

CSGS Executive Meeting June 15 & 16

Present: Jack DeRochi (president), Kim Needy (past-president), Karen Coats (president-elect), George Flowers (treasurer), Andrea Golato (secretary) and executive members: Ruth Bahr, Constinia Charbonnette, Mary Farmer-Kaiser, Julie Goodliffe, Desi Hacker, Jon Hakkila, Lori McMahon, Jamillah McDaniel, Sharen James McGee, Mary Owens-Southall, Cathy Pagani, Lisa Sperling, Troy Terry, and local host of original meeting site: Peter Harries

Beginning of the meeting: The meeting started at 8:05 with a welcome from Jack DeRochi and an overview of how the virtual meeting will be structured.

Minutes: The minutes from the executive meetings in Birmingham were unanimously approved (Motion to approve by Mary Farmer-Kaiser and seconded by Jon Hakkila).

Debriefing of the 2019 CSGS Conference in Birmingham, Alabama: Feedback was sought via the conference app and via survey that was sent to conference participants a few days after the conference. Constinia Charbonnette, who had managed the conference app shared feedback obtained via the app:

- A lot of engagement with the guidebook, 30% higher in download than last year, most downloads on first day of conference
- 210 unique users (some downloaded multiple times)
- Close to 8000 guide sessions – the app was used all the time. Surprise that it was used so much given the number of people at the conference
- Folks sent questions to chat, but that was not monitored.
- Twitter feed was also not utilized
- Twitter can be very important in virtual environment.

Constinia will export the survey and results so that the questions can be reused in future years and results can be compared to future results:

- We asked three sets of question related to the following themes
 - What is going to be in it for me?
 - Overall experience and how does it fulfill their needs
 - Location
- There were 24 responses (+1 test): all were very positive

Positive remarks:

- The key motivators for individual to attend the conference are: topics covered and networking opportunities. Interestingly cost was not as relevant.
- Attendees were very satisfied with the presentations; they appreciated the compressed conference time liked intimacy of the conference (rooms close together) and felt that the civil rights issues were relevant at the time of the conference.

Suggestions:

- Overwhelmingly, people liked the quality of the food but noted that there was too much food, and not healthy choices.
- In addition, attendees would like to give more input on the topics of the conference to also include newer topics. The executive committee noted in the discussion that about 1/3 of people are new each time: There is thus a responsibility to provide the basics for new attendees, while also covering new topics for those who attend the conference regularly.

- 3MT judges need to be diverse but everyone recognizes that it can be very difficult because of last minute cancellations. “You get who you can get” (lots of cancellations), Saturday is a tough day as well.
- We need to get guidebook up earlier.
- Future topics: emergency planning, focusing on small private institutions.

Operational Guidelines: (Lisa Sperling)

David Berkowitz (last year’s past-president) and Lisa Sperling have been working on producing operational guidelines that lists the various committees of the CSGs, a description of the duties at various times of the year and related processes and procedures. A draft of the operating guidelines was shared with the executive committee at the Birmingham meeting. The information for most committees is already included. Lisa still needs to work with the chairs of the following committees to update the guidelines: Sponsorship Committee, Ad hoc 3MT Committee, Auditing Committee. In addition, the new student award (non-traditional thesis) will have to be included. It was also suggested that the procedures for setting up the conference app should also be included. The secretary will keep the document and ensure that it will be reviewed each year.

Committees:

Jack DeRochi explained the process for how new members for committees are found. This is accomplished by an announcement at the conference, email solicitation, nomination from executive committee members when not enough volunteers come forward or when we need to ensure the representation of all states and institution types. It was suggested to also include a question in the conference evaluation form asking if the member is interested in serving. In addition, it was suggested to hold an info-session at the conference to provide information on what the committees are doing, what the nature of the work is, etc. Jack then provided an update on the status of the committees. Executive committee members made suggestion for creating more diverse committees by assigning different committees to individuals and by suggesting additional members. By the end of the meeting, the vast majority of spots were filled.

Ad hoc Communications Committee:

Throughout the past years, the officers and the executive committee have noticed that we have not always been successful at communicating all information to the membership in a timely fashion. For this reason, the role of a communications officer was suggested in discussions in Birmingham. If such a role were created, this person could have the following duties: send out via the listserv registration information, the call for papers, reminder emails, surveys, social media drive (promote the conference) or at least this person would make sure that this information is communicated. It was suggested that this person communicate with the secretary so that the website is updated accordingly. The Executive Committee decided to establish an Ad hoc Committee to develop a communications plan for the organization.

Members of this ad hoc committee are: Desi Hacker, Sharon James McGee and Mary Owens-Southall. The committee is charged with discussing:

- How do we better communicate throughout the year?
- What communications need to be sent when and by whom
- How can the listserv be sent more effectively?
- Should we engage in a social media platform?
- Should we create an official role of a communications officer

- Should we create an official role as a historian or photographer (Paul Gemperline has served in this role unofficially in the past).

