

# Institute of Systems Wisdom



Pioneers in Translational Consulting

## *Fellows Newsletter*

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Larry M. Starr, Editor

[larrymstarr@systemswisdom.com](mailto:larrymstarr@systemswisdom.com)

### **INSTITUTE MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

We welcome several new Fellows to the Institute. The website now has a Fellows page where members are listed: <http://www.systemswisdom.com/institute-systems-wisdom>. As we continue to grow and develop, we will request a brief biography and photo of each Fellow for web posting.

### **SYSTEMS WISDOM & INSTITUTE ACTIVITIES**

#### **Board Members**

Systems Wisdom is pleased to announce two new members to the Board of Directors. We welcome Vincent Barabba (<http://www.systemswisdom.com/vincent-p-barabba>) former General Manager of Corporate Strategy and Knowledge Development, General Motors Corporation, and Courtney Wright, Head of Marketing and Communications, North America at BNP Paribas Securities Services (<http://www.systemswisdom.com/courtney-wright>), and a graduate of Penn Organizational Dynamics.

#### **Consultants**

We are pleased to report that Collaborative Consultant, Sergio Garon (<http://www.systemswisdom.com/sergio-garon>), also from Penn Organizational Dynamics, is establishing an international service base for Systems Wisdom in São Paulo, Brazil. International service bases were previously established in Toronto, London, and Sydney.

## Strategic Alliances

Systems Wisdom has completed strategic agreements with six organizations. Each was selected because it can enable opportunities for education, research and consulting - including with Fellows.



Based at the University of Pennsylvania, the Mission of ACASA is to conduct theoretical and applied research, education and service to industry, government and education, using systems sciences and systems thinking as global knowledge and competency resources. Updates on topics are presented on the Ackoff Center Weblog (<http://ackoffcenter.blogs.com/>). For information about ACASA and the Weblog contact **Dr. John Pourdehnad**, Associate Director ([jpourdeh@seas.upenn.edu](mailto:jpourdeh@seas.upenn.edu)).



Based in Los Angeles, CA, Aero Consultants provide aviation expertise to Law Firms, News Media, Television and Film Production, and Aircraft Operators worldwide. Among their expertise is navigating complexity. For information contact **Captain Ross "Rusty" Aimer**, retired United Airlines Captain and aviation expert. Website: <http://www.aeroconsultingexperts.com/>



As with any other function in a business, organizations recognize the need to establish a more robust Business Process Management (BPM) discipline. Employing the *BPM-D<sup>TM</sup> Framework* to establish the right *BPM Discipline<sup>TM</sup>*, BPM-D helps to improve capability regardless of the current maturity of BPM function. For information contact **Dr. Mathias Kirchmer** (US) or **Peter Franz** (UK): <http://bpm-d.com/about-us/key-people/>. Website: <http://bpm-d.com/>



ICCPM Ltd was established by Australian, UK and US government bodies and major defense industry corporations, and is now a substantial network of global corporate, government, academic and professional organizations committed to the better management of complex projects across all industry and government sectors. ICCPM partners including Systems Wisdom provide leadership in the advancement of knowledge and practice of the management of complex projects, enabling the global community to better deliver complex projects with real social, environmental and economic benefits. For information contact **Fred Payne**: <https://iccpm.com/content/iccpm-north-america>. Website: <https://iccpm.com/>



InThinking Network is a non-profit, fully volunteer organization formed in 2001 by a group of students of the work of W. Edwards Deming and related theorists. Through hosting an annual 5-day Forum, the aim is to make thinking about sub-systems, variation, knowledge, and psychology, and their interaction - which comprises Deming's "System of Profound Knowledge™ (SoPK)" - more conscious. Such thinking about thinking, which we call "[InThinking](http://www.in2in.org)," will allow people to better perceive relationships and interdependencies in human endeavors, across all industries, extending to education systems and our government. For information contact: <http://www.in2in.org/contact/>. Website: <http://www.in2in.org/>



With offices in Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa, Leadership Options is a leading provider of leadership development and assessment services to the private and public sector. Their approach is based on principles of *Systemic Leadership Learning*, in which a creative design map of systems is used to analyze and interpret application implications of the interaction of various systems within the context of the learning content. For information contact **Dr. Morne Mostert** (<http://whoswho.co.za/morne-mostert-43668>). Website: <http://www.leadershipoptions.co.za/>

