

INSTITUTE FOR RETIRED PROFESSIONALS

OBSERVER FEBRUARY 10, 2020

FROM THE ADVISORY BOARD

- No Classes this Wednesday, February 12 (Lincoln's Birthday) and next Monday, February 17 (Presidents Day).
- General Membership Meeting, Friday, February 14, 1:15-3:15PM, Theresa Lang Center, 55 West 13th Street, Room 202.
- Next *Observer* will be Tuesday, February 18.

Space

We are now starting the third week of the semester at SLU (CUNY's School of Labor and Urban Studies). Members seem very happy with the classrooms and tech equipment, which coordinators are managing quite expertly. The neighborhood is accessible by public transportation and includes restaurants of many styles, theaters and concert halls for easy ticket purchase, the NY Public Library and, for those anticipating spring, Bryant Park.

The rocky part of the three weeks has followed from the configuration of office and classroom space at SLU, the staff's relative inexperience with students using these rooms during the day, and the recent renovation and redecoration of the space. These factors explain why, at the request of the SLU leadership, we have been reminding you to be mindful about noise in the public areas and to confine eating to the pantry areas on the 18th and 19th floors. We anticipate that with

respect and understanding on all sides, this rocky phase will pass.

A second rocky part of these first weeks concerned our use of SLU classrooms after 3PM for committee meetings, workshops, etc. In a meeting with the SLU leadership, the Executive Committee secured agreement that two rooms will now be made available after 3, Monday through Thursday. Our hours for room 1923 have been extended to 4:30 (so this room is now available to us from 9:30AM to 4:30PM), and room 19b is now available from 2:30 to 4:30PM. Email Adam to reserve either of these rooms for committee activities.

In addition, at any given day and time, one classroom at SLU—either 1804 or 1923—will often be available for members to gather and socialize during regular class hours.

At present, room 1804 is available to members on:

- Monday 9:30-11AM and 12:45-2:45PM
- Tuesday 9:30-1PM
- Thursday 9:30-2:45PM

If 1804 is not available, room 1923 may well be. Check it out. (At present this room is available during regular class hours **EXCEPT** on Tuesday 11-12:45PM, Thursday 11- 2:45PM, and on some specific days when the Curriculum Committee has its workshops—see announcement below).

IRP Office

Adam Blaton, our Assistant Director of Administration, continues to occupy the IRP office on the 9th floor of the 16th street building from Monday to Friday starting at 9:30AM. As you can imagine, many members are calling on Adam during these first weeks of the semester. To ensure that he can respond quickly, Adam asks that you please email—rather than phone—him with your requests and questions. Please indicate the subject of your request in the subject line and, again, the email is irp@newschool.edu. For chairs of committees and SIGs, and any others authorized to reserve rooms at SLU or The New School, please write “Request for room at SLU (or TNS)” in the subject line to ensure that Adam will attend quickly to the request.

IRP Future

The IER (Institute for Education in Retirement), our fund-raising arm, has raised \$110,500 thus far in its current campaign, with 82 percent of members contributing. This is an amazing result; all that is left is to increase the contribution rate to bring it closer to a perfect 100%, which is a big selling point in our conversations with other institutions. The campaign committee is now sending out letters acknowledging our gratitude to you all.

There is nothing new to report on the negotiation with CUNY’s Graduate Center. As we have reported, our negotiating team is meeting on Thursday, February 13 with the GC leadership, including the current president, provost, vice president for communications/public affairs, and vice president for educational advancement (who is also executive director of the GC Foundation). Also present will be the dean and program director for the GC’s Office of Academic Initiatives and

Strategic Innovation, Brian Peterson and Mariel Villere, who are interested in the affiliation with us. More to come on this.

Observer and Member Bio Archives

Want to check an *Observer* announcement from some time ago? Need to identify a member with a particular skill or interest? The archives of *Observer* and the member bios are now up to date on the Zine. Both files can be searched pressing ctrl+f (PC) or cmd+f (Mac) on your keyboard. The search is not case sensitive, e.g., gmm or GMM will get the same results. Try it out!

- Bios: <https://www.irpzine.org/news/new-member-bios-fall-2016/>
- *Observer*: <https://www.irpzine.org/irp-observer-2/>

EVENTS

Curriculum Committee Workshops

Last week Curriculum Committee members visited most study groups to give our semi-annual reminder of the central role that coordinating study groups plays in IRP’s success. We want to thank the coordinators who welcomed our members and all the participants who listened to what we said. And we especially want to thank the IRP members who shared their study group ideas and indicated an interest in coordinating; we will be in touch with you.

Whether or not you “signed up” last week, if you are interested in coordinating a study group, please let a Curriculum Committee member know (Committee members are listed in the Zine), and we encourage you to attend one of the Curriculum Committee coordinator workshops listed below.

Workshop Schedules

Please note that some times and venues are different from those previously announced because of changes in room availability. **All workshops are now scheduled at SLU, room 1923.** To register for a workshop, email Adam at irp@newschool.edu.

