

WRHC Business Meeting
March 27, 2020

Minutes

Present: Andersen, Badenhausen, Coomes, Cubilie, Denison, Dove, Edgington, Gasior, Hacker, Kegley, Kobs Nawotniak, Lanier, Means, Montaña, Radle, Schultz, Syrnyk, Villanueva

Apologies: Ketcham, Lee, Lyon

1. Meeting called to order at 10:09 AM MDT/9:09 AM PDT by Schultz. He expressed his satisfaction with the board's decision to cancel WRHC 2020 as well as his belief that the organization made the right choice.
2. Villanueva echoed Schultz's remarks concerning the wisdom of canceling WRHC 2020. He solicited any changes or corrections to the minutes of the November 2019 business meeting and called for a vote to approve the minutes. Kegley motioned; Hacker seconded; minutes were approved.
3. Edgington gave the membership report. As of March 27, 2020, 101 members have paid 2020 dues. Thus far, there have been 92 renewals (of these, 20 renewed in 2019) and 20 non-renewals. With 101 members, WRHC is between 72–78% of its typical annual membership assuming 130–140 total members. In terms of payment logistics, 68 members paid their 2020 dues via credit card and 33 members paid by check. Thus, there is a preference for payment online by credit card. Of 2020 members, 14 also paid their 2021 dues and 4 members also paid their 2022 dues. There are 9 new members. Representatives from 36 institutions were accepted to present at WRHC 2020. Of these, 33 paid their 2020 dues (5 in 2019; 28 in 2020) and 3 have not yet paid their 2020 dues.

Villanueva gave the financial report. Copies of the financial report are available upon request from Edgington. Deposits into the account since the November 2019 business meeting include the surplus from WRHC 2019 (including seed money) and 19 2020 dues checks; additional deposits of dues payments will occur prior to the November 2020 business meeting. Expenditures include secretary-treasurer travel to WRHC 2019 and WRHC 2020. Unused funds for WRHC 2020 travel will be applied to Edgington's travel to NCHC 2020. Seed money for WRHC 2020, NCHC dues, and a plaque honoring outgoing board member Lee accounted for the remaining expenditures. As ever, anticipated expenditures include funds for travel stipends and support for *Scribendi*.

Villanueva called for a vote to approve the membership and financial reports; Kegley motioned; Syrnyk seconded; reports were approved.

4. Hacker expressed disappointment at having had to cancel WRHC 2020 but acknowledged that the difficult decision proved to be the correct one. She recognized the tremendous efforts of her student leadership team in planning and emphasized the difficulty of the board's decision in light of those efforts. She noted that anticipated registrations for the conference were fewer than in years past, possibly due to travel logistics (e.g., closure of the Cedar City airport). She received quite a few cancellations from accepted presenters, especially students, and wondered how we can encourage students to treat submitting a proposal as a serious commitment. Nevertheless, some 180 presentations were planned as well as a distinguished keynote speaker. All refunds have been

processed in spite of delays due to the shutdown of the SUU campus. SUU's provost had waived fees for on-campus space and food for the conference had not yet been ordered, so canceling early helped offset losses. The only expenditure was a fee for the scheduling application, which Hacker anticipates will be absorbed by SUU's provost. She expressed gratitude for members' understanding regarding the conference cancellation while recognizing the efforts made by all.

- a. Kegley inquired about the possibility of certificates for students who had planned to present. Hacker acknowledged the possibility of producing certificates but noted that their production and distribution would represent an additional cost.
- b. Schultz proposed assembling accepted abstracts into proceedings that could be distributed to students. Hacker felt that this idea was more practical and that the document would make a good artifact for future student presenters. Villanueva suggested that the document could be published on the WRHC website.
- c. Coomes encouraged students to share their work in honors publications on their own campuses and voiced her support for compiling proceedings.
- d. Villanueva expressed gratitude for Hacker's and her team's efforts.

Andersen reported on planning for WRHC 2021. He and his team will work with Hacker and her team. He shared the disappointment of his student team regarding the cancellation of WRHC 2020 but assured that preparations are proceeding on pace. He will send printed postcards advertising conference via snail mail. As of now, the planned Friday excursion will be to a museum. The keynote speaker will be Rebecca Miles, executive Director of the Nez Perce tribe. The hope is that all sessions can be held on Saturday, but it is possible that the business meeting will be on Sunday morning. Travel to Pullman should be convenient; it is possible to fly to Spokane and make the one-hour drive to Pullman or to fly directly to Pullman. Conference hotels have been reserved.

- a. Schultz offered to share experience from WRHC 2019 if helpful. Andersen expressed appreciation.
- b. Villanueva inquired as to whether fees would go up for WRHC 2021. Andersen expects to keep registration fees at this year's level. If this changes, there would need to be discussion at November meeting. If not, fees will have remained unchanged for a decade. Andersen noted that it is very helpful to have conference budget information available on the WRHC website. He also shared the theme for WRHC 2021, which is "Planet and Peoples: Conservation and Coexistence." This theme should be sufficiently broad to attract student presentations across disciplines, but all are encouraged to submit those projects about which they are most passionate. Dates for the conference are March 26–28, 2021.

