

**Western Social Science Association  
Executive Council Meeting Minutes  
April 9, 2013, Grand Hyatt Hotel, Denver**

Members Present: Daniel McInerney, Heather Albanesi, Ross Burkhart, Les Alm (President-Elect), Tom Isern (President), Kristina Lyebecker, Prabha Unnithan (Vice-President/Secretary), Mary Jo Tippeconnic Fox, Theodore Ransaw, Reynold Nesiba, Geoffrey Hale, Heather Nicol, Barbara Wiens-Tuers, Victor Heller (Immediate Past President)

Ex-Officio: Kate Herke (Newsletter Editor/Conference Manager, & Administrative Associate), Larry Gould (Executive Director), Gary Linn (Coordinator of Member Recruitment and Retention), Scott Alan Carson (Editor, *Social Science Journal*)

The meeting began on Wednesday, April 9, 2012 at 7:30 a.m. with breakfast and introductions. The Council discussed the following items.

1. Conference Update: Isern commended the Alm's work in putting together what appears to be an impressive program and for coordinating with the Conference Hotel and our printers, Omni Press. Alm reported that the number of panels had increased from last year. Gould noted the increase in online registrations and that he had received nominations and information on awardees for the new Incentive Grants and Awards the Association was providing. Regarding the Poster Session, Ransaw said that while there were a few cancellations, 9 or 10 print posters had already been delivered to the Hotel. Albanesi, who is coordinating our charity collection effort, mentioned that the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Food Bank of the Rockies will be joining us at the President's Luncheon. Donations will be collected during the Association sponsored breakfast on Friday morning.

2. Going Green: Gould provided a handout on the advantages of reducing our reliance on printed receipts and envelopes (for holding name badges) along with printed programs. He recommended printing only name badges while emailing receipts at the time of registration. Further, he recommended making the program available at the WSSA website, as a mobile device app, and on a flash drive. This would allow us to print a only a limited number of programs. Discussion ensued in which the issues of connectivity (or lack thereof), making the electronic versions optional, and providing a discount for those willing to take the program electronically were discussed. We will discuss this matter further in the Fall meeting.

3. *Social Science Journal* (SSJ) Editor's Report: Carson reported that in the previous year, he had received 369 submissions and that the quality of papers he was receiving was improving. Wiens-Tuers inquired about the possibility of submitting review articles on books in a specific area. Carson discussed instituting Book and Article Awards for books that had been reviewed in SSJ and articles published in it respectively. Nesiba proposed and Nicol seconded a motion to make a WSSA Book Award to the best book reviewed in SSJ. Gould suggested that depending on the timing of the award announcement, the winning author or authors might be invited to

receive it at the Annual Conference and possibly, make a presentation. Following unanimous approval of the motion, a Book Award Committee consisting of Carson, Nicol and Wiens-Tuers was constituted to provide suggestions on the process. Carson identified difficulties in implementing a Best Article Award given the number disciplines and sub-areas that SSJ publishes. Ransaw proposed and Nesiba seconded a motion to charge the Book Award Committee to inquire into how we would proceed with a Best Article Award also. The motion carried unanimously. [See Items 20 and 21 below]

4. Matters Regarding WSSA Sections: A request to form a Human Ecology Section was received from Zachary Smith (Northern Arizona University). It had been discussed previously and was approved without debate. McInerney noted that the Rocky Mountain American Studies Association was meeting along with our Conference in Denver and might wish to affiliate with WSSA after this one-time experiment. A name change was requested by the Chicano Studies Section to called Chicano/Latino/US Hispanic Studies Section. Regarding the name change, it was decided that Alm will check with Section leaders as to the reason for calling it "US" Hispanic Studies and report back [See Item 16 below]. John Henry of the Association for Social Economics had expressed their interest in meeting during our Annual Conference. [The invitation to meet with us was approved unanimously through a motion by Nesiba, seconded by Companion during the Saturday continuation of the Council meeting.] It was decided that they would be directed to the General Economics Section Coordinator (Carson) for the inclusion of their panels at the Annual Conference. Further affiliation would be discussed after the 2014 Conference. The Anthropology Section has had difficulties since Section Coordinator Steven Edwards was not connected to WSSA anymore. We decided to continue the practice of listing it with Sociology. Steve Thomas, Section Coordinator for Criminal Justice and Criminology passed away in late 2012. As a result, Burkhart has been serving as Acting Coordinator. We will have to find someone interested in serving as the new Coordinator. [Following the efforts of Isern and Unnithan, Kevin Thompson and Melinda Schlager were later identified as new co-coordinators for the Criminal Justice and Criminology Section.] Social Psychology has already been integrated with Sociology and Albanesi is serving as Coordinator for both (along with Anthropology, as mentioned above).

