

OBSERVER  
JUNE 1, 2020

## IRP DIRECTOR'S NOTE

It's been a great first week having you with The Graduate Center and I hope you all have enjoyed your first study group meetings!

At the Advisory Board meeting on Friday, I reviewed our plans for a transition board that would support a genuine integration of IRP members and program structure with The Graduate Center, towards an expression of our shared mission and values.

The transition board will be composed of five IRP members and four Graduate Center (GC) representatives as voting members, plus myself and Harold Berkowitz as the two non-voting members. Over the summer, this group will be charged to review the IRP's governance structure and bylaws, and draft policies and procedures for the program at the GC.

Representatives with GC affiliation will be encouraged to observe study groups and committee meetings to better understand the spirit of the unique peer learning program. Together with the IRP Marketing Committee and The Graduate Center Communications and Marketing team, the transition board will develop a new name for the program.

Into the fall term, the same group would act as a brain trust for new member recruitment. The GC-affiliated transition board members would be offered the opportunity to apply to become IRP members as well as hold seats on the Advisory Board as non-voting members. We will hold off recruitment for additional new members from the GC until the Spring, working with Barry Cooper.

I would like to focus on welcoming the ten new members to the IRP who will start in the Fall and continue working with current members with a dual goal of integration and engagement, especially considering the challenges of the remote format and the time we are living in. Our team is organizing an operations committee with IRP leaders including committee chairs to meet regularly over the summer to address transition concerns and develop means to best work together for the administrative needs of the program overall. I will be in touch with the committee chairs about scheduling.

I have enjoyed the opportunity to connect with a few members already and look forward to meeting more of you. For that reason, I will host Office Hours on Tuesday from 12-1pm. Please RSVP here to receive meeting details: <https://bit.ly/3gFDclK>.

Town Hall Summary. In addition, for those of you who were not able to attend our Town Hall Welcome, and for those who would appreciate a recap, you can [watch the recording here](#), and below are some points from the Q and A session, providing information about your questions as well as the responses of Dean Peterson and me.

1. **What methods will you use to publicize the new relationship between the IRP and the Grad Center?**
  - As part of the launch, a press release was sent to major media outlets, the program was featured on the Graduate Center homepage, and was shared on social media channels by the GC.
  - We will develop a marketing plan with Communications and Marketing especially for new member recruitment, which will continue to highlight this new relationship.
  - Working with Communications and Marketing, we will continue to publicize events that the IRP organizes on the GC website events calendar and on the Office of Academic Initiatives and Strategic Innovation website. We will work with the committees and Advisory Board to make sure the word gets out to a broad public as well as the right people!
  
2. **Has a new name been selected?**
  - We are looking to reimagine the name of the IRP to mark this new chapter in its history and institutional relationship, and in particular because “institute” is defined differently at CUNY and at The Graduate Center.
  - We are assembling a transition board that will include members of the GC community as well as IRP members/leaders to work together to find a new name that resembles the ethos of the program and align closely with the mission of the GC and of CUNY.
  - We work in close partnership with the experts on the IRP Marketing Committee and in the GC’s Office of Communications and Marketing.
  
3. **We received several questions about administrative support for IRP members.**
  - Our office is fully prepared to work with IRP members to meet administrative needs of the program and of individuals.
  - We will collaborate with committees and field questions from the membership base, particularly in this time of transition.
  - We began staff trainings last week to retain the institutional knowledge built and maintained by The New School staff.
  
4. **Can I set up my own password other than the password I was given?**
  - Yes, the web outlook app should prompt you to reset your password on your first log in – there are illustrated instructions and contact information for support services in the [Google document of resources and links](#).
  
5. **Will we have all the rights and privileges of all CUNY graduate students?**
  - Your GC email address provides many perks including library resources and educational discounts at a number of retailers.
  - We are including an evolving list in the document of resources provided above.
  
6. **We also received several questions about library access both in the remote format and in person, at the Graduate Center and within the broader network of collections.**
  - Mina Rees Library is located on first floor of the Graduate Center at 365 Fifth Avenue.
  - You will receive a photo ID once we are on campus and you will be able to get a barcode sticker from the library for borrowing privileges.

