

Minutes
NCSA Old Council Meeting
April 12, 2012
Pittsburgh, PA

Present: Larry Nichols (president), Susan Alexander, Hans Bakker, Todd Callais, Steve Carlton-Ford, Jen Carter, Kevin Christiano, Barbara Denison, Natalie Haber-Barker, Fayyaz Hussain, Annulla Linders, Gustavo Mesch, Melinda Messineo, Carolette Norwood, Kent Schwirian, Mary Senter, Bob Shelly, Lissa Yogan and Conference Coordinator Joyce Lucke

Call to order at 6:25 pm, President Larry Nichols presiding.

Motion: Linders moved, second from Bakker to approve minutes from October 2011 mid-annual Council meeting, motion carried, no nays or abstentions recorded.

Agenda accepted with several additions of the Student Section and Teaching Section reports and the request to move the Finance report until after the Treasurer's Report.

President's Report: President Nichols started a dialogue about cooperation between the regional sociological associations. He reported that he contacted all the other associations with his ideas about interacting, sharing best practices, etc. and received positive feedback. The Pacific Sociological Association is ready to move forward with this. Another idea is to move forward and create a working group to identify and create a distribution list for all sociology departments in our region. There being no disagreement, Nichols will move forward with this.

Vice President's Report and report on the meeting: Joyce Lucke reported for Carrie Erlin who is unable to attend on how the meeting was finalized. Lucke said the registration is robust, hotel reservations are up, and the program is larger in comparison with those in immediate past years.

Her recommendation on the point raised by President Nichols as to how we should institutionalize planning for the contingency of a VP/program chair being unable to complete the program was to depend on the position of conference coordinator to supply the logistics, and allow the VP/program chair and the session organizer, program committee, etc. to provide content oversight.

Motion: Bakker moved, second from Linders, to make a considered judgment about selecting the software used to organize the submissions system and construct the program. Discussion followed on using various software packages and also who should be a part of the overall program process. It was pointed out that the Program Committee was traditionally the VP, the VP-elect, the Teaching Section and Student Conference chairs and the Conference Coordinator. The question was called. Motion carried, no nay votes or abstentions recorded.

Nichols suggested we should proceed with a discussion of the composition of the Program Committee. Conversation with several suggestions followed, including a query about the role of the president on the program committee, and a suggestion for more inclusion of sessions with interest for sociological practitioners. A call for considering changing the program theme selection from the VP to the president was made.

Motion: Linders moved with second from Denison to change the bylaws to move choosing the conference theme from the duties of the VP to the President (with the consultation piece switching too) and also switch moving the keynote selection from the VP to the President. Question was called, motion carried with no nay votes or abstention recorded.

Lucke announced there are several addendums to the program; also that the hotel is giving us some extras at the Council reception on Saturday evening.

President Nichols introduced several topics for discussion, the first being the optimal size for the annual meeting. From information shared by Lucke and others we are just about at the maximum number of sessions, although it was noted that the overall number of sessions is larger but with the recent addition of the student conference the number of non-student sessions is down. Second, he asked about past practices concerning evaluation of the NCSA conferences. Several were able to speak to past evaluations completed in each session, or overall conference evaluations done over the years on an inconsistent basis. A discussion on the overall quality of our conference from a variety of viewpoints, including paper and presentation quality, location, organizational issues, and so on followed. Carter brought to us some ideas gleaned from contacts with the student base across various universities concerning quality concerns. The suggestion was made that Nichols create an ad hoc committee to brainstorm some type of evaluation and get it out to the membership quickly. A suggestion was added to solicit for volunteers for committees at the same time.

Treasurer's Report from Linders: see attached. She pointed out the Vanguard Group of restricted funds made so little last year that it may need to be reviewed. Christiano mentioned that the stock market is up and down but that the Finance Committee is charged with the ability to investigate the investments, which may be a good idea to do.

Finance Report: Christiano followed the Treasurer's Report by stating that the financial picture is better than some years in the past. Additionally, he continued, the financial picture of the journal *Sociological Focus* is sound. But, he said, although the accountant suggested we may want to start using some of the *Focus* funds, he feels that fund is there to back up the overall operation of the journal. It will, however, continue to fund the Presidential reception. The association is solvent and more solvent than it used to be since we had some lean years and practiced some austerity and continue to be frugal in our operations. His report is attached.

A complementary conversation about how we make money on *Focus* and the movement of journal publishing into digital publishing followed.

Committee Reports (submitted reports attached)

Student Paper Competition: Norwood reported there were 10 papers entered in each of the graduate and undergraduate competitions and the winners are all on the program presenting.

Aida Tomeh Distinguished Service Award: not present

Applied and Professional Committee: Haber-Barker reported the committee focused on what could the NCSA annual meeting offer applied-clinical attendees. She suggests they are moving forward on a Future Practitioner's certificate modeled on the Future Faculty program.

Community Colleges: not present

Finance Committee: see above.

Membership: not present. Discussion among Council focused on reminding members to renew, and to keep reminding them. Various methods were discussed.

Nominations/elections: Bakker reported on the difficulty of finding suitable candidates and then getting candidates to agree to run, but, he reports, we successfully filled the slate and the election was held. Winners were:

- Lissa Yogan, president-elect
- Rachel Kraus, VP-elect
- Stacey Nofziger, Council
- Robert Carrothers, Membership Chair
- Barbara Denison, secretary (3 year term)

Discussion followed on how to identify people who are interested in being on committees and being nominated; several things for this conference were identified.

One concern, Nichols, expressed, is the issue raised on equitable representation and

Profession, Freedom and Responsibility: Hussain spoke to this committee's relative inactivity in the recent years and his work to restart their actions. He mentioned being contacted about a session on this year's program concerning the profession, freedom and ethics. Contributors to this discussion said there are issues surrounding sociologists' involvement in IRB issues, rules in emerging research areas on social media and digital surveys, and perhaps this is something for the committee to pursue. A comment was made that our code of ethics

Publication Policy: Schwirian reported the journal editor, Gustavo Mesch, was reappointed for another term.

Public Relations: Alexander reported on the production of the newsletter, reported there are 800 subscribers to the listserv, 198 people like the Facebook page but 68,211 people saw our Facebook page, many of whom are international. The job information posted on our website is

one of the main drawing cards. Discussion that followed resulted in a comment that New Council needs to take a look at clarifying lines of authority.

Equality and Inclusion: not present

Scholarly Achievement Award: not present but it was noted there were 5 great submissions.

NCSSC: not present.

J. Milton Yinger Award: Shelly reported that Keith Roberts is this year's winner.

Teaching Section: Messineo reported there were over 30 suggested sessions and workshops, there is an active list of many sessions available on the program. Rebecca Bordt is the recipient of the Schnabel award.

Student section: Carter reported on having a number of students interested in participating, and there was an idea of having a mixer outside the conference hotel. This may need to wait until next year. Carter reiterated the previously discussed theme of communication, keeping students and the student section chair connected with the other activities and schedule of the conference.

Journal *Sociological Focus* report: Mesch reported on the vibrancy of the journal but pointed out some issues with deadlines involving Taylor and Francis which are being resolved.

Motion to adjourn by Denison, seconded by Carlton-Ford. Meeting adjourned 10:13 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Jones Denison, secretary