

From the Executive Director



The year 2000 marks my sixth year of service as a member of the ASIANetwork Board of Directors. I still take great delight in board service, and as I talk with other board members, past and current, I find they feel the same way. There is magic in what happens at our board meetings, in the way we reach consensus on important policy matters, and in the commitments board members make to strengthen ASIANetwork. In the brief time I have in this issue's column, I wish to discuss the ASIANetwork Board and how it serves the consortium.

The first Board of Directors of ASIANetwork was approved by consortium members at the business meeting held in conjunction with the second meeting of ASIANetwork held at Hickory Ridge Conference Center in April 1993. Since then, thirty-two colleagues, representing twenty-nine different colleges, have served on the Board. Nominations made by current board members of three candidates for three-year Board terms are announced every year in the winter issue of the newsletter. At the business meeting held in conjunction with our annual spring conference, additional nominations are invited from current ASIANetwork members, and Board members are then elected. Caution is always taken to assure that there is balanced representation on the Board.

Steadied by administrative support provided first by Tom Benson, then Dean at St. Andrews College in North Carolina, next Marianna McJimsey at The Colorado College, and finally myself at Augustana College in Illinois, the board meets twice a year, in early October at Hickory Ridge Conference Center and in April in conjunction with our annual spring conference. Having never been a member of another board, I am not certain what happens at other board meetings. Nonetheless, I believe what occurs on this board is quite unique, and that it suggests much about the spirit of our consortium.

ASIANetwork Board members bring a remarkable amount of energy to board meetings, which transfers to a

willingness to embrace almost any task. Perhaps a couple of examples of Board commitment and cooperation will clarify this. In 1995, institutional membership in ASIANetwork reached eighty-two colleges and affiliate organizations, only half what it is now. This was my first year of Board service, and one of the first items addressed by the board at our fall meetings was membership. Rita Kipp of Kenyon College was the energetic chair of the membership committee. She emphasized the importance of increasing membership in the consortium, in part to strengthen our financial base (we have always been highly dependent on institutional dues to meet administrative costs). She then proceeded to distribute lists of college deans in various regions of the country and challenged each Board member to contact them by phone to promote ASIANetwork. Instantly, I became a telemarketer, and though I had grown up in the Intermountain West, attended graduate school in New England, and taught in California and the Midwest, my beat was the mid-Atlantic region. What fun! I chatted with a lot of secretaries and assistants to deans and a few—only a few—deans, but from those many calls, about a half dozen new memberships trickled in.

In 1997, when I was Board Chair, ASIANetwork launched its first fall mailing to college presidents in hopes of generating further interest in ASIANetwork. This might seem a simple task, but because the consortium is sustained by volunteer labor (we have no full-time staff) and the mailing had to be prepared in mid-August, when many of us are involved in research and travel, for an early September posting, this proved to be a monumental challenge. A simple listing of what was included in the mailing and from whence it was provided will suggest the cooperative spirit and the energy of ASIANetwork.

First, a list of the names of about 300 college presidents and their addresses was compiled by Tom Coburn of St. Lawrence University and sent on disc to Jane Tiedge, the history department secretary at Augustana, whom I had co-opted into this process. Next, I wrote copy for a cover letter, several hundred were printed on ASIANetwork letterhead, and then individually signed by me. Third, a brochure prepared by Cathy Benton of Lake Forest College with the help of Marianna McJimsey of The Colorado College was printed at Lake Forest College and sent to Augustana for inclusion in the mailing. Fourth, Madeline Chu of Kalamazoo College and Teddy Amoloza of Illinois Wesleyan University prepared and had printed at Kalamazoo College a flyer for the student-faculty fellows program. With the help of Norm Moline of Augustana College, they also produced a flyer for the College-in-Asia Institute program

and mailed them for enclosure in the mailing. Fifth, Rita Pullium and Carmen Dagnino of the United Board of Christian Higher Education in Asia headquartered in New York City provided information on their Visiting Scholars Program and their Visiting Professors Program to Jane Tiedge who had flyers about these programs printed at Augustana for inclusion in the mailing. A flyer on the Luce Consultancy Program was crafted by Dottie Borei of Guilford College and sent to Augustana. Believe it or not, all these materials arrived on schedule so that a group of Augustana College students were able to stuff one of each in envelopes which were mailed on schedule to college presidents. Pretty amazing!! This isn't the way Wall Street does things, but it works for ASIANetwork and, despite the daunting nature of this project, similar mailings have followed in subsequent years.

I hope that at this spring's conference each of you will find current and past Board members and thank them for their efforts. Equally important, I hope some of you will consider serving or encouraging a friend to serve on the Board. If you or a friend are interested, please contact the Vice-Chair of the Board, Joel Smith at jsmith@skidmore.edu. He will chair the nominations committee for Board membership next fall and will be collecting data on possible Board nominees.

Van Symons

9th Annual ASIANetwork Conference

Deadlines

Conference Registration

Friday, March 30, 2001

Hotel Reservations

Sunday, April 1, 2001



Pre-Conference Tour Sights/Sites

Asia Plaza Mini-Mall, Cleveland, Ohio

For more details on the Pre-Conference Tour, see page 6.