- 7. Are there print and scan resources available? Is there access to Adobe Acrobat Pro via computers to allow us to edit and revise pdfs? Are licenses available to IRP members for Adobe, G-suite, Microsoft?**
- Software licenses are not available for remote personal access, but rest assured that you will be able to log into computers in the library to use software locally.
  - We can address printing and scanning needs once back on campus.
- 8. Is tech support available for IRP members?**
- Our office will work with the IRP Tech Team, field tech support questions, and direct them to the IT team at The Graduate Center as needed.
  - Coordinators will be able to access tech support when in classrooms, and if you run into trouble with your email or zoom account, IT at The Graduate Center will assist.
- 9. Is there access to Zoom licenses?**
- All study group coordinators and committee chairs have been granted Zoom Pro licenses from the Graduate Center. Study Group coordinators will be hosts for the study groups, providing them with enough time for everyone to meet for the full hour and a half of a class. These licenses will be passed off to the individuals in the fall that are leading study groups or take on new leadership roles.
  - For members who are enrolled in study groups or interested in using Zoom to meet up with friends, please remember that you do not need a Zoom pro account to use Zoom! You are able to use Zoom for up to 40 minutes as a host without a Pro account.
  - Others who received Zoom Pro accounts include Advisory Board members, Executive Committee members, Committee Chairs, Special Interest Group Leaders, Activity Leaders, Tech Trainers, and Tech Assists
  - More information about the Zoom licenses and FAQs about how to use Zoom can be found on the GC's IT page, linked in the Google Doc that was shared.
- 10. Can the IRP record its Zoom classes and have it posted by The Graduate Center as part of its YouTube offerings?**
- This is an interesting idea and one that we can explore further! It may be best to think about the YouTube channel for public programs, including those organized by the IRP, such as Fridays@One.
  - Let's stay in touch about how to move this idea forward.
- 11. How best can the IRP contribute to the students, faculty, staff and public of CUNY and the Graduate Center?**
- We plan to continue a lot of the impressive service activities started by the IRP including conversation partners, voter registration drives, and homebound senior partnerships.
  - We would like to do this in the virtual/remote space as well as when we are in person again and are excited to collaboratively develop other possibilities for mentorships with our students (at the graduate and undergraduate levels) and creative enrichment programs in partnership with academic programs, centers, and institutes at the GC.
  - As time goes on, we see great potential for retiring GC faculty and staff to apply to become members.

- 12. How can the GC help the IRP to expand its marketing to a younger retired demographic and increase diversity more generally?**
- Our office plans to work with the IRP Diversity Committee to expand upon the goals laid out in the IRP strategic plan and that of the GC to grow the IRP with diversity, equity, and inclusion at the forefront.
  - We will work with our colleagues in Communications and Marketing to develop a marketing plan to be implemented in time for spring term recruitment.
  - Our hope is that the IRP resembles the diversity of CUNY and of New York City; we ultimately aim to promote wide access to education as well as share the wonderful resources that The Graduate Center offers.
- 13. Will the size of the membership of the IRP change from its current ~320 members?**
- We are interested in maintaining the scale of the study groups, not only based on classroom size (and Zoom screen size), but also for an environment that promotes dialogue and bonding among peer learners.
  - While we aim to expand membership over time with diversity, equity, and inclusion as priorities, we would need to scale the number of study groups at a similar pace, and allow for the small group experience in the social settings as well.
- 14. What is the scholarship policy for IRP members?**
- IER handles scholarships. Please direct your questions to the Advisory Board.
- 15. Are public spaces and facilities such as gyms, cafeterias, and rooms available to IRP members?**
- At the start of each term, our office will reserve public spaces at the GC for events organized by Fridays@One and OSOL. Committee meetings and other regularly recurring meetings will similarly have rooms reserved in advance by our office.
  - IRP members are welcome to use the Dining Commons on the 8th floor for casual meeting space and refreshments. There is also a café and lounge on the first floor, next to the library that serves coffee and snacks and provides seating for small group meet-ups.
  - Your GC email address will provide a discount to New York Sports Club
- 16. Will the technology in the classrooms all be the same?**
- Most classrooms support both Mac and PCs. To attach one's own computer, a dongle may be necessary for Mac support.
  - IT Services offers support for classrooms while classes are in session and they have a fast response time; the live chat function on their webpage is especially useful.
- 17. How can IRP members promote the relationship with GC CUNY?**
- You can use your email address for communication beyond business needs!
  - Tell your friends and community about the IRP, about what's going on at The Graduate Center (and its centers, institutes, the James Gallery, the Segal Theatre, GC Presents, etc.), and at CUNY! We hope you will attend events sponsored by the GC and invite friends and your expanded network to those events, both virtual and in person when we can safely gather again.
  - You can use social media to share your affiliation and news in the interim.

