



International Academy of Mediators

PAPER FOR A DISCUSSION ON THE FUNDAMENTALS

This is a draft paper for discussion.

On the basis that the current Board is fully supportive of the desire to enhance the 'International' character of IAM and the growing unease from certain membership sections of the globe outside North America, it was thought sensible to start a reassessment of the 'Essentials' of IAM and our current President as well as our incoming President have asked me to prepare something for the Board Meeting on the 29th April. The incoming Board for the first time in our existence contains more non-Americans than ever, and that should be the catalyst for the sort of discussion we are proposing.

Board members will be very familiar with the concerns which have been voiced over the last two years, particularly at the time of the year when membership renewal payments are due! Without putting them in any order of importance some of the issues that we need to consider are these:

1. The need for board meetings to be 'live';
2. The requirement that members attend at least one conference every three years;
3. The desirability of holding two conferences a year;
4. The level of annual membership fees;
5. The use of the large reserves which have been accumulated over the last decade;
6. The format and content of conferences and in particular whether they are sufficiently relevant to the needs and interests of the extra-American mediation community;
7. The current membership criteria especially as regards extra-North American and European countries where mediation is not as well developed.
8. The real role of IAM: is it a true academy?¹
9. What do our members consider membership gives them? What should our members bring to IAM? Most of us remember our induction with pride and a real sense that we 'had arrived' and recognised as member of an elite body of professionals. Is that still the case? Should we continue to promote that elitism? If we do will we ever grow our membership beyond a select few in privileged countries?

Suggestion:

We appoint a small task force to contact all overseas members and ask their views on some if not all the above issues and put together a report for consideration of the Board initially, and, depending upon the Board's views, for the membership as a whole.

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1. ¹ Wikipedia adopts the Oxford English definition and describes academy as "an institution of secondary education, higher learning, research, or honorary membership." As classicists will know, the Attic Greek: Ἀκαδήμεια, was a garden near Athens where Plato taught philosophy. The more modern use is to describe a Society or Institution for cultivating the arts or sciences of which membership is an honour and usually greatly prized.