LET'S GET STARTED—Thinking About Coordinating But Want Assistance? Bring your ideas to this workshop on:

- Monday, February 24, 1:15-3PM, or
- Wednesday, February 26, 11:15-12:45PM

Whether you have just the germ of an idea or one that is almost fully developed, this workshop is for you.

We will work together to support the development of your ideas, suggest resources, help you to find a co-coordinator (if you want one) and answer your questions about the Study Group proposal process.

HOW'S IT GOING?—Current coordinators are invited to discuss experiences with their study groups—what's working and what's...not so much.

- Monday, March 2, 1:15-3PM, or
- Wednesday, March 4, 3-4:30PM

Come and share insights and techniques with your colleagues. These meetings have proven very helpful!

COMPLETING A PROPOSAL—Want some help completing a study group proposal for next semester or for the future? Join us on:

- Monday, March 9, 1:15-3PM or
- Wednesday, March 11, 3-4:30PM

Learn more about finding appropriate resources on your topic, organizing a working syllabus, and completing the proposal form

Experienced coordinators will be there to answer your questions and to share their techniques for developing a proposal. We encourage those of you who are at a later stage of proposal development to attend one of these workshops.

You're Invited To Tuesdays With Friends

The Tuesdays With Friends Committee invites you to sign up for our spring program of small-group get-togethers featuring talks presented and hosted by IRP members. The dates and topics are:

- March 10—*Behind The Scenes On A Movie Set: The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly*, Presented by Linda Gottlieb
- March 24—*The Inscrutable Power of the Cult*, Presented by Carl Binder
- April 21—*Supertitles: Updating the Opera Experience*, Presented by Sonya Friedman

Take advantage of these special opportunities to spend time with your colleagues. [Click here](#) to read the descriptions and make your choice. (Please note that the invitation and sign-up will be through the *Observer* announcement only.) The registration deadline is Tuesday, February 18.

Save The Date And Register:

A Roadmap To Retirement

- Saturday morning, March 7
- The New School University Center, 63 Fifth Ave., Starr Foundation Hall, Room UL 102 (lower level)

The Our Stage of Life Committee presents Robert Freedman Esq., an authority on elder law and advocacy for vulnerable populations, who will discuss the legal issues we are likely to face as we age. Mr. Freedman was a founder of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys and currently serves on the Executive Committee of the Elder Law and Special Needs Section of the New York State Bar Association.

Coffee and light refreshments begin at 9:30AM. Mr. Freedman's presentation begins promptly at 10, followed by a Q and A session. The event is open to IRP members as well as their friends and members of the community. Admission is free, but please register in advance by [clicking here](#).

Women's Group Meetings

The IRP Women's Group will meet in room 19b at SLU on Wednesday, February 26, at 3PM and on Friday, March 6, at 1PM.

MEMBER SURVEY ATTITUDES REPORT

Last year the IRP Member Survey Committee conducted a survey of members to help us understand who we are, how we relate to the IRP and to one another and, most important, how we learn. The demographic part of the survey, dealing with factors like age, education, careers and income, was published in the November 20 *Observer*.

Now the committee has provided its second report, giving examples of responses on members' attitudes to the IRP organization, study groups, and the IRP community. During the spring semester the committee will be working on a detailed analysis of the survey, especially cross-referencing the demographic and attitude

responses. They will then publish a full report.

The committee appreciates your 69 percent response to the survey and has decided to give you an early look at what you told us. Several members of the Advisory Board reviewed the attitudes section, and we include their comments here.

Overall, members were very positive about the IRP.

1. The strongest response was to questions about types of study group experience. Community is important to our membership, not only in socializing, but in learning.

What is important to you about the IRP?	VERY MUCH OR SOMEWHAT	NOT MUCH
SG topics and presentations	95.1%	1.4%
Discussion in class	97.2	2.8
Making new friends	90.8	9.2
Social activities, SIG, Fridays@One, etc.	65	35

2. Although coordinating and serving on committees commanded healthy levels of response to "what satisfies you most," the most compelling was "learning/new ideas" at 98.5%.

What satisfies you about IRP?	VERY MUCH OR SOMEWHAT	NOT MUCH
Coordinating a study group	75.1%	22.9%
Being on a committee	76.5	28.4
Learning about new ideas/topics	98.5	1.5

3. There is general support for either a self-governing IRP or for one run by an affiliated college or university. Interesting, since we have experienced both in the last 10 years.

IRP Structure	USUALLY OR SOME-TIMES	NEVER
Part Of A Univ, Director Hired By Univ.	84.2%	15.8%
Self-Governing; Members Elect Director, AB	66.9	6.1

4. Members recognized the importance of the coordinator to learning in the study group. This suggests a larger, more controlling role for coordinators.

