

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

Whoa, it's already May! Time flies and, sometimes, things change. Even things you *never* expect to change, like Jill Pace as our Executive Director. Double whoa! (But, *do* know that Julie and Caitlin have been doing a superb job keeping the trains running, and on time.)

La Quinta. As 205 of you (and 91 guests) know (*great* turnout for a spring meeting location like this one that's a bit harder to get to), in La Quinta at the end of March we had *great* weather, *great* food and wine (having the main event at dinner on Friday, following the initial test in New Orleans, seems to have been well-received again), *great* company, and an overall *great* time, starting on Thursday with a *great* **Special Session: *Out with the Old, In with the New? – Evaluating the Costs and Benefits of Gentrification.*** And that was just the start of a *great* program that **Jack Fersko** and the Programs Committee (and predecessor Programs Committee planners) put on. **Terri Simard** and **Jane Smith** put on a *great* workshop on “Unconscious Bias” which about 50 of us benefited from *greatly*.

And we had a *great* (okay, last one) time saying goodbye to **Jill Pace**, to honor her 32 years of leading the College. (Some of the things below happened/were announced at La Quinta, too.)

MSC. As presaged in my March message, **Bill Sklar** reported to us in La Quinta that the Member Selection Committee recommended to the Board of Governors -- and the BOG approved -- the admission into the College of 47 distinguished, collegial lawyers. *And . . .* nineteen (40%) are women and the average age is 52 (wahoo!). This outstanding result is the culmination of important, collaborative work between the MDC and MSC -- we owe them our gratitude. Of course, the rest of us played an important role, and we must continue to do so. Please schedule some time with yourself in the next few weeks -- maybe an adult beverage nearby would enhance the experience -- to think about possible candidates, whether to introduce to the MDC or to jump straight to MSC. **Importantly** -- even though you can't nominate or otherwise be directly involved with someone in your own firm, you can get the ball started, whether at MDC or via another Fellow willing to take up the mantle.

Member Engagement Task Force. In La Quinta, this hard-working group (led for the past 1+ year by **Ray Truitt** and **Michael Goodwin**) delivered recommendations on possible ways to improve member engagement in the College. Their 5 recommendations touched on the following areas: (i) raising early with new candidates the substantive committees they might have an interest in, so we can respond promptly after their admission; (ii) more intentional orientation for new Fellows, both at the two meetings (for the first-time attendees) and at local/regional meetings held soon after the Spring admission; (iii) improvement of the mentoring role; (iv) consideration of some manner of meeting discounts; and (v) consideration of a variety of things to improve committee activities and associated member involvement.

Transition. The flip side to saying goodbye to Jill is saying hello to “*life after Jill.*” Yes, a daunting thought after all this time. But, as noted above, I can assure you that Caitlin and Julie have the bit and are running ahead in good form (I think I need some manner of John Nolan metaphor or aphorism here.) As part of taking this generational opportunity to assess staffing and support, etc., and with **Roger Winston's** leadership, the Executive Committee agreed with a recommendation that ACREL engage an outsourced, part-time bookkeeper, a notion that was fully-endorsed by Jill, Julie, and Caitlin who met with the bookkeeper earlier this week. Among the benefits should be state-of-the art controls and coverage of important, necessary things, freeing Julie and Caitlin to responsively handle other ACREL business to carry out the mission of the College.

As part of this transition, the Executive Committee decided that we should take a “fresh eyes” opportunity to see what other trade groups and associations are doing for staffing and paid management support.

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Peter Aitelli has graciously agreed to lead that effort with a small working group. There are no predetermined outcomes (e.g., from the beginning, we said that we would not knee-jerk default to “finding a replacement for Jill,” though that’s a possibility). Stay tuned.

Committees. This time ‘tween meetings is important for our Substantive Committees, who have a tradition of great leadership and important activities during this several-month period. I look forward to hearing about some of that. Please feel free to share things you all do with the broader College, where you think that would be useful.

LinkedIn. With the summer travel season approaching, this is a great time to post messages and photographs to ACREL’S LinkedIn page (yes, it *is* a bit annoying that you can only post one photo per message). Post ‘em when you get home from your trip, so the bad guys don’t know you’re gone. (Jay, I’m *tryin’* . . .)

Montreal Meeting. With only a few details left to finalize, we’re ready for all of you to come to Montreal for the Fall meeting. **Adam Weissburg** is leading the charge for the Programs Committee, and it’s going to be a fantastic meeting. Please note *save the date* and other information elsewhere in this issue.

Sponsors. When you’re on that second adult beverage thinking about potential new members, also think about potential new sponsors. *And* existing sponsors you know well enough to whom to say “thank you” in your own special way. Having and keeping our sponsors is a value proposition, our side of which is making the sponsorship valuable to the sponsors. Please help us care for and feed them.

All the very best to each of you and your families!