Small is beautiful

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First of all I would like to say that I feel lucky to be here at the 40th anniversary IATUL conference, having taken part in IATUL-work since 1983. I look back with pride on the long IATUL-tradition of Veszprém University Library and in general the early joining IATUL of Hungarian university libraries. In our company we can see dr. József Zsidai, director of Miskolc University Library, who became a IATUL member 30 years ago, so maybe he has got one of the longest memberships among us.

Our long IATUL history deserves attention, falling in a period when the international activity of East European university libraries was restricted by both financial and political barriers. Hungarian librarians found ways to join IATUL despite the double barriers.

Librarians from Veszprém University Library took part in several IATUL meetings from 1968 to this conference. Dr. Zoltán Kováts, former director, took part in six meetings. Mártta Egyházy, my deputy, was a participant in three meetings. Csilla Deák, a young staff-member, took part in the Tallinn Seminar. I was present at 11 IATUL events. Certainly my staff and other Hungarian librarians took part in the Veszprém Seminar in 1988.

I am not able to list all the benefits which come from the IATUL membership:
  - high level professional experiences
  - dignified possibility to publish our papers
  - ever-living friendships
  - memorable adventures.
I would like to mention that, in the frame of TEMPUS project, three of my staff-members have spent from three weeks to six months time in London and Oxford. I am very grateful to my IATUL partners who provided these study tours.

The last year, when I prepared a special World Bank project for Hungarian university libraries, I again enjoyed help from IATUL members. Professor Elin Törnudd, Dr. Sinikka Koskiala and Arja-Riitta Haarala, directors in Finland, and Dr. Valentin Wehefritz, director in Germany, welcomed us and shared their experiences with me and my expert-team. So the IATUL blood circulation flows and sustains us.

Since its establishment 40 years ago IATUL has realized the main purpose: providing a forum for directors and senior staff of technical university libraries to meet and discuss problems of common interest.

IATUL provides a forum for libraries’ representatives to exchange their views, share their experiences, forge personal friendships and international understanding, and develop co-operative approaches for solving problems.

The main IATUL attraction, apart from the high level professional relation among the members, is the ability to keep in personal contact with the majority of members. This special familiar style is a consequence of the relatively small size of our Association.

IATUL began its life with 34 members. Today the number of members has been increased four times and, beyond the Ordinary Members - Honorary Members, Sustaining Members, Observer Members and Non-voting Associate Members - have joined the Association.

The continuous increase in IATUL membership shows the success of our Association, but the larger size endangers the atmosphere of intimacy which is so beneficial to us. In vain we would wish IATUL no increase because as Alice said in *Through the Looking Glass*: "I never ask advice about growing."

The question is how to preserve the advantages of a small size organization, its familiarity, the values of existing personal contact, despite increasing membership.

To achieve this we need:
Presidents and Board members who maintain high level professional values with a friendly style,

the application of technical developments so that we can exchange quick and informal messages through the Internet,

continued anniversary celebrations and other events which preserve and revitalise the IATUL tradition, and transfer it to younger members,

to make our commitment and engagement to our successful international Association, which may credit its success to its small size because "small is beautiful".