## Presentations

### International Institute for Learning

As a partner of ICCPM, Systems Wisdom has been invited by the International Institute for Learning (IIL: <http://www.iil.com/>) to be part of the education team for International Project Management Day 2014. This annual one-day virtual event presents speakers and topics to a global audience; in 2013 it was to 65,000 attendees. Similar to other massive open online courses (MOOC), a speaker is professionally videotaped while giving a lecture then the (edited) presentation becomes available online. For this event, only those who register for the conference will have immediate access. However, 30-days later a link becomes available for open access. Taping will be in July. The conference is in November. Open access occurs in December. For more information, follow this link: <http://www.iil.com/> to “International Project Management Day 2014” to see the welcome video. Here is the opening slide for the presentation we will give.



### Association for Enterprise Information (AFEI) / National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA)

AFEI/NDIA (<http://www.afei.org/Pages/default.aspx>) has invited Systems Wisdom to give a presentation to its senior leadership in Washington, DC. The program will use a “Lunch and Learn” format and will be attended in person and virtually via video link. The topic concerns adopting innovative business models by changing the mindset of people and organizations something many argue needs to be done but have difficulty accomplishing. The program will be taught by John Pourdehnad and Larry Starr.

## Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI)

FPRI (<http://www.fpri.org/>) will be meeting with Systems Wisdom to discuss the development of a program for FPRI members on “Systems and Design Thinking Implications on Public Policy.” In 2012-2013, Systems Wisdom members facilitated a systems/design-based strategic planning project which resulted in the following summary posted on the FPRI website:

Recently our Board of Directors conducted a strategic planning process that has enabled us to provide a stronger financial base, recruit young talent, expand our program offerings geographically, give new emphasis to our History Institute, upgrade our website, bolster our social media presence, and create new products and services from E-Books to blogs to webinars... We now offer regular programming in Philadelphia, the Main Line, Princeton, New York City, and Washington DC; we have an expanding menu of publications around the world; our fans on *Facebook* have grown from 2,500 fans in January 2013 to over 30,000 fans in November; and the *Global Go To Think Tank Index* has rated FPRI for two years in a row Number 1 in the US for think tanks with a budget under \$5 million and Number 2 in the world for think tanks under \$5 million—up from 19 last year.

## Academy of Management Annual Meeting

The Management Consulting Division Program Chair for the Academy of Management which is holding its 74<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Philadelphia from August 1 – 5 (<http://aom.org/annualmeeting/>) has asked Larry Starr to be the chair for a conference session called “Management Consulting: Scholar/Practitioner Education.” The session has speakers presenting the following topics: Developing Theory and Skills in Conversational Consulting: The Relevance of a Doctoral Programme; The Instructor's Role in the Student Consulting Process: Working with the Student Team; Motor Trike: Building A Brand Community; and, Documenting Organizational Culture: Not Just a Bottom-Up or Top-Down Act.

## **Projects**

### Russian Opportunities

In the previous *Newsletter* we noted that John Pourdehnad was a member of the Tomsk State University (TSU) International Academic Council ([http://tsu.ru/english/international\\_council/](http://tsu.ru/english/international_council/)) and was participating in strategic planning efforts in Tomsk, Russia. For information and photos see the following links: [http://tsu.ru/english/about\\_tsu/news\\_events/46954/](http://tsu.ru/english/about_tsu/news_events/46954/) and [http://www.tsu.ru/content/news/news\\_tsu/46984/](http://www.tsu.ru/content/news/news_tsu/46984/).

As follow up to his participation, TSU has contacted Systems Wisdom to become facilitators for a variety of consulting, educational and research opportunities. We are now in final discussion about delivering a 5-day education program in Tomsk to senior university officials on “**DEVELOPING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY TO DEAL WITH COMPLEXITY.**” Following this, TSU leaders would travel to Philadelphia and facilitated by Systems Wisdom meet with officials of

US academic and corporate-educational institutions. Topics for the Russian visitors would include the design and development of international degree programs, collaborative research opportunities, and the creation of a consulting and education institute within TSU to deliver services to clients in Russia and throughout the world.

### Professional Doctorate

Larry Starr has accepted an appointment at Philadelphia University to design and develop a new kind of professional doctorate for working professionals. The program is expected to be housed as part of the innovative collaboration of their Schools of Design, Engineering and Business/Commerce: <http://www.philau.edu/designengineeringandcommerce/index.html>. The appointment begins July 1, 2014. The first cohort of doctoral students is anticipated to begin in fall 2015.

