

3 July 2009

To: AILACT Membership
From: Derek Allen, President of AILACT
Re: Election of 2009-11 Board of Directors; Membership Meeting, June 4-5, 2009;
Conference-call meeting of Board of Directors, June 30, 2009.

Election of 2009-11 Board of Directors

As previously announced, Derek Allen, Tom Solon and Don Hatcher were elected by acclamation as President, Vice-President, and Treasurer, respectively, for 2009-11.

Twenty-seven ballots were submitted in the election of directors at large and the following seven individuals were elected: Dan Cohen, Bob Ennis, Maurice Finocchiaro, Jim Freeman, Susana Nuccetelli, Michael Scriven, Dale Turner.

Membership Meeting, June 4-5, 2009

A membership meeting was held on June 4 with 15 members present; the meeting continued on June 5 with 12 members present. I reported briefly on several matters of business from the past year (the amendments to our constitution, the revised terms for our essay prize, the appointment of Susana Nuccetelli as publicist for the prize) and listed several appointments that would end in the coming months. I then thanked the four members of the 2007-09 Board who were stepping down: Tony Blair, Trudy Govier, Leo Groarke, and David Hitchcock. They served the Board with dedication, and I am very grateful to them.

Don Hatcher was unable to attend the conference, but sent me his Treasurer's report, which I circulated at the meeting. It showed that in the first five months of our 2009 budget year (i.e., as of June 1, 2009), we had \$63.00 in expenses (\$42.00 in postage from 2008, \$21.00 in supplies from 2008) and \$303.00 in income, and that we had a balance of \$3,666.09. These figures (all in U.S. dollars) did not include the cost of the 2009 election-and-membership-fee mailing to AILACT members or, on the income side, the membership-fee payments made in response to that mailing. (I can report here that in response to that mailing we received \$80.00 in membership fees and a further \$20.00 in donations.)

We turned next to a discussion of priorities for AILACT over the next two years. Our constitution says that part of the purpose of AILACT is "to facilitate the professional cooperation of its members." We agreed that it would be desirable to create a password-protected section of our website to permit members to correspond with selected other members, as an alternative to posting to the entire AILACT-D list. Two further matters were discussed - membership and fee payments. It was agreed that we should send information about AILACT, and a membership form, to the OSSA 2009 attendees and that we should try to recruit APA members, using APA membership lists. On the subject of fee payments, there was strong support for giving members the choice of paying by cheque (as at present) or electronically, using PayPal.

On the following day (when the meeting resumed) discussion focussed on a further part of AILACT's purpose as defined in our constitution: "to promote and improve the extent and quality of research into, and teaching of, informal logic and critical thinking at all levels". We considered

the idea of making AILACT a resource for instructors of informal logic and critical thinking, especially for those (whether members of AILACT or not) who teach IL/CT at the introductory level, and we discussed two possible initiatives: creating teaching-relevant files/archives on our website and providing links to them on our home page; getting information about AILACT, and a link to our website, posted in a prominent position on a website that will be reached by individuals who Google "Informal Logic/Critical Thinking".

Next, we considered a list of possible administrative priorities for the 2009-11 Board: a review of our constitution to enable our business to be conducted more efficiently; a concerted effort to recruit new members, including students and prominent people in the field; the striking of a committee to advise on appointments to designated AILACT positions; a review of the content of our website. These proposals were supported by the members present. Several further suggestions were made: votes in an election of members to the Board of Directors should be by email and the election period should terminate well before the annual meeting (rather than concluding at the annual meeting, as at present); all membership meetings should be by email; papers presented at APA AILACT sessions should be sent by the program chairs to our webmaster for posting on our website; our website should include brief bios of Board members.

It was noted that our constitution does not require that committees established by the Board comprise only Board members, and it was agreed that AILACT members who aren't Board members should be appointed to Board committees as appropriate (with the approval of the Board).

Conference-call meeting of Board of Directors, June 30, 2009

President's Report. I reported that I had sent an email to the graduate students on the OSSA 2009 attendance list inviting them to become members of AILACT (at the OSSA conference there had been an AILACT meeting for graduate students) and that I had sent emails to some 50 other OSSA attendees extending the same invitation to them.

Appointments. The Board approved the following appointments: Wanda Teays as APA Pacific Division program chair for a further three years (2011-2013); Jim Freeman as editor of the AILACT newsletter for a further two years (2010, 2011); David Godden as webmaster for a further three years (2011-13).

Committees. The Board established an Appointments Committee, a Recruitment Committee, a Textbook Review Committee, and a Critical Thinking Assessment Committee. The membership of these committees will be announced when finalized. Rather than establish a small committee to review the constitution, the Board decided that it would itself review the document, functioning as a "committee of the whole".

Initiatives. (1) The Board endorsed the idea of creating a password-protected section of the AILACT website containing a list of AILACT members who consented to be listed there, with their institutional affiliations, email addresses and teaching and research interests in IL/CT/argumentation theory. The section would be password protected so as to be accessible only by the listed AILACT members. Its purpose would be to enable members to interact with other members with whom they shared research/teaching interests. (2) The Board also endorsed the idea of posting material for IL/CT instructors on the AILACT website. The material will include an annotated list of IL/CT textbooks. Members of AILACT will be invited to provide abstracts of textbooks they have recently written and/or comments on textbooks they have recently used; they will also be invited to post "comments on the comments" on the listed texts.

This initiative will be implemented by the Textbook Review Committee. The Critical Thinking Assessment Committee will provide website information and advice about the assessment of critical thinking, including information about research on this subject.

Other Business. (1) Susana Nuccetelli reported that she had distributed the notice for the 2009 AILACT essay prize to 50 philosophy departments and to the APA, which has posted it on its website. Later this summer, she will contact the departments again. (2) The Board discussed the idea of giving AILACT members the choice of paying membership fees by cheque (as at present) or electronically, using PayPal; PayPal payment will be investigated.