

Vice President's Message – Ray Ison

IFSR 2016 Newsletter

I am delighted to be joining the IFSR executive at this exciting time for what I have been calling 'cybersystemics'. My rationale for using this term was explained in presentations at ISSS2016 in Berlin last year in my Presidential Address, and in a special 'systemic inquiry' at Herrenhausen Palace, Hanover last year. For those interested all of the talks at the Hanover event and much of the background can be found at this site: <http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/govan/>. Amongst other matters raised at these events was the significant institutional complexity in the cybersystemic field and the lack of intellectual and political influence for our interests and achievements – particularly in key policy and research funding fora associated with the UN, Brussels, Washington and the like.

Some will know that I have been Professor of Systems at The Open University (OU), UK since 1994. Following many (ongoing) mergers we OU systems academics who number about 10 are now located in the School of Engineering and Innovation in a new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Faculty. Within this broader structure we are organized as the Applied Systems Thinking in Practice (STiP) group (see <http://www9.open.ac.uk/mct-ei/research/applied-systems-thinking-practice/about>) and we are responsible for a successful MSc in Systems Thinking in Practice (see <http://www.open.ac.uk/choose/ou/systemsthinking>). We currently have just under 1500 alumni actively engaged in a LinkedIn community.

From 2008-15 I was also Professor at the Monash Sustainability Institute, Monash University, Australia where I developed and led the Systemic Governance Research Program, an interdisciplinary, systems-based research program focusing on water governance, climate change adaptation and social learning. At the Open University I have through various commissioned projects and initiatives, usually entailing collaborative research, demonstrated how social learning, including systemic inquiry, can be employed as an alternative governance mechanism for managing in complex situations such as water governance, program and project governance, climate change adaptation, food security research, social learning and the purposeful creation of communities of practice. I am the author of the book (2010): *Systems Practice: How to Act in a Climate-change World* (Springer & OU). Most of my major research publications can be seen or accessed here: <http://oro.open.ac.uk/view/person/rli2.html>

For me, the IFSR has a basic structure fit for greater exploitation in the service of fostering and institutionalizing systems literacy at a global scale. Working with others I would like to leverage the possibilities inherent in its structure, history and people to further this aim. In particular I would like to explore how IFSR might support more meaningful relationships between Systems (read cybersystemic) educators and educational providers and support means to develop professional standards/competency frameworks.