Elements of the new doctoral degree are expected to include practice and applied scholarship, project-based learning, part-time studies, a systems/design approach to learning and problem solving, and study/travel to leading academic and corporate institutions. Opportunities to participate in the project will be presented to **Fellows** as it develops.

## **FELLOWS READING**

This issue of the *Fellows Newsletter* presents additional links to academic and practice papers, reports, blogs, and other sources of intellectual stimulation. Fellows are encouraged to read, discuss and offer feedback. Here are readings for 2014, Vol 1 No. 2:

Quoted from: <http://aom.org/News/Press-Releases/Leadership-is-neither-a-matter-of-rank-nor-a-solo-affair,-study-finds.aspx>

### **Heterarchy in Contrast to Hierarchy**

It may be hard to believe, given the size of the popular literature on how to become a leader (*and the focus on analytic parts rather than systemic wholes – LMS*), but in recent years scholars have increasingly challenged the traditional view of leadership as an individual trait in favor of conceiving it as a shared property of group members.

"Power in groups is traditionally conceptualized in reference to a rank ordering of individuals," begins a paper in the current [\*Academy of Management Journal\*](#), adding that "the prevailing wisdom is that stable power hierarchies promote more effective groups by providing order that helps facilitate collective decision-making." The study then proceeds to take issue with this conventional view through an elaborate behavioral experiment that is supplemented by interviews with members of a variety of work groups, ranging from an editorial team in book publishing to a sales task force at a national tile and stone company to a top management team at a multinational insurance and financial-services corporation.

What emerges is that, rather than flowing from a single leader, power in contemporary teams tends to shift from one team member to another as "situational demands and uncertainties shift." This team power structure is called a "heterarchy" in contrast to a "hierarchy." The term is borrowed from neurobiological research on the organization of the brain. Read more:

<http://aom.org/News/Press-Releases/Leadership-is-neither-a-matter-of-rank-nor-a-solo-affair,-study-finds.aspx>.

Quoted from: <http://aom.org/News/AOM-in-the-News/The-danger-of-corporate-thinking-in-higher-education.aspx>

### **The danger of corporate thinking in higher education: Business schools are too eager to emulate the commercial sector**

Over the past two decades the emirate of Dubai emerged as a hotspot for the establishment of international business school campuses, only to then see many of these campuses subsequently close their doors or operate with largely empty classrooms as the world financial crisis took hold.

What happened in Dubai was something business faculty spend considerable time writing and teaching about but which they had little success in avoiding – the making and breaking of a bubble. The Dubai business school bubble exposed a disturbing eagerness of schools to emulate the corporate sector in a way that is at odds with their traditions and puts their reputations and finances at risk.

The lesson of the Dubai bubble is that business schools need to get back to being students and critics of the corporate world, not participants in it. If not, Dubai could turn out to be a portent of a sector-wide depression, an early warning sign of a wider problem in higher education in general and business education in particular. Read more: <http://aom.org/News/AOM-in-the-News/The-danger-of-corporate-thinking-in-higher-education.aspx>

Quoted from: <http://hbr.org/2011/09/learning-to-live-with-complexity/ar/1>

Gökçe Sargut and Rita Gunther McGrath: From *Harvard Business Review* (2011) worth reading (again):

### **Learning to Live with Complexity**

Managing a business today is fundamentally different than it was just 30 years ago. The most profound difference, we've come to believe, is the level of complexity people have to cope with.

Complex systems have always existed, of course—and business life has always featured the unpredictable, the surprising, and the unexpected. But complexity has gone from something found mainly in large systems, such as cities, to something that affects almost everything we touch: the products we design, the jobs we do every day, and the organizations we oversee. Most of this increase has resulted from the information technology revolution of the past few decades. Systems that used to be separate are now interconnected and interdependent, which means that they are, by definition, more complex.

Complex organizations are far more difficult to manage than merely complicated ones. It's harder to predict what will happen, because complex systems interact in unexpected ways. It's harder to make sense of things, because the degree of complexity may lie beyond our cognitive limits. And it's harder to place bets, because the past behavior of a complex system may not predict its future behavior. In a complex system the outlier is often more significant than the average.

**Read more:** <http://hbr.org/2011/09/learning-to-live-with-complexity/ar/1>