

WPSA Executive Council Meeting
Thursday, April 1, 2021
8:00 a.m.- 11:50 a.m. PDT
Virtual Meeting using Zoom platform

Members present: Seth McKee, Elsa Favila, Jamie Mayerfeld, Jessica Lavariega Monforti, Michael Bowers, Mario Guerrero, Melissa Michelson, Ricardo Ramirez, Richard Clucas, Pei-te Lien, Shirin Deylami, Laura Evans, Brent Steele, Elsa Dias, John Meyer, Brent Boyea, Sara Sadhwani, Sarah Shair-Rosenfield, Mark Ramirez, and Jason Casellas

Members absent: Ainsley LeSure, Nadia E. Brown, Natalie Masuoka

Guests: Amanda Patterson, Cheryl Hall, Efren Perez, Ian Balisy, Lisa Magaña, Mere Conroy, Renee Cramer, and Ron Schmidt

Call to Order 8:03 a.m. PDT by President Jessica Lavariega-Monforti

I. Approval of Minutes

September 2020 WPSA Executive Council Meeting
November 2020 WPSA Executive Council Meeting

Approval of Minutes: Ricardo Ramirez motions to approve both minutes; Mark Ramirez seconds Motion approved, unanimous vote

II. Reports

A. President's Remarks

Jessica Lavariega Monforti

Lavariega Monforti opens by thanking all of the staff, Richard, and Elsa for their hard work in this unprecedented year. She notes success on developing a Diversity Task Force, Committee on First Generation Scholars, and virtual communities.

B. Virtual Online Conference

Ricardo Ramirez

Ramirez delivered report indicating the challenging task of switching from an in person to hybrid to fully online conference. Thanks to Elsa and the section chairs, the process went smoothly. Of course, attendance was not as high as San Diego in 2019, which had 354 panels and 1178 registrants. For the online conference, there were 179 panels and 634 registrants at the time of the report. Zoom accounts used by section chairs and other members also saved WPSA some money.

C. Executive Director

Richard Clucas

Clucas highlighted his work over the past six months. Among other activities, he worked on conference planning, including canceling the in-person conference in Seattle and negotiating a new contract for 2025. The 2022 will be in Portland, Oregon, at the Downtown Hilton. The Political Science Department and the Mark Hatfield School of Government at Portland State have agreed to host the meeting. Clucas says is making progress in organizing a local arrangements team and securing some financial support. He has also worked with the Publications Committee in preparation for the searches for PRQ and PGI editors, as well as with Brent Steele at the University of Utah for renewing the MOU for publishing PRQ. He notes he needs help in finding editors for the Western Newsletter. He has also worked with other WPSA committees, especially the 75th Anniversary Committee. Finally, he reported his work on administrative duties.

D. Treasurer

Michael Bowers

Bowers presented the assets and liabilities of the organization, and noted that, despite the pandemic, the organization made \$9,000 from the Los Angeles virtual conference last year. Overall net income was \$72,182, so organization is in healthy financial shape.

E. Political Research Quarterly

Seth McKee

McKee reported PRQ had a decline in new submissions due to the pandemic, and noted acceptance rates for Theory, American, and Comparative papers have increased, while IR acceptance rates have dipped slightly. He reported a concern about backlog for printing articles accepted, which SAGE has agreed to address. He noted the desk reject rate has decline from a high of 51 percent in 2019 to 41 percent in 2020. He also noted difficulty of persuading reviewers to accept invitations. Questions were asked about the extent to which Editorial Board members review manuscripts.

Ian Balisy, the representative from SAGE, provided a brief report on the journal. He discussed how to address the page budget so more articles can be printed in a timely fashion. In terms of economics, Balisy notes the journal has had a strong year financially and expects this to continue.

Clucas presented a report on the WPSA Publications Committee's work in addressing complaints that the PRQ was relying too extensively on desk rejects, especially on articles related to race. The committee asked the PRQ editors to conduct an analysis of their desk reject rates, including comparing them to other journals. The committee presented a proposal to require the new editors of both PGI and PRQ to develop formal written policies on when desk rejects will be used, laying out specific criteria that will be applied to all manuscripts.

MOTION to adopt the Publications Committee proposal called for by Jessica Lavariega Monforti; seconded by Melissa Michelson

Motion approved, unanimous vote

F. Politics, Groups, and Identities

Nadia Brown

Brown was unable to attend in person, but provided a report for Clucas to present. Clucas praised Brown's work as editor, not only for her handling of traditional editorial tasks, but for launching a wide range of initiatives to help the journal become a leader in the discipline.

