



MID-SOUTH SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
Minutes of the Executive Council Midwinter Meeting
Saturday, February 21, 2015
Virtual Online Meeting via GoToMeeting.com

Saturday, February 21, 2015, 8:30amEST

Present:	Anita Bledsoe-Gardner	President
	Dawood Sultan	President-Elect
	Ruth Chanie	Secretary-Treasurer
	Tim Gongaware	Past President
	Shelly McGrath	Vice President
	Jeremy Ross	Vice President-Elect
	Brian Hinote	Editor, Sociological Spectrum
	Dennis Peck	Hotel Negotiator
	DeMond Miller	Chair, Committee on Nominations
	Melissa Powell-Williams	Chair, Committee on Women
	Toni Sims-Mohammad	Chair, Small & Community Colleges
	Earl Wright II	Chair, Committee on the Profession

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order by President Anita Bledsoe-Gardner at 8:36am.

MOTION to accept Minutes from the 2014 Fall Executive Council Meetings.

- **M/S/P**

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL REPORTS

President's Report: (President Anita Bledsoe-Gardner presented, also written report)

- Green Initiative: In order to further save paper and costs, this year's midwinter meetings were held online via GoToMeeting.com. Anita urges the organization to consider doing more online, such as exploring a conference application for mobile phone users to cut down on printing costs. She will continue to explore options.
- We have not chosen a Citizen Sociologist Award in some time, so Anita requests that if there are any nominations for this award, please let her know. This award is for non-academics who are doing extraordinary sociological work in the community or otherwise outside of academia.
- Building membership – Anita reminded us that all members of the EC are responsible for helping to build the membership. This is especially important given the budget deficits the organization has been facing.
- *The report was accepted*

Secretary-Treasurer's Report: (Sec-Treas. Ruth Chananie presented, also written report)

- Ruth's main concern is the budget deficit from 2014 (over \$11k). She urges the EC to find ways to increase income and reduce expenditures.
- The total money in the general fund has decreased since she sent the written report.
 - o \$5,344 was paid to Taylor & Francis for 167 Sociological Spectrum subscriptions.
 - o \$4,126.96 was paid to Mobile Renaissance Hotel for renegotiated attrition for the 2014 conference.
 - o The remaining balance in the general fund account is \$15,063.08.
 - o The balance in the Lyman Scholarship fund account is \$29,226.17.
- Ruth is working on an application for liability insurance through Travelers' Insurance Company in order to provide legal protection for the EC members and the organization. She will provide an update on the process later on.
- **MOTION** by DeMond to go into a closed session to discuss the details of an attempted breach of the Wells Fargo checking account on January 22-23, 2015.
 - **M/S/P**
- **MOTION** by DeMond to go out of closed session.
 - **M/S/P**
 - o *The report was accepted*

President-Elect/Program Chair's Report: (President-Elect Dawood Sultan presented, also written report)

- He sent out two calls for session organizers but is concerned with overwhelming people's email inboxes. Tim and Earl suggested that he should go ahead and send out more calls and not worry about too many emails.
- Dawood is planning to travel to Lafayette in the spring to meet with the hotel representative and tour the facilities as part of the 2015 conference planning.
 - o He also expressed a need to clarify equipment costs with the hotel, as this is not included in the contract.
 - o Further, he is planning to ask the local arrangements chair to provide LCD projectors for the conference if possible.
 - o Some discussion of whether or not to purchase these for the organization ensued, but was tabled for discussion during old business.
- He is planning to work with Anita and Tim to create a conference budget.
- He also recommends increasing the MSSA annual membership conference registration fees as a measure to improve the association's financial health.
- Further discussion ensued regarding ideas for Dawood to consider as he plans the conference.
 - o *The report was accepted*

Vice President's Report: (Vice-President Shelly McGrath presented)

- She plans to send out calls for graduate student paper submissions in March and late April to catch students before the end of the spring semester, and again in June or July as a reminder.
- She set the deadline for submissions for September 1.
- After the papers are all in, she will choose judges. The scores will be due Sept. 30.
- Tim pointed out that the normal deadlines for paper submissions are toward the end of June. He suggested that Shelly coordinate with the Vice-President Elect and the Lyman Scholarship Chair to have the same or approximately the same deadlines for all student

award competitions. This would make advertising and soliciting submissions much easier. Shelly agreed.