Logistics

Jack DeRochi announced that there would be standing meetings once a month on an alternating schedule (Wed and Thursday) at 3 pm EST. Jack will send out meeting requests to the committees. **Next meeting of Executive Committee is Thursday, August 13, at 3:00 EDT.**

Update on Conference in 2021

Because of COVID-19, the officers decided to cancel the in-person event originally scheduled for February 2021. Originally, this would have incurred a penalty \$52,472 as penalty. George Flowers worked with a local contact and with hotel to reduce the cost. The hotel (Marriott) was cooperative: We were only charged a penalty of 10%, the remaining amount will be applied to our yearly conference in 2022. The 2022 conference will be held Feb 16-17, 2022 at the Raleigh Marriott City Center. George Flowers assured the executive committee that we have enough funds in reserve to cover the cancellation fee. All executive committee members agreed that it was wise to have cancelled the conference. When the face-to-face meeting was cancelled, the officers also sent out a survey about how CSGS can engage the membership throughout the year, i.e., in monthly meetings and/or at a virtual conference. Jack DeRochi presented the results of the survey. In general, there was interest in monthly or bi-monthly sessions and in a virtual conference which addresses timely topics. Survey respondents favored a smaller number of sessions than would be held at our regular conference spread out over 1-3 days. The highest level of interest was in key-note speakers (apparently a draw to participate), in a 3MT competition, and in Panel Sessions with Q&A. Executive committee members still felt that the awards ceremony and the business meeting are vital components that would have to be covered. The suggestion was made to hold the awards ceremony as part of the opening remarks (and not to announce it widely) so that participation was secured. There also was some interest in the student strand.

Jack DeRochi then presented the following options to the committee given that the face-to-face conference was cancelled:

- a. We organize a full-scale virtual conference over two days that is similar in offerings and themes to what the face-to-face event would have been
- b. We do not hold a virtual conference at all
- c. We hold only monthly sessions
- d. We hold one session per month and next February; and in the week when the conference would have taken place, we hold one or two sessions, plus a business meeting, a 3MT and give out awards.

After some deliberation, the group reached the consensus that option d) would be the best move forward. A full-scale virtual conference seemed to be too big a project given that few of the members have experience with such events and given that all executive committee members were very busy with reopening plans on their campuses. Cancelling all events was not considered to be of good service to the membership since all members pay membership fees and could likely benefit from an exchange with colleagues during these uncertain times. Monthly sessions were favored because they allow for a flexible response to emerging issues in graduate education. Given that the awards ceremony, the 3MT and the business meeting are key elements are needed, option d) was chosen.

Monthly Sessions/Fora

- The entire series will be organized as a collaboration between CSGS and CHBGS, for each monthly session, there will be a facilitator from each organization, there will also be one additional executive member who will oversee the chat room/Q&A
- The monthly facilitators are deciding on the format (presentation, panelists) and are organizing the event.
- Executive committee members have liked the CGS Office hours organized this summer but felt that it allows too few members to participate. The group decided to allow for broader participation and to potentially use break-out rooms if too many members register for the event.
- We need to explore the platform. For the time being, facilitators will inquire if they can use the Zoom platform of their university. CHBGS will cosponsor if a Zoom account is purchased.

Registration:

- Registration will take place via the CSGS Website (communications should drive the membership to the website).
- The registration for the monthly events will be free, unless we invite a speaker who charges a fee. For the February event, a registration fee might be collected. Members seem to be willing to pay between \$100-200.
- The registration should also include a space for the attendee to pose questions in advance

Timing/topics:

- Given the pressing issues and uncertainties around fall reopening, and the usefulness of exchanging ideas and discussing issues with colleagues, the decision was made to start with the monthly meetings as soon as possible in July.
- The topics for the first few meetings should be set by the executive committee to give facilitators/speakers enough time to prepare.
- Other topics for the monthly forum as well as February's activities will be determined based on feedback from the general membership.
- The goal is to provide a platform for the exchange of deans, not necessarily to provide answers and solutions to all issues/concerns.
- Topics that were suggested:
 - Recruiting during a pandemic
 - Legal update: Mackenzie Wilfong (recommendation to secure her soon)
 - Advocacy
 - Social Justice / Student Protests on Campus
 - Mindfulness for graduate deans / addressing isolation of deans
 - Transitioning to face-to-face instruction
 - How to do a virtual 3MT competition (<https://threeminutethesis.uq.edu.au/uq-2020>)
 - Teaching and mentoring online
 - How to mentor students of color
 - Information for new deans of historically black graduate schools and/or Hispanic Serving Institutions
 - How do we meet the needs of our students during these times?
 - Managing stress of faculty and students
 - Managing office staff in times of uncertainty and budget cuts
 - TA issues (they are getting lost in the conversation)

