

Minutes of the Council
Western Social Science Association
Salt Lake City, Utah
17-18 September 2010

Agenda for this meeting distributed
Minutes of 4-14-10 & 4/16/10 council meeting distributed
Meeting convened by Gil at 8am

Reflections on the Reno Meeting & Ongoing Recommendations

New constitution approved without problems

The venue: virtues and flaws of a casino setting vs downtown setting -

- Perhaps hire shuttles for access to town
- Advise people of the venue and how to get around

Video presentations were particularly well attended, including good interaction (need for advance planning of facilities and copyright niceties taken care of)

On return to Grand Sierra, staff the second floor with a student table and coffee outpost

Student participation is likely to increase, both on program and in paper competition – resource program assembly and paper competition as required

Many remarks on quality of Salt Lake venue, not only its amenities, but also the exceeding hospitality and service orientation of people here

Ted: suggestion of using special journal issues as an element in the local conference recruitment effort

Discussion of timeline for program compilation: deadlines for submission > timeline for assembly by section coordinators > timeline for integration by program chair

Financial Report by Larry

Print-out distributed, with comments:

- Finances generally in a comfortable state
- Minimal obligations currently outstanding
- Reno meeting was rather good for local meeting expenses, especially in regard to flexibility on food service and AV provisions

- (Side note: OK for people to bring their own projectors for sessions in Salt Lake. People have to be able to handle their own equipment if they do.)
- \$30,000 minimum expenditure for food required for Salt Lake meeting
- Learning from Reno example: with influx of local participants, less demand for certain meals, such as breakfast, so order food accordingly

Larry: “All in all, we’re in pretty good financial shape.”

Once again, the need for marketing and follow-up, as well as using the new dues structure, to attract and retain participants. The formal contact effort is already in progress.

Tom: what about a poster session for easy entry by graduate students, especially local ones?

- Logistics of this—whole additional program assembly matter
- Too late for 2011—possibly plan for 2012
- Research the technology of poster display
- Use this also to bring in undergrads from surrounding institutions
- Poster session committee appointed by Gil: Tom, Heather, Ted, and Gary

Indian Studies Section effort to get program participants in the Salt Lake venue: sessions specifically devoted to Mormons and Indians.

Finance Committee—is not currently functioning. Vice President is supposed to chair this, and Larry sends regular reports to it. Not a standing committee in the constitution, but mentioned in last meeting’s minutes; so need to get this re-established now.

Tour of Convention Hotel Facilities

Led by Brooks Ehrhart, Event Manager, Hilton Salt Lake City Center.

Approval of Minutes from April

Moved by Vic, second by Jack, passed unanimously

Back to Finance Committee

Committee of three chaired by VP, plus: a first-year member of the council, and a second-year member of the council.

Gil called for nominations: Eileen volunteered as second-year member, Heather the first-year member. Chris moved to close and declare the two elected. So done.

Journal Editor Report

Prahba not present (attends one meeting per year). See April minutes for his report and remarks there; there was the idea of a session on plagiarism. Gil reported on Prahba's behalf that the journal is on schedule, without serious backlog. Gil made reference to the correspondence over past months on a special issue of the journal devoted to the economic situation of China, which is going ahead, to emerge in September 2011 issue. Discussion of advantage of this special journal issue to recruit Chinese scholars into the WSSA.

Note from Elsevier received by Prahba and Larry, proposing format changes in the journal. Prahba wishes to defer on this until his administration is concluded. Larry does not see this as cause for alarm, except we have a history of changes in size of the publication. "In the end I don't think it really matters." Council agrees with Prahba's sentiments.

As to choice of special issue topics, we are in the process of a search for an editor. With the new editor on board, bring that person into a policy discussion of the constitution of special issues. Chris moves, and Doug seconds, that this be entered into the minutes to see that it eventuates. So passed.

Richard distributed a three-page report for council review, comprising book reviews for the journal and coordination of book display at the annual meeting. The "bigger issue" Rich selects from the report to discuss with the council is the book display. Library of Social Science evidently is expanding and quickening under new management. Scholar's Choice, which first came to our meeting last year, to seek authors and projects, is interested in coming in also with a "combined exhibit" also. Should this be permitted? Larry says we have no exclusive contract with LSS. Larry suggests he and Rich talk with Howe at SC and negotiate best prospect of the two, so the exhibitor has prospect of a profitable arrangement.