Clucas also presented the proposed Call for new Editors of PGI, which was developed by the PGI Selection Committee.

Motion to approve the Call for Editors was made by Jessica Lavariega, seconded by Melissa Michelson.

Motion approved, unanimous vote

G. Nominating Committee

Lisa Magaña

Magaña presented the Nominating Committee slate to the council and discussed the individual members being nominated.

H. PRQ Editor Search

Efren Perez

Perez, chair of the selection committee, reports that there have been three formal inquiries but no applications. He notes difficulty of job and workload, especially during pandemic, has made it difficult to create a large pool of applicants. He says that the selection committee will be expanding its efforts after the conference.

I. IT committee

Meredith Conroy

Conroy describes Facebook and social media profiles, and mentions that the blog is on hiatus. Praises the outstanding work by the Twitter teams of both WPSA journals.

III. Old Business

A. 75th Anniversary Committee

Ron Schmidt, Sr.

Schmidt, the chair of the anniversary planning committee, gives overview of the initial planning work by the committee to commemorate the anniversary next year in Portland. Among other ideas, the committee is likely to recommend that the receptions be concentrated on Thursday

night, and a dinner and dance planned for Friday evening. There will also be special themed panels at the conference and special pages devoted to the conference on the association's website. Schmidt noted that there is a line item in the budget, which will be taken up later in the meeting, specifically for anniversary-related activities.

The committee has also been working on ideas for a fundraising campaign to coincide with the anniversary. The committee proposes that the funds be dedicated to two purposes: providing conference travel funds to junior faculty, community college faculty, and graduate students not able to cover costs with institutional funding; and to support Association awards, both existing and forthcoming. Mayerfeld asked if members could also be encouraged to contribute to the Association's general endowment. Schmidt asked the council to approve the focus of the fundraising campaign in those three areas (travel, awards, WPSA fund).

Schmidt mentioned that the committee is considering the possibility of hiring a consultant for some limited support in the fundraising campaign. John Meyer said that consultants may cost more than the benefits they bring, and that hiring one may not be the best use of funds.

Motion to approve committee fundraising plan put forward; seconded by Jamie Mayerfeld
Motion approved, unanimous vote

IV. New Business

A. Budget

Michael Bowers

2020 budget was \$196K, and 2021 proposed budget is \$230K. includes increases for staff pay

Motion to table discussion until after discussion of salaries by Jessica, seconded by Bowers
Motion to table approved, unanimous vote.

B. WPSA-University of Utah MOU

Richard Clucas

Clucas presents an overview of the relationship between the WPSA and the University of Utah regarding the publication of PRQ, which is owned by the University of Utah. The relationship is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding. The current MOU will expire this year. Clucas has been working with Brent Steele, the managing editor of the journal and the chair of the Political Science Department at Utah, on a new MOU. The proposed new MOU has been approved by the university and now needs council approval.

Motion to approve MOU by Jessica Lavariega Monforti and seconded by Melissa Michelson
Motion approved, unanimous vote

C. Executive Director Contract

Jessica Lavariega Monforti

Clucas has asked to sign another three-year contract as Executive Director. The association's Wage Committee has been considering this request and the other personnel-related matters that follow. The Committee has recommended extending the contract.

Motion to extend the contract made by Jessica Lavariega Monforti, seconded by Pei-te Lien.
Motion approved, unanimous vote

The council was then asked to consider awarding a one-time \$5,000 bonus to both Richard Clucas and Elsa Favila for their hard work for the association.

Motion to approve the bonuses put forward by Jessica Lavariega Monforti, seconded by Pei-te Lien
Motion approved, unanimous vote

D. Staff Pay

Jessica Lavariega Monforti

The association has four part-time staff members, none of whom have received raising in recent years. These staff members are: Elsa Favila, Lucy Phulps, Jason Phulps, and Chao Vang.

A proposal is put before the council from the Wage Committee to increase the salaries for the hourly employees (Phulps, Phulps, and Vang) by \$10 per hour

Motion by Lavariega Monforti, seconded by Ricardo Ramirez
Motion approved, unanimous vote

A proposal is put forward by the Wage Committee to increase Elsa Favila's salary by 10%

Motion by Lavariega Monforti, seconded by Ricardo Ramirez
Motion approved, unanimous vote

E. Future Planning Committee

Clucas asks the council to create a Future Planning Committee to consider the best administrative structure for the association. Clucas says that he thinks it is prudent for the association to consider whether the current structure, which relies almost entirely on two part-time employees, is ideal, or if the association should at a later date consider introducing an alternative.