Linn reported that the number of panels and presentations by various Sections for the 2013 Denver Conference looked healthy. He would be contacting Section Coordinators whose numbers had dropped to offer Executive Council's assistance for improvement. He added that it would be a good idea to develop criteria for inclusion or dropping of Sections based on their representation at the Annual Conference.

5. Presentations via Skype: Linn reported that as result of requests from Disability Studies scholars (and previous Council approval on an experimental basis) two presentations would be made via Skype. He acknowledged that this is an accommodation and would not become the norm for presentations in general. [See Item 12 below]

6. Financial Report: Gould presented this report noting that our finances look good, but that he would like advice regarding future investing criteria. Hale suggested "individual reinvestment stability" as a criterion. Discussion centered on the possibility of engaging the services of a financial planner, especially one who does not receive a sales fee for making investment recommendations. Nesiba proposed and Hale seconded a motion that a financial planner (e.g., Yuma Investment) be invited to the Fall meeting of the Council to make a presentation on investment strategy. Motion passed unanimously.

Gould said our legal expenses are expected to go down while Conference expenses (particularly those related to catering) are expected to go up. As has been true for some time, journal revenues help subsidize the Conference. He added that as a result of the Wicks endowment to WSSA, we own property in Montana. Currently, we are considering how best to dispose these off in concert with other organizations/institutions that are part of the endowment.

Lunch was served at this point. After reconvening, the following issues were discussed.

7. Presentation by Elsevier (SSJ Publisher): Illaria Meliconi representing Elsevier joined us and presented a report on the status of SSJ, which was very positive. SSJ's impact factor and number of submissions were both trending upward. McInerney inquired about the packages in which SSJ was included. Meliconi was unable to answer this and said it depended on negotiations with subscribing libraries, institutions and organizations. In terms of future marketing, Albanesi mentioned that it would be useful to know which disciplines cite SSJ papers the most. Discussion on how to solicit papers beyond the traditional mainstay disciplines of political science, economics and sociology resulted in a suggestion that we ask Section Coordinators about this. Isern recommended inviting future book awardees to write articles for SSJ. Following Linn's question about the impact of "open source" publishing which would result in the free availability of articles, Meliconi noted that this was an ongoing topic of discussion for all publishers, given the current model of publishing depends on users (or their libraries) subscribing and paying for usage of published content. This matter will be raised again in future Council meetings.

8. Participation of Students at Annual Conference: Council next took up the continuing issue of encouraging graduate and undergraduate students to participate in the Conference. Several suggestions were offered including instituting a "Rising Star" award for a meritorious student participant, providing monetary assistance to Sections and placing advertisements in campus newspapers. Gould agreed to pay for advertising in campus publications if we opted to do so.

9. Fall Meeting Dates and 2018 Annual Conference: It was decided that the Fall meeting would occur September 13, 2013 with Council members arriving the previous day. Those who would be visiting higher education institutions in Albuquerque (primarily the University of New Mexico) would do so on September 12. The 2018 Annual Conference is slated to take place at the San Antonio, Texas Hyatt.

10. Constitutional Amendment Regarding Vice-President Position: Following the requirements of Texas law for non-profits, the position of Secretary is required to be filled. We have not had this position before. Unnithan has been serving in this role temporarily in addition to being Vice-President. A motion to change the designation of Vice-President to Vice-President/Secretary was made by Nesiba and seconded by Hale. Motion passed unanimously. Isern will propose this amendment after explaining the rationale to attendees at the General Business Meeting.