- Ruth suggested that Shelly contact the students who submit papers and their advisees prior to the conference to encourage them to attend.
- DeMond suggested that the student presentations should take place on the same day as the banquet, as this will increase participation.
 - o *The report was accepted*

Vice President-Elect's Report: (Vice President-Elect Jeremy Ross presented, also written report)

- Jeremy will coordinate dates with Shelly. He will also send out three rounds of calls for undergraduate paper award submissions, and once those are in, he will solicit judges.
- He also agreed to follow up with the students who submit to encourage conference attendance.
 - o *The report was accepted*

Past President's and Budget Committee Report: (Past President Tim Gongaware presented, also written report)

- Tim said he will look into state incorporation in mid-march. Meanwhile, if anyone has a suggestion as to which member state we should incorporate in, please let him know.
- As for the 2015 budget, the important issue is to increase income and reduce costs.
- The online registration system is a bit costly, but so far it seems to be worth it. We will monitor it closely.
- One way to save money is to go to online-only subscriptions through Taylor & Francis for Spectrum. This was discussed, and the general consensus was:
 - o The hard copy method of delivery serves as advertising and a reminder to members about our organization (and the journal).
 - o Switching to member preference (online only, hard copy only, or both) would be very time consuming to keep track of.
 - o However, it was suggested that Brian poll the membership to see what they think.
 - *The report was accepted*

Committee on Nominations: (DeMond Miller presented, also written report)

- DeMond thanked Meredith for her extensive help in getting him started in this position.
- There are confirmed nominations for the Chair of Nominations, Membership, and Minorities as well as for Vice-President Elect.
- The present concern is that there are no confirmed nominees for President-Elect. DeMond asked the EC for suggestions and was given several names to follow up on.
- Once the slate is complete, the Nominations Committee will narrow down the nominees to two persons in each category. These will be presented to the EC, and then submitted for the ballot.
 - o Ruth or Anita will send DeMond any initiatives that involve by-law changes for inclusion on the ballot.
- DeMond will ask Kim Davies if she is willing to conduct the electronic voting process as she has done for the past several years.
- Dawood thanks DeMond for stepping in as Chair of Nominations.
 - o *The report was accepted*

Committee on the Profession: (Earl Wright II presented)

- Earl will follow up on Jackie Eller’s suggestions regarding COPE (Committee on Professional Ethics) as described in the 2-15-14 EC Minutes. This consists of the following:
 - o Revision of the COPE document
 - o Making COPE more visible and accessible to members
 - *The report was accepted*

Committee on Women: (Melissa Powell-Williams presented, also written report)

- The change of committee name should go on this year’s election ballot. The voting item is to change the name from the Committee on Women to the Committee on Women, Gender, and Sexuality. Because this is a by-laws change, it needs to be voted on by the entire membership.
- To help make our membership and registration forms more gender inclusive, two responses were added to the form in addition to male and female – decline to answer, and specify with a blank to fill in.
- Melissa said the caucus wants to make sure students interested in the caucus feel included and supported at the meetings, and suggested starting a women, gender and sexuality caucus student travel fund. This should be a new business item but was not included in the present meeting. It should be placed on the fall meeting agenda.
 - o *The report was accepted*

Spectrum Editors’ Report (Brian Hinote presented, also written report)

- Spectrum is in good shape – staying steady over time.
- Submissions are continuing to increase, and the acceptance rate is in the teens, which is good.
- As for Taylor & Francis, Meredith Ripa has left the company, so the editors are working with the new contacts, Melody Harris and Paul Cirillo. Hopefully the new working relationships will be as positive for Spectrum as the one with Meredith was.
- The editors will continue their journal promotional efforts this year, as these seem to be very effective.
- A new slate of Spectrum editorial board members has been approved.
 - o *The report was accepted*

Written Reports Submitted but not present at meeting were: Committee on Membership Chair Theresa Davidson; Forum Editor Tina Deshotels; Lyman Scholarship Committee Chair David Knottnerus; Lyman Book Award Committee Chair Erin Rider.

