

The Focusing Institute

1st July 2014

Dear Members of the Focusing Institute,

A few days ago our Nominating Committee recommended that six people should be appointed to the Board of the Focusing Institute and six to the newly formed International Leadership Council.

The period for public discussion is now over. During this period nobody objected to any of the recommended names and nobody suggested additional names. We received many messages warmly appreciative of the committee's recommendations.

Such being the case, the Board is very happy to appoint the twelve people whose names were put forward by the Nominating Committee.

The incoming Board will be:

Jim Iberg
Mary Jennings
Kevin Krycka
Susan Lennox
Jane Quayle
David Rome

The email address for the Board will be board@focusing.org.

The International Leadership Council will be:

Marine de Fréminville
Heinz-Joachim (Hejo) Feuerstein
Ruth Hirsch
Akira Ikemi
Sergio Lara Cisternas
Barbara McGavin

The email address for The International Leadership Council will be ilc@focusing.org.

The new Board and Council will take office on July 9, 2014. Each member of the Board or the Council will have a term of one, two or three years, and may be re-appointed for a second, three-year term. The Board can have up to ten members. There is room for additional members to be added if they are needed.

We are almost at the end of our time and are now the outgoing Board of The Focusing Institute. It has been a pleasure and a great honour to serve this wonderful community and to bring the institute through this important transitional period.

We want to express our warmest thanks to our conscientious and insightful Nominating Committee, and to offer our very best wishes to the incoming Board and Council, in whose abilities and commitment we have great faith.

Kind regards,

Rob, Robert and Cynthia

Rob Foxcroft, President
Robert Lee, Vice President
Cynthia Callsen, Secretary/Treasurer
(The outgoing Board of The Focusing Institute)



For those people who want to understand better the process of nominations, an account follows.

ABOUT THE PROCESS

The process of appointing our new Board and Council passed through eight phases.

(1) Members of the institute were invited to suggest fellow Members to sit on the Nominating Committee.

(2) The Board considered very carefully all the suggestions that were received, and chose the Nominating Committee through a long process of focusing, listening and consultation.

In seeking suitable members for this committee, we had in mind several qualities. They should be well known. They should have an exceptionally wide knowledge of people in the community who might be called upon. They should be people who can be counted upon not to put the interests of any particular group before the interests of the community as a whole. They should understand the key nature of the responsibility that they take on.

The method of nominations works best when the Nominating Committee are people of the highest integrity and are very widely trusted. Their work succeeds when their nominations are acceptable to the membership.

Bearing in mind all these considerations, we chose a group of people whom we felt we could trust to act as a Nominating Committee.

(3) The names of the proposed Nominating Committee were put before the membership.

(4) Some of our members asked for an additional person to be added to the Nominating Committee and this was done.

(5) Every Member of the Institute was free to nominate possible members of the Board and Council. Nearly a hundred nominations were made. Some people were nominated over and over.

(6) The Nominating Committee considered all nominations very carefully. They spent several weeks in gathering together two balanced groups of people: a group of people with the specialized knowledge and experience that are needed on a Board; and a group of energetic, experienced, pro-active people who could represent many places, many languages, and many strands within focusing. They took their responsibilities very seriously, bringing a great depth of focusing and mutual listening to their patient deliberations.

(7) The names of the people nominated were put before the whole membership. No objection to any name was brought to our attention.

(8) The present Board appointed the people whose names the Nominating Committee had brought before the community.

This method of appointment through a process of nominations may not be very well known. Perhaps it may be natural for people who are not familiar with the process to feel a little suspicious of it.

So why use this method?

Briefly, because we are widely spread and many of us do not know one another very well. We are a world-wide polyglot community. Many of us cannot afford to travel to international meetings, and could not speak one another's languages if we did.

The present Board believe that the methodical, focusing-oriented process of nominations is "more democratic" than a simple election. But the word *democratic* has many meanings. We will try to say what we mean.

(1) In an election, many people have to vote on a very superficial knowledge of the candidates. It is impossible to have a reliable felt sense of a candidate whom you have never met. Everybody knows that elections can lead to poor choices.

(2) Sometimes elections are divisive. When appointments are made using a nominating committee, the process avoids the competitive struggle that takes place when there is an election, which may leave behind it a residue of bad feeling and faction.

(3) A Nominating Committee does not recommend single individuals, but tries to build balanced groups of people with complementary strengths and qualities.

(4) In our experience, many excellent people would never seek office. There is a great strength in the fact that a Nominating Committee is free to approach modest, busy or retiring people who would hesitate to put themselves forward for office.

(5) And any good Nominating Committee will engage in a long, spacious process of focusing and mutual listening, always bearing in mind the views and feelings of the community.

Bearing these five points in mind, we decided that, in our circumstances, the method of nominations would be far more likely than any form of election to result in the appointment of wise, balanced and respected groups of people to the Board and Council.

We believe that the good choices made by our Nominating Committee speak for themselves.

We have no doubt at all that our constitutional arrangements will evolve as we have more experience. Until such time as we make constitutional changes, a Nominating Committee will be formed each year to recommend appointments to the Board and Council.

LOOKING FORWARD

It seems natural that people may feel some anxiety lest the actions of the Board inhibit the work of the Council. Will this happen? We can only wait and see.

The role of the Board is to take a balcony view, to look after the finances, and to take care of all the things that are legally required of a charitable organisation. The Council will be free to concentrate on the fullest possible outreach, working at the active, practical level.

At present, the incoming Board and Council are looking forward eagerly to working very closely together in a friendly, constructive way, receptive to one another's views and feelings and to the concerns of our Members and of focusing people everywhere.

Among their most urgent tasks will be to establish more developed lines of communication with the membership; to listen very actively to all the different voices; and to represent all the different strands in the wider focusing community.