I look forward to seeing you soon! Keep in touch with us at [engagement@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:engagement@qc.cuny.edu).

Best,

Mariel Villeré

## FROM THE ADVISORY BOARD

### Scholarships

The Institute for Education in Retirement (IER), the IRP's fund-raising arm, is offering a limited number of needs-based scholarships for the coming academic year in order to help cover Graduate Center fees. The application and instructions for filing can be found on the Zine under the Scholarships tab. The deadline for applications is June 15, 2020.

### **Don't be a Victim of a Hacked Email Account! Protect Yourself NOW! Here's How:**

Denise Waxman, chair of the Tech Committee, sends this important message.

Two IRP members have had their email accounts compromised in the last week, following similar incidents in the last few months. This is bad for the members who have to cope with the fallout. And it's bad for members' friends and family who fall victim to the fraud.

### Use Common Sense to Protect Yourself from Fraudulent Emails

- Don't Trust that just because an email says it's from someone you know, that it is.
- Is it written the way that person would write?
- Does it make sense given your relationship with that person?
- Does it ask a vague or open-ended question?
- If in doubt call the person on the phone to verify.
- Avoid Clicking on Links unless you are confident of the source.

### Beyond Common Sense: Learn how to Spot Phishing Emails

These are the emails that ask you for account information, passwords, money, or things of value. Here's a video about how to tell from the email itself that it is suspicious. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U7tbJVSInvom>

### Take Smart Steps Now To Protect Your Email Account

We call on all IRP members to take the following steps to protect your email and not be a victim of fraudulent emails NOW:

***Change your email password today.*** Be proactive and protect your account from being compromised. Find out how to create a memorable AND unbreakable password here: <https://blog.avast.com/strong-password-ideas>

***Learn about other steps to protect yourself.*** It's not just your email. Protect your computer and your accounts too: [click here to learn more.](#)

This information will be added to the IRP Tech Stuff site for your reference at any time. <https://sites.google.com/view/irptechstuff>

## SUMMER SESSION 2

A total of 218 members registered for the second session. There are still some places left in the Study Group **Topics in Cosmology** that will be filled on a first come, first served basis. Please send your requests to add this study group to Adam at [irp@newschool.edu](mailto:irp@newschool.edu). You must write in the subject line '**ADD A STUDY GROUP**' to be considered. Once Fall registration is completed, the Registration Team

can open up spaces in a few additional summer study groups, if there is sufficient demand.

## FALL REGISTRATION IS BOOMING

A stunning 302 members registered for the 36 study groups in the Fall 20 Semester. The Registration Team is in the midst of their work and will send out rosters and schedules as soon as practicable.

Please note that in order for 13 weeks to conclude before Christmas, the start date of the fall semester has been changed to **Friday, September 11th**.

## OUR CUNY EMAILS

CUNY will send all IRP mail, such as the *Observer* and class registration information, to our CUNY email. Please check this mail often. You can always access it at <https://wa.gc.cuny.edu/owa/>. If you prefer to read your CUNY email where you read your other email, there are several options in the document at this link <https://bit.ly/3caNQQ4>.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Make Sure You're Ready To Vote!!

The New York Presidential and State Primary Election is coming up on Tuesday, June 23. All voters registered in NYS will be mailed an application to request an absentee ballot. Your application may have already arrived, or it should be coming soon. When you receive it, you must complete and return it in order to receive your ballot. You can return the application in various ways, including by mail or online. See the instructions on the back of the application form. The deadline for submitting a completed application request is June 16 but try to submit as early as you can. This application will have the Covid-19 language so you may indicate that this is the reason you will be voting absentee this year.

## EVENTS

### Reminders: Inter-Term Activities Continuing

#### Short Stories Aloud

Tuesdays at 4PM, starting this week

These sessions Zoom once a week for an hour and a half to read stories aloud. Please email Sharon Girard at [proustmatters@gmail.com](mailto:proustmatters@gmail.com) for an invitation.

#### Federalists Forever

Every Other Thursday 4PM, starting this week

The Federalists will discuss such topics as the continuing relevance of the Constitution and the strengths and weaknesses of the American political system, particularly in this time of crisis. Contact Howard Miller at [howard3195@outlook.com](mailto:howard3195@outlook.com).