Learning In SG	AGREE	DISAGREE
Prefer Coordinator Lead Discussion, Set Rules	93.4%	1.9%
Learn By Coordinator's Questions	89	0.5
Learn From Coordinator's Presentation	89.1	3

5. The committee also took a quick look at some of the differences in the responses of men and women.

A. This past decade women averaged a higher percentage of the new members admitted than in the previous decade.

- 2000 to 2009: Women 56%, Men 44%
- 2010 to 2019: Women 62%, Men 38%

B. Making friends at the IRP is equally important for women and

men at 83% for each. 40% of women report many or most of their friends are other IRP members vs. 33% of men, not a big difference but more women (62%) than men (51%) would like more social activities.

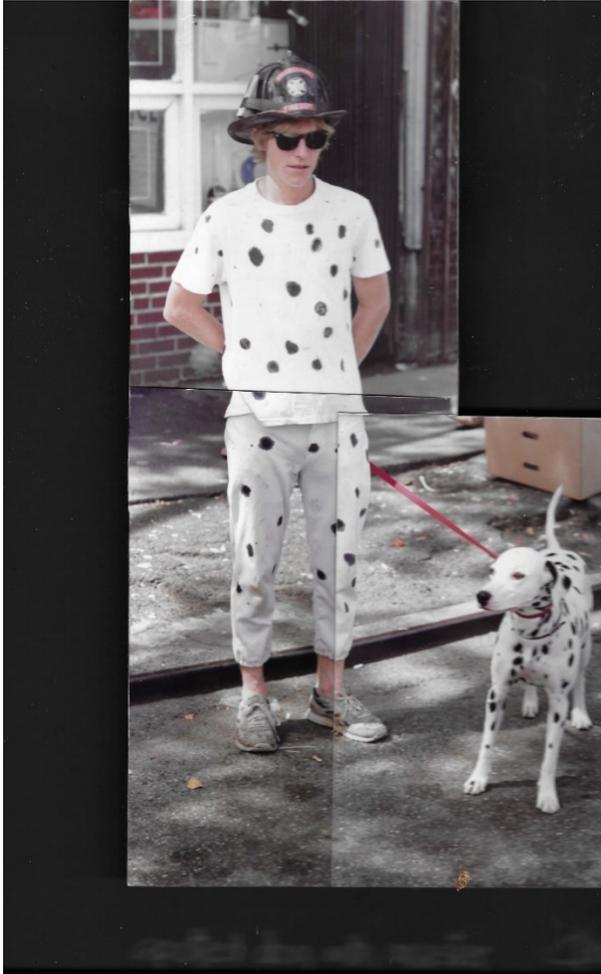
C. The largest demographic differences between men and women spotted so far: 29% of female IRP members are married or living with a partner, while 71% live alone. The male percentages are reversed with 82% of male IRP members married or living with a partner and only 18% living alone.

Thanks to the Advisory Board members who made the comments above: Harold Berkowitz, Barbara Marwell, and Susan Rauch

The Survey Committee members are Lenore Cooney, Michael Hill, Marilyn Menack, Terry Perlin, Rita Silverman, and Maureen Sullivan.

Online Art Show

Claude Samton provides the sixth contribution to our online art show.



Spotted Dog and Master Strolling the Streets of SoHo, by Claude Samton

According to Claude:

“Most of my large photomontages consist of hundreds of separate photos and take months to assemble. When this young man strolled by with his dog, I took four photos and assembled them in five minutes. He said he wore the fire helmet to make him look official.”

REMINDERS

Information Sessions Coming Up; Please Spread the Word

The Admissions Committee will hold Information Sessions for potential new IRP members on:

- Friday, February 28, 1-3PM at TNS
- Wednesday, April 22, 3:15-5:15PM at TNS

Now is the time to reach out to people you think may be interested in joining the IRP. We are seeking to broaden our membership with qualified applicants who will reflect the diversity of our city. If you know such individuals, please tell them that they can arrange to attend one of the information sessions by sending an email to Adam.

LunchMate

The Community Building Committee, chaired by Jan Adler, is asking you once again to help strengthen our communal bonds and our knowledge of a new neighborhood by making dates for lunch with members new to the IRP or new to you, during this spring semester. Feedback from the effort last semester was quite positive, so try it, or try it with someone else. If you have other ideas about the focus of this committee, email Jan Adler at adlerjan@optonline.net.

The Virtual Senior Center Committee

The committee is in the process of identifying members to conduct future webcasts to homebound seniors. If you are interested, please contact Fran De Lott via email to francesditt@gmail.com or phone, 212-362-9807.

RESOURCES

IRP Zine

- To access the IRP Zine, go to www.irpzine.org. To view the directory or IRP Faces, you must login with these credentials:
 - Username: IRPNewSchool
 - Password: Fall2018
- For the fall and spring calendars, [click here](#).

New School Events Calendar

- [Learn more](#) about upcoming events at The New School.

CUNY Events

- Learn about [Music in Midtown](#), a program of free concerts at 1PM on Thursday afternoons at the Graduate Center on 5th Avenue and 34th Street
- Graduate Center Spring Public 2020 Events—To view the lineup and reserve your spot now, click here: www.gc.cuny.edu/publicprograms
- School of Labor and Urban Studies (SLU) [public programming schedule](#), 2019-2020
- [Public programs in Midtown Manhattan](#)