member Integration that is included as the final page of this *Observer*. The goal

of the Plan is to mobilize all our resources so that new arrivals become fully participating IRP members. In a coming issue of *The Observer* we will provide bios and pictures of the ten new members.

The IRP has also become a not-for-profit corporation under New York State law (called the Institute for Education in Retirement, Inc. (IER)) able to collect and spend money. This means that from now on, any money that members contribute to the IER is under our control. We have also submitted our application to the IRS for IER to become a 501 (c)(3) tax exempt corporation, which means that under NYS law, once the application is approved, contributions to the IER are tax deductible.

For the future, the Advisory Board is exploring all options—including continuing the current TNS/SPS model, as well as forming a relationship with another institution including CUNY (the Graduate Center, Hunter) and Columbia.

In the course of Q and A and discussion, members of the Advisory Board reminded members that our new dean, Helen Wussow, plans to hire a director for the IRP who will use the resources of her Open Campus division for administrative support in areas like budget, scheduling, and technology. Until the director is hired, Adam will continue as our administrative officer, available in the 9th

floor office at 16th street. Dean Wussow made a few revisions to the job description we developed last year in collaboration with Dean Watson's office. She told the Executive Committee that she would

appoint a search committee of six members, including two from the IRP (Eileen Sullivan and Jan Adler) and expects to have the director in place by September.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DIVERSITY-OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Activities The committee is in process of contacting diverse organizations and university alumni/ae associations to spread the word about the IRP. We welcome your input. Do you have a candidate or an organization for us to contact? Email Doris at dwally44@aol.com or Mary at mabel331@gmail.com.

IRP's Ron Russo, and Tamara Oyola-Santiago, of the New School's Wellness Program, have led workshops to improve our skills and sensitivity.

PLEASE NOTE AND SAVE THE DATE: On Saturday, October 19, we will sponsor Richard Blint, Assistant Professor of African-American Studies at Eugene Lang College of The New School leading a talk, Q and A, and discussion on the work of James Baldwin.

We are also planning a trip to Weeksville, the oldest free Black community in NYC. Details to follow.

Opportunities Thank you to two outgoing original committee members, Susan Forlenza and Dolores Walker, whose contributions have been instrumental in developing our mission.

We invite you to apply for their positions on the Committee by letting Adam know of your interest.

The Committee meets monthly on the third Monday of the month.

Events: For all IRP members, the committee recommends Film at Lincoln Center, which is hosting the annual Human Rights Watch Film Series at the Walter Reade Theater June 13-20. Information about the films, tickets, and schedule is available at:

<https://www.filmlinc.org/festivals/human-rights-watch-film-festival-2019/#about>

<https://ff.hrw.org/new-york>

ANNOUNCING NEW IRP NEWSLETTER

This Fall the marketing committee will publish the first issue of a Newsletter focused on enhancing our IRP experience and helping to keep us all connected. We will also be distributing copies to news outlets, schools, and other organizations. The Newsletter will be published once each semester and will complement *The*

Observer's timely information with member profiles; articles about members' outside interests, collections, travel adventures and more; reports from study group leaders, mentors and our special interest groups; the rewards of being a longtime IRP member and tips on being a newbie. We'll also have IRP-related puzzles and humor pieces, book and movie reviews,

and tips on how to score discounts for events, shopping and subscriptions.

Get in touch with your inner Lois Lane or Clark Kent! The editors, Pat Fortunato and Audrey Lipton, want to hear from you if you are a skilled writer, editor,

proofreader, graphic artist, managing editor to handle scheduling—or are a devoted seeker of deals of all types. Contact Audrey and Pat at: IRP.Newsletters@gmail.com.

FROM THE MEMBER SURVEY COMMITTEE

On May 10 we emailed a survey to all IRP members. The response rate to date is gratifying, but we are hoping to get as close to 100% as possible. Remember that your responses are anonymous and we hope to use the results to inform decisions about IRP programming and to compare current member attitudes and demographics with those reported in previous surveys of IRP and other institu-

tions. If you have already taken the Survey, thank you; if you have not yet completed it, please do.