- All events will be on either Wednesday or Thursday, always at 1:00pm EST

Communication:

- Short communication in the form of a “Save the date” message to the membership very soon that announces the structure for the year: upcoming monthly sessions with the four topics pre-assigned, and an announcement of the concentrated meetings in February. The message will also state that topics for the remainder of the year will be driven by member suggestions and emerging issues
- Officers will write up conceptual text for the series “Challenges to graduate education in 2020-121” // Graduate Education in Times of Uncertainty: What’s Going on Now?)
- We need to highlight how this is different from other webinars we are all invited to these days

First set of forum discussions will address/respond in some way to the challenges facing graduate students and graduate schools for a fall re-opening.

Facilitators listed below will write up 2-3 sentence descriptions for their event.

July 8, 2020, 1:00 pm EDT

Facilitators: Lori McMahon and Mary Owens-Southall, Julie Goodliffe will facilitate the chat

Topic: Managing (Surviving?) the Chaos of Reopening

August 4, 2020, 1:00 pm EDT

Facilitators: Troy Terry, Ruth Bahr, and a member of CHBGS

Topic: Managing (Surviving?) the Chaos of Reopening

September 9, 2020, 1:00 pm EST

Facilitators: Jon Hakkila and Julie Goodliffe

Topic: Managing (Surviving?) the Chaos of Reopening

Fall forum topics to be determined as we move forward.

Concentrated events (in lieu of conference)

February 24-26, 2021

Announce that there will be a 3MT and that there will be awards.

Conference in 22

Feb 16-20, 2022 in Raleigh

Summary Observations

Membership wants to apply what we learn this year in future years.

- For instance, if we hold a face-to-face conference, can we hold virtual sessions (at different price points) for those who cannot attend in person? Can we record sessions and make them available online?
- Do we want to retain the monthly sessions beyond 2020-2021?

GUIDEBOOK

- *A decision needs to be made if we will want to use the conference app for the virtual conference next Spring (Guidebook is a yearly commitment).*
- *If we use the conference app, it needs to be available earlier*
- *If conference app is used for the virtual conference, we should consider monitoring the chat*
- *If the conference app is used for the virtual conference, we may want to use Twitter as it can be very important in virtual environment.*

SURVEY

- *Executive Committee seeks to survey membership again this fall to help plan monthly fora as well as the conference activities in February.*
- *In terms of the conference survey, the survey should include the following questions (and ideally, we would be able to sort the data according to these responses)*
 - *how often have you attended CSGS conferences?*
 - *What is your role?*
- *The survey should be sent out earlier (on the last day of the conference) and it should be announced at the last session. Ideally, we would also provide an incentive for filling out the survey sending out survey (drawing for registration for next year)*
- *Include a question asking if member is interested on serving on a committee*

REGISTRATION:

- *Ask on the registration if this is the participant's first time attending the conference (invite all new conference participants to "new deans breakfast" since other new office staff members (directors, associate deans, etc.) are also participating in the conference. (Be sure though that question excludes students as the topics of this breakfast would not be of interest to them.)*

KEEPING OF RECORDS

- *We should maintain all records on a shared drive to which all executive members have access (this would also be helpful in case of emergencies)*
- *No decision was made on what platform to host the documents: Dropbox, OneDrive, Teams. This is an item for the officers to discuss*

COMMITTEES

- *It was suggested to hold an info-session at the conference to provide information on what the committees are doing, what the nature of the work is, etc.*
- *An Ad hoc Communications Committee was created, chaired by Desi Hacker, to develop a communications plan for the organization. Update on progress planned for August Executive Meeting.*

ACTION ITEMS

- *Jack DeRochi will send out meeting requests for 1) Executive Officers and 2) Executive Committee.*
- *Jack DeRochi will send brief announcements to membership: 1) to announce the launch of monthly roundtable/forum discussions; 2) conference dates for 2021 and 2022; and 3) we will continue with student and faculty awards.*

- George Flowers will explore the cost of a CSGS/ CHBGS Zoom account. In the meantime, other members will check if they can host the monthly meetings on their university's Zoom license. We can also explore other platforms (Teams, WebEx, etc.).
- Facilitators will send Jack and Andrea 2-3 sentence descriptions of their planned forum discussions.
- Executive Committee will draft thematic scaffolding around CSGS plans for the 2020-21 year.
- Andrea will
 - begin creating registration pages on webpage for first 3 monthly fora.
 - Update webpage with program
 - Update webpage with info about 2022
 - Create registration page(s)

Minutes prepared by Andrea Golato, Secretary