Also, need to invite regional university presses and other local publishers to come.

What about non-book vendors? Richard is investigating.

Journal Editor and Book Review Editor Searches

Doug distributed draft of call for journal editor. Doug assembled search committee of Phaedra Pond, Doreen Barrie, Prahba, Chris. Add Diane Calloway Graham. Prahba composed draft of announcement, edited by Doug, informed by feedback from committee. Doug notes need of definite commitment, in writing, of release time for editor by host institution. Larry insists on formal contract with institution. Editor candidate interviews to be done at April 2011 meeting, and decision announced at the meeting. So search timeline backs from that; will be adjusted in interests of reality. Submissions due 15 December. Short list by mid-March to be distributed to council. Suggestion of making note of term limit (two three-year terms) and implying the good relationship past with suggestion of talking with current editor. Another suggestion: note policy setting relationship with council. Another suggestion: somehow make process management experience a criterion for the search. Call will be finalized – today!

Doug counsels making the journal editor selection, then involving the new editor in selecting the book review editor. Rich agrees to stay on an additional year in order to facilitate such transition. Council concurs with this.

Constitutional Review

Anything to say? No comments, everything is cool. Approval and text will be published to website. Commendation to Jack, Nina, Diane, and others who did the hard yards on this. Larry urges continual review of operations to see we are in accord with the constitution.

Operations Manual

At the spring meeting we determined domains and some responsibilities. Some operations manuals are in place, such as officer duties. Current need is in regard to committee operations, as well as an introductory piece and table of contents to preface the other documents. Larry suggests: send all operations pieces to him to assess what we have and what are the gaps. Then, have another extraordinary meeting of a select group to consolidate the association's policy manual. Larry says, include a template of the council agenda.

Recruitment & Retention

Gary distributed an email reporting on work. This includes two new coordinators of Philosophy Section. Contacted sections needing work.

Related to recruitment: Larry reports some 2000 postcards sent, including not only members but also individuals at institutions in area of meeting and other promising institutions. Again, seeking 650-700 benchmark for conference attendance.

Virtue: WSSA is a relatively inexpensive conference to attend.

Suggestion from Heather: develop a hit-list of universities in conference region every year for section coordinators to contact. Larry already is compiling this, including email addresses of individuals. Section coordinators should amplify from this on the basis of known or idiosyncratic interests.

Ted: What about surveys of meeting participants? We ceased doing this several years ago. Or, what about a section coordinator post-survey? This as a matter of assessment. Ted is licensed to work on a participant survey.

Newsletter

Kate: "I'm going back to nagging people." Deadline 22 November for next newsletter. Current edition to go out as saddle-stitched booklet, 16 pages, rather than folded mailing. Done in 4-page increments.

Assignments:

- Doug: progress of editor search.
- Vic: conference overview.
- Gary: recruitment and retention activities.
- Ted: proposition of a poster session.
- Gil: nominations for positions.
- Larry:
- Dan: suggestions on national assessment initiative.
- Heather: redshirting if kindergartners.
- Eileen: researcher collaboration with tribes.
- Something by a student: Chris has a visiting grad student he will ask; if not, then Gill will recruit.

Suggestion: improve portrait photos.

Request from Kate: examine the website, and make suggestions for additions and revisions.

Note: Free job listings at WSSA website.

Need to work on paper competition announcement, making it clear there are two separate competitions. Tom work with Kate on this. (Revise for the website and for emailing to deans and so on.)

Applause for Kate! . . .

Nominations

Jack distributed sheets of nominees for offices and board positions. A couple of corrections made.

Thanks to nomination committee members: Nina, Jim Peach, Doreen, Diane. Chris also helped recruit candidates, as did Jim.

Moved by Eileen to adopt slate of nominees, second by Vic, adopted.

Postcard notice will go out to members to vote via the website. Election open in mid-December and closed mid-February.

Jack presented plaques to retired council members: Vic, Tom, Gary.

Visits to Conference Region Institutions

Five—Jack, Larry, Kate, Vic, & Gil—arrived Wednesday morning. Targeted 5-6 universities in the area to recruit.

- Jack: Utah, two academic centers. Lots of potential grad student attendees. Met with deans and some chairs. (Chris will follow p with chair of Geography.)
- Vic: BYU and Utah Valley State. Latter has 33,000 students. Much interest of deans in both places, and they mentioned using conference to educate undergrads as to possibilities of gradate work. Utah Valley pledged financial support for student attendees.