Lanier reported that long-range planning for WRCH 2022 is underway. Most sessions will occur in the student union building where there are two floors of meeting space and multiple dining options. Dates for the conference have not yet been set because hotels have not been confirmed. The conference hotel will likely be Park Central Hotel, which is conveniently located in proximity to public transport. Negotiations with several venues were ongoing, but there is considerable uncertainty now due to the ongoing situation with COVID-19. Three or four options for the excursion will be explored; Albuquerque is rich in possible sites. More details will be forthcoming in November.

- a. Villanueva expressed satisfaction that the conference will return to the University of New Mexico, which is rich in WRHC history.

Villanueva noted that a report on WRHC 2023 will be given at the November 2020 business meeting.

5. Villanueva presented candidate Syrnyk for the at-large board position. Syrnyk briefly introduced himself emphasizing his commitment to the western region and mentioning his public advocacy work surrounding English education in the state of Oregon. He stressed that he would bring strengths in big-picture, strategic thinking to his work on the board. He referred members to his candidate statement. No nominations from the floor were made. Syrnyk was elected to fill the at-large position.

Villanueva noted that Edgington had been nominated by the board to serve the remainder of his term as secretary-treasurer. Edgington introduced herself briefly stressing her connection to honors education in the western region. Edgington was elected to serve the remainder of Villanueva's term. Villanueva noted that, until the banking changes have been finalized, requests for financial statements should be sent to him.

6. Villanueva raised the issue of multiple applications for travel stipends coming from the same institution in light of WRHC's traditional first come, first served philosophy. He wondered if, even when there are sufficient funds to award all applications received, an effort should be made to award different institutions.

a. Kobs Nawotniak inquired whether not funding some applications would result in cost savings. Villanueva reported that, in six years, awards have only exceeded the funding cap once. Kobs Nawotniak suggested implementing a priority deadline. Andersen supported the idea and noted that the board could always fund some early applications and more later if funds remain. Villanueva recommends that the board discuss further at the November 2020 meeting.

Villanueva mentioned that Lyon wished to discuss student representation in WRHC governance. Recommended carrying the item forward to the November 2020 meeting.

Villanueva reported that there had been some interest in investing WRHC assets but explained that, in order to do so, WRHC's status as a civic association would have to change. A finance committee to oversee investments would also need to be established. He advised that discussion be re-opened at November 2020 meeting.

7. Montaña reported that this year's issue of *Scribendi* has gone to print and been returned to the publishing office. New Mexico is currently prohibiting gatherings of more than 5 people, so there will be no in-person launch event. There will be a digital launch on April 17 with a social media component. She reminded members of the national student exchange, which allows students to study for a year at UNM and to work on *Scribendi*. She noted that this exchange represents a great opportunity for those interested in publishing. *Scribendi* received 553 submissions from 291 submitters at 47 schools. The number of submissions held steady although the number of unique schools declined. Institutions in Utah are top submitters. There were 21 open-media submissions and 12 foreign language submissions with Arabic, Korean, Latin, Spanish, and Urdu represented. 513 submissions came from WRHC members and only 17% of this year's submissions came from within UNM.

a. Villanueva congratulated *Scribendi* staff on their efforts, especially in the midst of this challenge.

Badenhausen reported that NCHC staff are working remotely on summer meetings, institutes, etc. NCHC's CFO has taken another job, which is a big loss for the organization. NCHC is working closely with its financial management company, but there is a gap at the moment in terms of finance and conference preparation. He requested patience from members at this time. He reminded members that board nominations are open until May 1 for self-nominations and until June 1 for other nominations. He noted that the western region is now well represented on the national board but encouraged WRHC members to please nominate colleagues or encourage them to self-nominate. Members may also suggest nominations to Badenhausen.

- a. Syrnyk inquired regarding the possibility of summer institutes being held remotely. Badenhausen confirmed that the possibility is under discussion but that it depends on facilitators' willingness to host remotely.
- b. Given the seriousness of the situation surrounding COVID-19, yield for NCHC could be lower, and budget challenges may be they result.
 - i. Hacker inquired about the possibility of remote sessions for California residents. Badenhausen confirmed that remote participation for California residents is still under discussion and that footage of New Orleans remote sessions is being evaluated. Technology limitations are an issue.

Means reported that UNR's Honors Program is on track to become the UNR Honors College in June 2020. UNR's provost is optimistic that Nevada's Board of Regents will approve the cost-neutral proposal.

Villanueva presented 2020–2021 officers:

Jayci Hacker, Southern Utah University, 2020–2021 President
Kim Andersen, Washington State University, 2020–2021 Vice President
Erin Edgington, University of Nevada, Reno, 2020–2021 Secretary-Treasurer
Ilse-Mari Lee, Montana State University, 2020–2021 Past President
Christopher Syrnyk, Oregon Institute of Technology, 2020–2021 At-Large Member

Commemorative plaques were presented to Lee and Villanueva for their service.

8. Hacker adjourned the meeting at 11:27 AM MDT/10:27 AM PDT.