#### Advances in Civilization

This series of discussions will continue into the summer with programs scheduled on Thursdays, June 11 and June 25 at 4PM. The group will then take a brief hiatus and return on Thursday, September 17.

Topics include: Frederick Banting and the Discovery of Insulin, Hannah Arendt, and Charles Darwin. Anyone, who has not yet participated in this series should contact Steve Kalinsky at [stephenkalinsky@gmail.com](mailto:stephenkalinsky@gmail.com) and he will send a Zoom invite.

#### Men's Group

Every other Wednesday, 12:15PM

Contact Jay Fleischman at [ejayfleish@aol.com](mailto:ejayfleish@aol.com).

#### Women's Group

Thursday, 3PM

Contact Arlyne LeSchack at:

[aleschack@aol.com](mailto:aleschack@aol.com).

#### Pour at Four

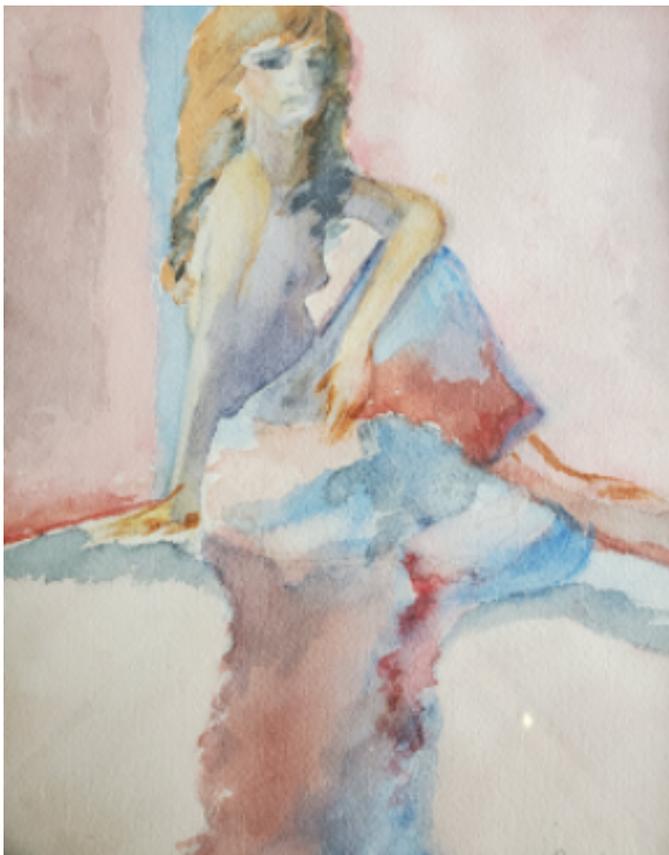
Friday, 4PM

This gathering, hosted by Susan Rubens, will continue to meet at our 24-hour chat room:

<https://sites.google.com/view/irptechstuff>. After June 30, the group will meet at a CUNY/GC site. More to come on that.

## **ONLINE ART SHOW**

Alix Kane provides our twenty first contribution to the online art show.



**Title:** Semi-Nude in Watercolor

**By:** Alix Kane

According to Alix: The effect is the result of my experimenting with color wash.

## MEMBER FORUM

Keep your ideas coming to Leslie Davis at: [ldavis7104@yahoo.com](mailto:ldavis7104@yahoo.com).

Jane Case Einbender points out that the federal stimulus payment may come as a debit card. "I first thought mine was junk mail," she writes. Here is a link to a Washington Post story:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/05/28/people-are-mistaking-stimulus-payments-junk-mail-or-scam/>

**Another Reminder:**

### Spanish Conversation – LAST CALL

Myriam Bucatinsky is assessing whether members are interested in joining a SIG to practice Spanish. The group, of 6 to 8 people, would meet once a week or every other week. If you can read and discuss a short newspaper article, a short story, or other item of general interest, please contact Myriam at [myriambuca@gmail.com](mailto:myriambuca@gmail.com).

## RESOURCES

### IRP Zine

- Fall and spring calendars, [click here](#).
- *Observer* Archive  
<https://www.irpzine.org/irp-observer1-1>

### CUNY Events

- School of Labor and Urban Studies (SLU) [public programming schedule, 2019-2020](#)
- [Public programs in Midtown Manhattan](#)