- Jack: long-term approach to local institutional support. We want members, not donations.
- Gil: Weber State. Method: identify institution; search past year's program for that institutional name, come up with contacts. Honors program wants to have undergrads attend and present. Will provide free train transport. Area not done: go to university press.
- Larry & Kate: Utah State. Dan organized the visit there. Visited CHSS, where we have active members. Met all department heads in college, and got good testimonials. Also met w Dean of Natural Resources, who will recruit for s across Utah. Also contacts in School of Business. Requests for electronic materials to distribute. Proposal: show up with thumb drives with all materials on them and hand them out. Missed the press.

Larry: need to do more advance planning of this process, so as to cover all bases. Rather than mass postcards, limit postcards to current participants. Remarkable promise of this initiative!

Reconvened by Gil at 8:50am

Floor to Vic to discuss the theme for Salt Lake meeting, **“Addressing Questions That Matter.”** Vic elaborates on this in his piece for the upcoming newsletter – laying aside assumptions to address more basic questions, “help our colleagues reframe what they do.” In addition, the success of the conference can be defined in how effectively it builds community. For instance, each council member serving as coach to a section coordinator.

Doug: How to give attention to the theme? Perhaps encourage sections to devote panels to the theme.

Discussion & Suggestions - Meeting Format

Larry: results of a survey of conference participants. Personal contact, by colleague or administrator, is what is most effective. Among people considering participating, inexpensive cost was key. Being in downtown venues is considered important. Plenaries are not popular.

Heather: facilitating crosslisting among sections, by sharing information across of papers coming in.

Jack: council members particularly work with sections needing development.

Les: getting word of paper acceptance and panel scheduling out sooner.

Isern: devote attention to branding, and use social networking, broadly defined.

Vic: looking at presidential luncheon, and presenting of student awards. Larry speaks for doing student awards at presidential luncheon on Thursday. Further discussion, print a notice of paper winners, with photos and abstracts, and noting presentation, to be placed into attendee packets.

Printing a poster of prize winners – PDF – vice president to compose and send to Salt Lake for printing. Also smaller PDF for inclusion in packet.

Vic raised with Larry subject of incentives for pre-registration. Possibly a raffle of a netbook.

Conference preps, according to Larry. He & Kate arrive on Sunday. Monday they purchase supplies, print nametags and receipts and so on. Tuesday start stuffing packets, with student workers. Tuesday afternoon Kate trains students. Wednesday the council convenes. And so on.

Status of Canadian Studies reception – lapsed – but Doug is working on this, look for a resurgence in Houston.

Les: need for signage and maps for participants.

Dan, re the theme: instruct discussants of panels to use the conference theme to critique and tie together the papers.

Heather: consistent issue of no-shows. Purge the program of non-registrants?
Larry: need for adjusting timeline for pre-registration. Also problem for Mexican scholars, with difficulty doing credit transactions.

Solution: prior announcement we are monitoring this and that no-shows will be reported to the president. Then, systematically gather this data and follow up post-conference.

Heather: Another measure on the no-shows – send roster of pre-registrants to section coordinators to check for delinquents. Chris: draft language for section coordinators to use with participants about need to register.

Larry's suggestion: increase late registration fee to \$30, \$15 for students, \$10 for guests. Chris moved, Jack seconded. Passed, effective for 2011 meeting, and "special arrangements may be made for international visitors."

New Business

Kate raises issue: business cards. She will print on demand.

Doug: ACSUS is getting ready to send out call. Will include WSSA call.

AV package for each room (screen, stand, electricity) is \$100. Overhead costs extra. Overheads will be provided only on demand. Hotel has no objection to participants bringing their own projectors. Discourage people to use video or slides; go computer digital projection.

Hotels in general have become more receptive to people bringing their own projectors.

Motion: WSSA purchase three projectors for conference use. Not to be publicized, but available if needed. Gary moved, Betsy seconded. Passed.

Homework from Gil: email from each of us listing contact info for department chairs, deans, and provosts. Gil will send letters of appreciation, and also boost the organization.

Doug: Is there a term limit for section coordinators? Larry: encourage sections to have a lead section coordinator and a backup (who may or may not be next in line).

Chris: Can Gary study the question of section coordinator transition? Possible problems: coordinators going too long; or too much turnover; or section coordinator not being a good portal.

Adjournment