

Minutes
WPSA Executive Council
Tuesday, March 17, 2020
2:00-3:00 p.m. PST
Meeting conducted virtually using Zoom technology

Members present: Ainsley LeSure, Nadia Brown, Tony Carey, Elsa Favila, Jane Junn, Jamie Mayerfeld, Lan Chu, Jessica Lavariega Monforti, Mario Feit, Mario Guerrero, Melissa Michelson, Natalie Masuoka, Ricardo Ramirez, Richard Clucas, Sarah Shair-Rosenfeld, Shirin Deylami, Laura Evans, and Jason Casellas

Members absent: Michael Bowers, Farah Godrej, Seth McKee, and Brent Steele.

Meeting Called to Order by President Jamie Mayerfeld at 2:00 p.m. PST

I. OLD BUSINESS

A. Online Alternatives to Regular Conference

Introduction and welcome by Jamie Mayerfeld.

Executive Director Richard Clucas outlines efforts to hold a discussion with Marriott hotel about the challenges for holding the conference in Los Angeles. Still waiting to hear back from Marriott contact, who is busy because many groups are canceling their conferences. He looks forward to amicable resolution.

Tony Carey asks about MPSA and banning of large events. Richard says that California and Los Angeles have not banned them, so we are not in the same position.

Shirin Deylami asks about legal implications of cancelling conference. Richard discusses legal issues and complications of process.

Elsa Favila suggests we send an updated email to members apprising them of situation.

Jane Junn says we cannot please everyone on the question of cancelling. People will understand after the fact.

Lan Chu suggest we worry about details later.

Discussion of proposed optional online conference later this year. It is to be managed centrally through Zoom. Jane suggests that we don't provide a precise date. Mario F. still opposes online conference for many of the reasons he outlined at the meeting on March 13. Things will get worse regarding coronavirus, online teaching will take a toll, and more work for organizers. Shirin agrees with Mario F. and things panels will fall apart due to low participation. Natalie M. also skeptical about online conference.

Jane J. this is not perfect, but we need to move on.

Jane Junn moves to approve motion to set the tentative date of an online conference for May 21-23, 2020. This date would be used if the Association cancels the meeting in Los Angeles and the Association leaders decide to move forward with a virtual meeting, as spelled out in the motion approved on March 13. Ricardo Ramirez seconds.

Vote: 14 in favor, 2 against, and 0 abstentions

B. Proposal to Consider Refunds to Conference Participants

Jamie moves to consider a proposal on refunds. The association has a standing policy of no refunds to those who do not attend the annual conference. An exception to that policy is being considered this year because of the unusual nature of the pandemic. Because of challenges in refunding registration fees, the proposal calls for participants to ask for a refund rather than having the Association automatically giving everyone refunds. The proposal also calls for providing an option for members to donate their registration fees to the association.

Jason C. wonders if a credit could be given for next year's conference. The difficulties with that were discussed.

Sarah asks about how we deal with graduate students who might have more stringent financial needs to reimburse membership fee.

Jane June calls the motion. Nadia Brown seconds.

VOTE: 16 vote in favor of refund policy as outlined by Jamie M. in email, 0 opposed.

Meeting adjourned at 3:06 pm PST

Respectfully submitted,

Jason P. Casellas, Secretary
Western Political Science Association