

ACREL President's Message – News & Notes – March 2019

I know that cold weather, etc. revisited too many of you since last month's message – I'm delighted to report that those things are *not allowed* in the Palm Desert area, so they must be getting smaller by the minute in your rearview mirror. We *will* raise a glass to the *vernal equinox*!

La Quinta. As of today, 212 of you, and 92 spouses/guests, will join us in **La Quinta**. I surely hope that most of you will be there in time (4 p.m. Thursday) to see a fantastic **Special Session: Out with the Old, In with the New? – Evaluating the Costs and Benefits of Gentrification.** And that's just to kick start a fantastic program that **Jack Fersko** and the Programs Committee (and, of course, **Art Menor** and other predecessors who “touched” this Program in the 18 months or so it's been in planning) have put together for us. **And don't forget** – this is our special time to say goodbye and *Thank You* to **Jill Pace**, to acknowledge her 32 years of extraordinary leadership of the College.

MSC. Under superb leadership from **Bill Sklar**, the Member Selection Committee has completed its work and will submit its recommendations and a report to the Board of Governors in La Quinta on Thursday, and a final report to all of us Saturday morning after the BOG action. Just as he has been about their diligence and good humor, the MSC members have been effusive in their compliments on Bill's efforts, one saying to me: “*Without diminishing the accomplishments of his two predecessor chairs with whom I served on the committee, I believe Bill reached a level of organization and efficiency that will be hard to beat.*” I won't detail much now, but it certainly looks like we will have a robust, well-rounded new class of Fellows. And it appears that the more-intentional diversity efforts are paying off. Kudos both to Member Development and Member Selection – you folks are awesome, and the College is *way* better off because of your commitment and execution. Now, back to work . . . and that means *all* of us! We can't afford to rest too long on laurels, even as well-deserved as these are.

Future Gaze. You will hear more about this as time passes, but when you see Marilyn Maloney thank her for initiating and leading a cross-section of dedicated Fellows who are taking a deep dive into the College's challenges and are exploring ways to meet them. We talk often about the College's aging and the effects, notably financial. As noted last month, an important part of this group's work is to develop new value components for our sponsors, to help retain and expand that important source of support (**Sponsors**, did I say that we love you and don't take you for granted?). The Sponsor value proposition must be a bilateral win-win. I am confident that the College will soon enough start reaping benefits from the Future Gazers' efforts. **Thank you, Marilyn, et al.**

Member Engagement Task Force. **Ray Truitt** and **Michael Goodwin** have spent the past year+ leading a team of about 20 other Fellows gathering information from Fellows (including conducting separate surveys on Committees and Meetings, and one gathering input from New Fellows [2015-2017 classes]), digging, thinking, talking and otherwise trying to figure out how to make ACREL membership more valuable to Fellows and their respective organizations. As

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you also heard last month, the most important thing we do is recruit and retain quality Fellows, and this big effort fits directly into that. Ray and Michael will make their final report on Saturday in La Quinta. **Thank you and your METF teammates.**

Committees. Our Substantive Committees continue to be very active, and all have plans for their meetings in La Quinta. As I noted in my letter inviting you to La Quinta, we worked hard to accommodate those meetings, and Committee chairs cooperated by showing flexibility. We can't get everything perfect given the times available, etc., but here's to hoping you all are satisfied with the results and have exceptional meetings. ACREL is blessed to have strong Committee leadership, which continues to make Committee activities one of the best things ACREL does. **Thank you all for that hard work.**

Safe travels to all who are heading to LQ next week – I very much look forward to seeing and visiting with you.