

Association of Sociology of Religion, 1st Council Meeting Minutes

August 12, 2017

4:00-8:00 pm

Intercontinental Hotel, Montreal, Quebec

Present: Lori Beaman, Michael Emerson, Daniel Olson, Paula Nesbitt, Rachel Kraus, Di Di, Jerry Park, Gerardo Marti, Milagros Pena, Mary Ellen Konieczny, Lisa Pearce, Ruth Braunstein, Inger Furseth, Solange Lefebvre, Jean Beaman, Trish Thomas, Suzanne Macaluso

Michael Emmerson welcomes the group and calls the meeting to order at 4:16 pm.

Introductions around the room.

Review of last year minutes: name spelling correction. Motion to approve from Lori Beaman, second from Lisa. Minutes approved with corrections unanimously.

Lori Beaman: Reports on the nominations committee. No serious issues were raised in the process. The winners and all council members are printed inside the program. Paula Nesbitt was elected as President-Elect. The voting members and the newly elected council members are Elizabeth Arweck, Jualynne Dodson, and Solange Lefebvre.

Appreciation was expressed for those cycling off council: Richard Flory, Giuseppe Giordan, Milagros Pena.

Dan Olson – President Elect’s report:

- Change to the by-laws in when the members of standing committees are nominated so he asked one person from a few committees to continue for an extra year.
- Discusses the theme for the 2018 conference, encourages reaching outside of the sociology of religion and inviting scholars from outside of the discipline to participate in a series of “presidential sessions.” Inviting sessions – ideas for topics from a subfield that would be relevant should be sent to Dan and Jerry Park (Program Chair). He also asked for ideas for a Furfey Lecturer for 2018. Look to the Call For Papers for more information. Ideas for potential speakers were given, Dan will send an e-mail to council asking for names.
- We will not have a joint ASA/ASR session next year due to the timing of the call. Lori Beaman adds how difficult it is to coordinate with the ASA for the joint sessions.
- Discussion about waivers on the membership and conference registration for participants in the presidential sessions. Rachel Kraus gives some financial context, 4 or 5 waivers in registration would not be monetary problem. Need to give thought to how those decisions are made. We could treat the presidential sessions like the ASA/ASR joint sessions in which we do not require additional registration for ASA attendees.

Discussion of waivers for registration, should the exceptions be made on a case by case basis through a conversation between the president-elect, program chair, and executive officer. No dissent.

Rachel Kraus – EO report:

- Announcement about drink tickets – color coded for the three different receptions
- New for this year – ribbons identifying the leadership of the ASR
- ASR meet and greet at the business meeting, please try to attend if at all possible on Monday morning.

- Information on website frustrations. Experiencing a lot of difficulties. The webmaster has said that our site is quite outdated. Discussion of changing webmasters.
 - o \$5000 to \$8000 to get our website up to “code”
 - o Vote to approve up to \$8000 to make the changes to the website. Motion is made and seconded, unanimous approval.
- New membership fee structure has been implemented. Discussion of a “retired” category, recommendation from the finance committee is that with the change to different income level options will help with this issue and no other changes need to be made.
- Discussion of membership/registration fee waivers. Helpful to have the nonmember price/option published. Current policy is that everyone on the program must be a member.
 - o Motion to include a nonmember conference registration option for those on the program who are invited to participate in author meets critic sessions.
 - o Passes unanimously
- Raising registration fees, last year approved by council but does not go into effect until 2018. Philly, NY, and SF coming up and they are more expensive conference cities. Discussion of when to implement the registration fees.
 - o Motion to implement the raise originally approved for 2017 in 2018 and in 2019 implement the raise originally approved for 2018.
 - o Passes unanimously
- Current nonmember registration fee is now lower than the fees just approved.
 - o Motion to raise the nonmember fee to keep the same differential.
 - o Passes unanimously
- Discussion of hotel room costs and bookings. This year many bookings were cancelled at the last minute.
- Finance committee recommendation to pay registration and renew membership at the same time.
- QuickBooks discussion. Rachel has found it helpful for organizing and maintaining clearer financial records.
 - o Motion to approve the yearly subscription to QuickBooks.
 - o Passed unanimously
- Discussion of the 2018 budget.
 - o Motion to approve the 2018 budget
 - o Passed unanimously

Jean Beaman – International liaison committee

- Should the Gallagher Travel Grants be awarded separately? International scholars v. students? International scholars regularly ask to use the funds for airfare rather than hotel nights. Clarify the language in the call online.
- Tax advantage to awarding room nights rather than cash.
- Motion to approve the proposed language change to the Gallagher award as proposed by the committee: International scholars (award in hotel room nights + up to \$500 cash) and graduate students (award up to 3 ASR hotel room nights)
 - o Friendly amendment to add the 3 nights passes
 - o Motion passes

Di Di – Program Chair

- Overview of the program report.
- Changed time slots to better fit with ASA but we don’t have the long lunch time slot. Moved the business meeting to the morning.
- Concern over the number of author meets critics sections.
 - o Should this be up to the program chair?
 - o Limit the length of time after publication of the book? 2 years?
- Difficulty with paper proposals being differentiated by the online system.
- No problems getting conveners.