Click here to access the Survey: <http://bit.ly/2WZwdNj>.

The Survey Committee plans to have a report on results by the Fall term.

IRP AND TNS CENTENNIAL

As careful readers of *The Observer* will remember, Julia Foulkes, Professor of History at TNS, who has been working with our Centennial Committee, requested IRP members who had taken continuing education courses at TNS to share their memories with her Centennial team. Phyllis Kriegel, Lila Shoshkes, Marian Lamin, and Steve Reichstein responded to the request and on April 26 they met with Mark Larrimore, Associate

Professor of Religious Studies, for a conversation about their experiences. As Professor Larrimore wrote after the discussion, “The spirit of America’s original ‘university for adults’ lives on in the IRP...Kate (our producer) and Jessica (our student assistant) were moved and inspired—as was I.” The conversation was recorded and will be released as a podcast in September. We will keep you posted.

Summary of Advisory Board Plan for Integrating New Members into the IRP AY 2019-2020

From: New Member Integration Committee: E. Sullivan, C. Groneman, G. McCaslin

This plan is based on several factors: the recommendations made last year by the New Member Integration Task Force, the comments and suggestions of our newer members at Town Hall meetings, and our own meetings with Chairs and members of the Orientation, Mentoring, Admissions, and Community Building Committees. We thank all the members who provided comments and suggestions. The Plan focuses on two parts of the integration process: activities after the orientation session and mentoring.

Post Orientation

New member integration will continue for at least the entire first year of IRP membership. The specific tasks and responsibilities for this period are:

- Make special announcement at orientation session asking for someone to volunteer to get in touch with other members of the incoming class for regular get-togethers. Follow up with the leader of the group
 - Responsibility: Carol and Greg
- Arrange tech meetings to include all members but with a special focus on new members
 - Responsibility: Tech and Curriculum Committees
- Hold a ‘committee fair’ so that new members can learn about all our committees/activities/SIGs, with special emphasis on things new members can join
 - Responsibility: Adam
- Arrange “Pour at Four” (perhaps at an earlier afternoon hour) get-togethers for all IRP members, every other week. (This may be a tall order given current space constraints, but ...)
 - Responsibility: Greg
- Encourage established IRP members to invite a newer member they don’t already know well to lunch; or offer to accompany a new member to a GMM and introduce them around
 - Responsibility: All, via Community Building Committee
- As early as possible, obtain a photo of new members that can be attached to the bios that are circulated to members in *The Observer* and posted on the Zine
 - Responsibility: Adam

Mentoring

Most of our new members comment very favorably on their experience with mentors but, as reported by previous task forces and at Town Hall meetings, the experiences can vary. The Mentoring Chair and Committee implemented several new procedures during the past year. The chair received information from Admissions on new members soon after they were admitted and began the process of matching them with mentors. The chair then sent a formal letter with revised Guidelines outlining their responsibilities to the mentors and followed up with an informal letter in the first weeks of the semester, asking mentors how things were going. The Mentoring Committee also worked with Adam to schedule sessions to provide tech assistance for the registration process to the new members. These procedures will continue.

And, in addition, the Mentoring Committee will begin to implement the following procedures this year.

- Organize workshops throughout the year for mentors and the committee to facilitate the sharing of experiences and advice; as part of these workshops, the new members will also meet with members of the Advisory Board, the IRP's governing body
- Follow up with new members early in the semester regarding their experiences with their mentors. This can be done by email or by organizing forums for new members
- Ask mentors to send regular progress reports to the committee at least during the first semester; mentors should also be told to inform the mentoring chair if they are no longer able to fulfill the obligations of the position
- To elevate the cultural importance of mentoring within the IRP, mentees and mentors will report on their experiences at General Meetings and Town Halls and will write short reports about their experiences for *The Observer* or longer accounts for the *IRP Newsletter*
- Issue calls for mentors, and also for members of the Mentoring Committee, in *The Observer* to expand the base of mentors and also to ease the work of the committee

In addition, the organizers of the orientation session for new members will invite a member of the Mentoring Committee to attend all or part of the session.