

Statement from Charlie Morgan with his reasons and qualifications for running for election as an Internal Board Director.

“Representation is important, sure, but action, experience, ideas just as much,” responded my 24 year old socialist daughter when I wondered what this older, white, male psychoanalyst could bring to the AKRI Board. A lot, I now think, having reached out to hear from others about the issues currently facing AKRI and our community.

I became active in the Boston Center (CSGSS) at a time of crisis for AKRI (the early 90s) and became less active in the Center in the 2010’s when my presidency ended (I was the fourth or fifth president in a row who did not complete their term). I think we failed then to grapple fully with issues of succession and ambition, but these issues in AKRI remain as relevant, maybe more so, than ever. Ambition and succession are inextricably bound. Creative ambition needs support from below, and it needs room to move from above. How is that above-space created, how does succession unfold, and how do we mark and metabolize the sense of loss, guilt, and envy that even the most creative ambition and successful successions evoke? Open, deep, and collaborative conversations are essential here; and this is where my experience and empathy may be most useful.

Early in my membership at the Boston Center, we were evolving our GR ‘technology’ to understand gender relationships. We struggled then, as AKRI struggles now, to understand the sometimes conflictual but importantly overlapping relationship between our educational mission and our social justice ambitions. The social and existential crises now facing our world require organizations that matter (like ours) to reckon anew with their relationships to social justice, systemic racism, gender equity, the environment, and more. We have no luxury to work in a vacuum.

The psychoanalysts who helped found our organization gave us brilliant theoretical tools and techniques. But later generations of psychoanalysts (and social theorists) have challenged many of the embedded assumptions in that originating language, highlighting the ways theory and technique can serve to maintain unexamined power dynamics and the reproduction of the status quo. I think we have interesting and important work to do here.

As a Board member recently said about AKRI’s future: “we don’t want old wine in new bottles.’ Today, vintners graft contemporary vines onto old roots to create new wines that carry the depth of history. The dialectic of old and new, when nurtured by thoughtful inquiry, pointed engagement, and creative experimentation, can bring essential and meaningful change.

I hope this gives you some sense of my thinking. I believe in the power of unconscious forces (I teach contemporary psychoanalytic ideas to Chinese therapists in China), I believe in the social construction of reality (my PhD work drew on such theories), and I believe in Group Relations, AKRI, and the power of our evolving ideas. There is hard work to be done and good questions to be asked. I’d be happy to engage in doing both.

Feel free to write me at crmtwo@icloud.com if you’d like to discuss any of this further.

Charlie