11. Other Matters: Issues pertaining to attendance and participation at the Annual Conference were discussed. Nesiba asked if all papers submitted had to go through Section Coordinators. Following an affirmative response, he suggested giving Coordinators one night's free hotel accommodation at the Conference and free membership for getting their Section's final program to the General Program Coordinator (i.e., the President-Elect) by the December 1 deadline. Albanesi proposed this as a motion and Unnithan seconded it. Motion was adopted unanimously. Albanesi suggested listing the names of those who sent paper presentation proposals but did not attend ("no shows") the Conference online. Gould will follow up on the above.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

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The meeting reconvened on Saturday, April 12, 2013 at 8:00 a.m. with breakfast. New members of the Council, Barbara Bonnekesson, Michèle Companion and Lynda Dickson were in attendance. We were joined, at various times, by Debra Wilson from the Disability Studies Section, Debra Andrist of the Chicano Studies Section, and Stephen Mumme of the Association for Borderlands Studies, our affiliate, as guests. Council discussed the following items.

12. Skype Presentations: Wilson reported that there were two Skype presentations during a Disability Studies panel and that they were successful. She made several suggestions on how these should be handled in the future in terms of preparation, equipment and personnel to handle the process. Council agreed that this accommodation would be made only to presenters who were paid participants at the Conference.

13. Conference Recap: Alm reported that the Skype presentations went well although there were some brief glitches in the equipment. The collection for the Food Bank of the Rockies was successful. The Book Exhibit with Scholar's Choice as the vendor worked well also. We had no problems with the distribution of projectors to meeting rooms and those equipment functioned properly.

14. Fall Newsletter: Herke asked for contributions to the next WSSA Newsletter. Several ideas were floated and assignments were made. The deadline for submissions is August 1, 2013.

15. Conference Manager and Newsletter Editor Positions: Herke has been carrying out the responsibilities connected with these two positions. Given that we are contemplating adding the duties associated with running a new WSSA website, it would be appropriate to change the title of the position in a way that captures this consolidation of responsibilities. Following Herke's suggestion, Companion proposed and Ransaw seconded a motion to name the new position as Communications Director. Motion carried unanimously. [See also Item 19 below.]

16. Chicano Studies Section Name Change: Andrist explained that the name change requested by the Section was intended to broaden the scope of the panels. She agreed that calling it the Chicano, Latino and Hispanic Studies Section would be better than Chicano, Latino and U. S. Hispanic Studies. Tippeconic-Fox moved and Hale seconded a motion to rename the Section as the Chicano, Latino and Hispanic Studies Section. Motion passed unanimously.

17. Association for Borderlands Studies: Mumme reported that members of ABS sometimes felt "disconnected" from WSSA. In particular, WSSA needs to be aware of the situation of Mexican scholars for whom academic rewards are more likely to be found within their institutions rather than from participation in external organizations such as the WSSA. Nicol suggested the possibility of providing translation services for our Mexican colleagues. Asked about the possibility of ABS meeting separately from WSSA, Mumme replied that while there had been suggestions regarding doing so, no decision has been made and WSSA should not "panic."

18. Recognition for Executive Director: Gould left the room for the discussion of this item. Isern mentioned that given his long record of outstanding service to WSSA, Council should seriously consider formal recognition of some kind for Gould. After discussion of several alternatives, Ransaw motioned and Companion seconded a proposal to donate \$5,000 in Gould's name to a charity of his choosing and to offer him free Lifetime Membership. The motion passed unanimously.

19. Pay Increase for Communications Director: Herke was not present for this discussion. Following consolidation of the duties of the Conference Manager, Newsletter Editor and (future) Website Manager, a pay increase for the new position was discussed. Nesiba proposed and Lyebecker seconded a motion for a salary of \$12,000. Motion carried unanimously.

20. Book Award: Isern discussed the process and criteria for implementation of this new award to be called the President's Book Award after providing a handout. After a discussion, Hale motioned and Lyebecker seconded a motion to begin making the award in 2014 based on the handout. Motion passed unanimously.

21. Article Award: Isern provided a handout and discussed how to implement this new award. Following discussion, Nesiba proposed and Hale seconded a motion to implement this award along the lines indicated in Isern's handout. Motion carried unanimously.

22. Domain Name and Social Media: Gould mentioned that many versions of the WSSA domain name were not available for purchase. Following a suggestion by Unnithan, he said would try for a domain name that included our year of founding (e.g., wssa1958.com) in it. We are currently on the LinkedIn platform. Albanesi offered to work on a Facebook page and Herke will initiate writing a Wikipedia article on the WSSA.

The Executive Council meeting at 12: 30 concluded with lunch.

Respectfully Submitted,

Prabha Unnithan

Vice-President/Secretary