Motion by Jessica Lavariega Monforti to approve committee, with a membership composed of five past presidents and the current president; seconded by Ricardo Ramirez
Motion approved, unanimous, with one abstention

F. Diversity Task Force

Renee Cramer

Cramer discusses survey which was sent to EC members with best practices to develop recommendations for greater inclusion. Cramer notes that most council members believe the association is doing a good job, but they feel there is room for improvement.

Jessica Lavariega calls for motion for task force to develop recommendations to present to the council, seconded by Melissa Michelson.

Motion approved, unanimous vote

G. Virtual Communities Proposal

Jamie Mayerfeld, Cheryl Hall

Mayerfeld and Hall discuss the achievements of the Virtual Communities pilot program over the past year and present a proposal to make the Virtual Communities a regular part of the association's offerings. The proposal is divided into several sections so that each one could be voted on separately.

Mayerfeld asks that the council to consider first the proposal for the long-term leadership structure of the Virtual Communities. He asks that the council vote on the following proposal: "Long-term leadership structure. The proposal then calls for a change in how the Virtual Communities Program members are selected beginning in 2022 and in the status of the Virtual Community Program Chair. The proposed long-term structure calls for new Committee Members and Program Chairs to be nominated by the WPSA Nominating Committee and then elected at the annual WPSA business meeting."

Motion to approve this long-term leadership structure offered by Mayerfeld, seconded by Shirin Deylami

Motion approved, unanimous

Mayerfeld puts for a proposal to approve an initial leadership structure, one that calls for a structure similar to that of a regular standing committee, with the WPSA president appointing all five members.

Motion by Mayerfeld, seconded by John Meyer

Motion approved, unanimous vote

The council then considered a proposal to make the VC program chair a member of the Executive Council, which would have to be approved by association.

Motion to Table this proposal was put forward by John Meyer, seconded by Jessica Lavariega Monforti.

Motion to table approved, unanimous vote

A motion was then put forward on VC eligibility and participation fees. The proposal calls for the setting of fees to be set by the President, Program Chair, VC Program Chair, and WPSA Executive Director, which is consistent with how fees are set for the annual meeting.

Motion to approve his motion made by Mayerfeld, seconded by Lien.
Motion approved, unanimous

H. Climate Action Fund Spending Proposal Jamie Mayerfeld and Cheryl Hall

The Council then began to consider how to fund the Virtual Communities. Mayerfeld and Hall put forward a proposal from the Climate Action Committee requesting that the \$1800 in the Climate Action Fund be used to support Virtual Communities this year. The Climate Action Committee also called for additional funds to be set aside in the Association’s regular budget to support the Virtual Communities. It was made clear during the discussion that the request for funding from the regular budget was meant as a one-time request and not a permanent line in the budget. If the VC need additional funds from the budget in future years, it will make a new request. There was also a discussion on whether it was appropriate to use the Climate Action Fund for VCs. The concern raised against the expenditure was that it is unclear whether the VCs would have any effect on the association’s climate footprint, especially if the introduction of VCs actually caused the association to grow.

The Motion to approve the use of the Climate Action Funds for the Virtual Communities was made by Mayerfeld, seconded by Dias
Motion approved with 16 voting in favor and 2 against

A. Budget Michael Bowers

After consideration of the Virtual Communities proposals, the council returned to the operating budget. The proposed budget put before the council included the funding for the 75th anniversary, the Virtual Communities, and the increased personnel expenses.

Michael Bowers proposes approval of budget, seconded by Lavariega Monforti
Motion approved, unanimous vote

I. Interim Recording Secretary Vote Richard Clucas

Clucas explains how Jason Casellas has been nominated VP and Program Chair. If Casellas is elected, which will likely happen at today’s Business Meeting, the secretary position will become vacant at the end of the 2021 conference. This proposal asks the council to appoint Janni Aragon to serve as the interim Recording Secretary until next March, when Aragon will become the regular Recording Secretary, presuming she is also elected at today’s Business Meeting.

Motion by Richard Clucas, seconded by Jessica Lavariega Monforti
Motion approved, unanimous

J. Scheduling of Late Summer Meeting Richard Clucas

With the APSA meeting scheduled as a hybrid of in-person and virtual participation, Clucas says that the Council should consider how it wants to handle its late summer meeting, which is traditionally held during the APSA meeting. Clucas says he will send out an email to council members to determine the best way to conduct the meeting in late summer.

Meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m. PDT

Respectfully submitted, Jason P. Casellas, Secretary, Western Political Science Association