Gerardo Marti – SoR Editor Highlights

- Commitment to bring on more international board members, still a challenge to find scholars who are rigorous enough in their review and willing to commit.
- Associate Editor to focus on dissemination and publicize an author's work.
- Efficiency of decision making has added to the value of the journal
- Site SoR in your work, particularly the last year 😊

Michael Emerson – special thanks to Gerardo for his work

Trish Thomas – Publisher's Report

- Circulation trends
- Trend toward online only
- If people want data on subscriptions, contact Trish

Michael Emerson

- Fichter Award Committee – discussion on capping the proposals to \$5000
 - o Motion to approve, passes
- Distinguished article award – make the name of the award consistent with the spirit of the award
 - o Proposed change to “The Distinguished Sociology of Religion Journal Article Award”, motion and passes
- Lifetime Achievement Award
 - o Discussion of ASR covering some expenses
 - o Motion to cover travel expenses (airfare + 2 nights hotel, in addition to the current \$500)
 - Passes

To discuss at the New Council meeting:

- 2020 dates to be decided at New Council meeting
- Preliminary discussion of what to include for the ASR lifetime achievement award
- ASR Social Media
 - o Should this be a paid position?
 - o Give it an official title that someone could put on their CV
 - o Associate Program Chair for Social Media
- Posting pictures on the website – put a disclaimer when people register for the conference

Association of Sociology of Religion, Second Council Meeting Minutes

August 15, 2017

7:00-8:15 am

Intercontinental Hotel, Montreal, Quebec

Present: Dan Olson, Michael Emerson, Paula Nesbitt, Rachel Kraus, Di Di, Mary Ellen Konieczny, Lisa Pearce, Ruth Braunstein, Inger Furseth, Kevin McElmurry, Suzanne Macaluso

Dan Olson calls the meeting to order at 7:17 am.

Discussion of upcoming meetings:

- 2020 meeting dates. ASA is August 15 to 18, Religion section day should be August 17.
- Rachel proposes for our second council meeting to be held on August 17th. Welcoming reception and first council meeting on August 14 with two main conference days on the 15 & 16 with the second council meeting on the 17.
 - o Concerns raised about receptions at ASR conflicting with ASA religion section reception.
 - o Motion to approve the dates, seconded, motion passes

Michael Emmerson picks up discussion of ASR Social Media presence from first council meeting

- Should this be a paid position? No
- Give it an official title that someone could put on their CV
- Associate Program Chair for Social Media
- Motion to establish an ad hoc communications committee to develop both an internal and external communications strategy for Philadelphia and New York in consultation with the program chair and president. Seconded. Motion passes.
 - o Identify a person or two in the association who has experience getting their work out to the broader media in addition to someone who has internal communication experience.
 - Elaine Ecklund
 - o What would the expectations be for the job?
 - Taking photos, tending the feed on Twitter, retweeting, enlisting friends for assistance. Ask a graduate student to apply for the position, they would provide a paragraph about how they would do the job.
 - Take a look at this in the context of a wider communications strategy, perhaps form an ad hoc communications committee to take up the job of specifying the specifics of the job.
 - What about a Facebook page? A newsletter? Reaching out through various listservs?

Get call for papers out to various external lists

Rachel Kraus discusses the low attendance pattern at sessions and the pattern that has been going on over the past few years.

- Most non-joint sessions had fewer than 10
- 246 attendees at our conference
- Somewhere between 15 to 20 no shows that we are aware of
- Fewer than 10 cancellations were at the last minute

Di Di discusses attendance, meeting rooms are smaller this year so some rooms felt more full than previous years. Some last-minute cancellations came the day before the conference. There were some sessions where the presenters just did not show up.

Discussion of pulling papers when presenters do not pre-register for the conference.

Ask session organizer/convener to contact all of the presenters beforehand so that they can get a sense of who will not attend.

- Problem is that not all sessions have an organizer, most are organized by the program chair and simply have a convener.

Can we get a breakdown of who did not attend? A report on no-shows, attendance at sessions, numbers who did not pre-register?

Shorter time slots, fewer sessions per time slot so that there are not 7-8 choices but only 4-5. This makes it difficult to match up with ASA sessions but it might increase participation.

Dan Olson invites comments on this topic be e-mailed

Paula Nesbitt requests a breakdown by time of day so that we could schedule smaller/not paper sessions during time slots where attendance tends to be lighter.

Discussion of the 2018 meeting – FYI we've gotten really good room rates, location for 2018 is centrally located in the city even if it is farther from the ASA hotel.

- If an e-mail could go out to members in the event of cancellations so those who missed out on the room block could get in at the conference hotel.

No new business to discuss

Dan Olson gives special thanks to Michael and Di Di and calls to adjourn at 8:24 am