OLD BUSINESS:

Purchase of LCD Projectors

- **MOTION** by Dawood that MSSA purchase at least 3 LCD projectors for use by presenters at the annual conference.
- Discussion points included the question of who would “house” the projectors. The answer was the Secretary-Treasurer. She/he would bring or ship them to the conference each year.
- Also, the purchase would relieve some of the pressure from the local arrangements chair.
- Earl suggested that we purchase the lower-end models for about \$150 each, since they are only used once a year. He said that is what the Association of Black Sociologists did.
- Tim asked Earl if there was a way that we could share them with ABS by paying half of the cost.

- Earl agreed to ask, so the motion was tabled for now.
 - **Motion Tabled**

NEW BUSINESS:

Internal Audit

- **MOTION** by DeMond that the existing Budget Committee conduct an examination of the financial records of the organization, and if the President wishes to have a separate ad hoc committee to also examine the records then she can create one.
- Discussion points were as follows:
 - Tim pointed out that Anita (as President) can create such a committee already, without approval from the EC.
 - Anita said that given the earlier concerns, there should be a close examination of the financial records.
 - Tim pointed out that this was already done by the existing budget committee.
 - Anita requested that bank statements be made available, and copies of all receipts, and that these and the other financial documents (such as the bank register) be made available to all members of the EC.
 - Ruth said that this would not be a problem, although she would need to request copies of the 2014 bank statements from Wells Fargo since the old account was closed and she no longer has electronic access.
 - DeMond asked Anita if she would like to appoint additional members to the Budget Committee for a special meeting and closer inspection of the financial records.
 - Anita appointed Dennis Peck and Earl Wright II as additional members for this current purpose. Both agreed to serve.
 - Tim, as Chair of the Budget Committee, set a date that this financial review should take place no later than April 30, 2015.
 - **Motion Withdrawn**

Distinguished Career Award

- After some discussion, two leading nominees were identified: Thomas Durant and Dennis McSeveney. Anita suggested that both receive the award in 2015.
- Ruth pointed out that there would be an additional cost for the actual award of over \$100. (last year's award cost \$130).
- Anita agreed to pay for the second award herself.
- Earl pointed out that there needed to be an official nomination, written (by email ok).
- Anita composed and sent the email to the EC.
- **MOTION** by DeMond to accept the nomination of Dennis McSeveney for the 2015 Distinguished Career Award.
 - **M/S/P**
- **MOTION** by Tim to accept the nomination of Thomas Durant for the 2015 Distinguished Career Award.
 - **M/S/P**

Hotel Site Choice for 2019

- Dennis Peck discussed the two competing contracts for Jackson, MS for 2019, which were previously provided to the council. Jackson had previously been chosen as the city

for the 2019 conference, although the specific hotel had yet to be decided. The pros and cons of each contract were discussed.

- **MOTION** by Tim that the 2019 conference be held at the Marriott in Jackson, MS.
 - **M/S/P**
- Dennis asked for suggestions of cities to look into for the 2020 meetings. If anyone has suggestions, please contact him.
- Also, he asked if the council would like him to contact the Chattanooga hotel for 2016 regarding the mid-year meetings, which are included in the contract.
- **MOTION** by Tim for Dennis to try and get us out of the mid-winter part of the Chattanooga contract.
 - After discussion, it was agreed that the President, President-Elect, and Secretary-Treasurer should attend the mid-year meetings in person, but that all other members could attend using virtual meeting technology.
 - Lack of travel funding and out-of-pocket costs by the EC members was cited as the primary reason for this motion.
- **FRIENDLY AMMENDMENT TO THE MOTION** by Tim to have Dennis renegotiate the contract with the understanding that the President, President-Elect, and Secretary-Treasurer attend the mid-year meetings in person, but that all other members could attend using virtual meeting technology.
 - **M/S/P**
- Dennis suggested that for future contracts, the EC consider paying outright for meeting space, in lieu of risking room night attrition. The council agreed they would consider this and encouraged Dennis to keep this option in mind while negotiating future contracts.

Changes to Membership and Registration fees

- DeMond proposed the creation of a lifetime membership category (~\$1000), which is consistent with similar orgs.
 - Earl pointed out that Theresa (Chair of Membership Committee) would need to draft a proposal for a sustaining membership category to be included on the form.
- Anita called for promotion of institutional memberships, which she initiated in 2014.
- Dawood suggested applying for external grants that could potentially provide travel funds to members. He also reiterated his suggestion to look into increasing registration fees.
- Earl said these issues would require a separate (virtual) meeting to fully discuss.

There was no further old or new business. Meeting adjourned at 12:40pm.