

**Minutes of the Association of Global South Studies (AGSS) Executive Council
Meeting
El Querandi Restaurant, Buenos Aires, Argentina
16 December 2019**

Executive Council (EC) members in attendance:

Ryan Alexander
Jose da Cruz
Lauren Eastwood
Michael Hall
Sunita Manian
Brian Parkinson
Bill Peterson
Paul Rodell
Philip Szmedra
James Winchester

EC members not in attendance:

Gary Kline
Jyoti Tripathy

Non-EC members in attendance:

Patricia Moral
Elizabeth Onash

Meeting Convened

The meeting was called to order by Ryan Alexander at 7:00 PM. The minutes of the 2018 EC meeting held in Albuquerque, NM were approved without changes.

Results of the Election

Michael Hall reported the results of the election for vice-president and EC II seat. The winners were Funke Fontenot for VP and Brian Parkinson for the EC seat. Dr. Hall reported that the vote tally this round was twice as large as the preceding year which bodes well for the vibrancy of the AGSS.

Financial Report

Paul Rodell next offered the financial report. Dr. Rodell first mentioned that he was trying to make sense of the membership list including deleting individuals that are

deceased as well as those that have not been actively paying dues for many years. He asked that the EC members peruse the membership list and send to him any corrections as well as updated email addresses. Dr. Rodell will develop a Life Member list; an annual membership list, a student membership list; and a non-active former member list with the help of the EC. Dr. Rodell also offered that the AGSS web page application for membership needs activation.

Dr. Rodell then spoke of the cost of both the 2018 and 2019 conferences indicating that the 2019 conference would experience a deficit of approximately \$10,000 considering the conference cost of \$20,000 minus the \$10,000 generated by conferences fees and other revenue sources.

Dr. da Cruz inquired about the cost of retaining a webmaster for the AGSS website. Dr. Rodell responding that the organization is paying Svetlana Peltsberger \$1200 per year. Dr. Alexander offered that the website needs an overhaul to which a number of members responded that the current website was much improved over the previous version. A member offered that the webmaster was being overpaid. Dr. Hall responded that the webmaster's payment was increased due to the work involved in the website re-vamping but the increased payment has remained the same since the updated website became active. There was no further discussion about webmaster remuneration.

Lauren Eastwood inquired about how the organization's funds were being invested. Dr. Alexander proposed looking into alternative investments to boost earnings over what is currently being earned by the present allocation. Dr. Eastwood offered to contact a friend who is a Certified Financial Planner to inquire about how AGSS funds could realize a greater return.

James Winchester suggested increasing the conference registration fee and lowering conference expenses to avoid the large deficit that the Argentina conference experienced. Dr. Hall offered that even with an increased conference fee the organization would still benefit by offering much lower conference registration fees for students. Dr. Eastwood expressed a reluctance to increase the conference fee. Sunita Manian, the past president and conference organizer for Morocco, spoke of the way business was handled to bring the 2017 Marrakesh conference in under budget.

Dr. Hall offered that the principal reason for the large deficit experienced in Argentina was the requirement that in-country service providers were paid in Argentine pesos

rather than U.S. dollars. Due to the significant devaluation of the peso relative to the dollar (high inflation rate over the past six months in Argentina).

Website Information

Dr. Rodell offered that the current information on the organization's website about hosting future AGSS conferences is a deterrent to institutional involvement because of the financial emoluments that must be offered the AGSS by a potential hosting institution. He mentioned that Dr. Harold Isaacs, the AGSS founder would use conference revenue to help fund the publication of the organization's journal. Since that financial support is no longer needed Dr. Rodell suggested deleting the requirement that institutional hosts provide conference financial support. Drs. Hall and Rodell will review the current wording regarding institutional involvement and re-write the existing language to make hosting a future AGSS conference more attractive.

United Nations membership

Dr. Eastwood reported that the United Nations was accepting of the organizational name change from the Association of Third World Studies to the AGSS. However, the Climate Negotiations body of the U.N. was not satisfied that the AGSS was sufficiently institutionally concerned about climate change and environmental topics in general to grant the AGSS access to its deliberations. Dr. Szmedra offered that a future conference theme could specify the global environment as its central focus. Dr. Manian suggested that greater topic diversity at future conferences could be realized through electronic panels where presentations could be done remotely. Dr. Eastwood offered a resolution to make an institutional commitment to the importance of climate change studies going forward for the AGSS. The resolution was passed unanimously.

Journal of Global South Studies

Dr. Alexander reported on the state of the Journal of Global South Studies (JGSS). He announced that Vaughn Shannon of Wright State University had agreed to become the new associate editor for the Middle East. Dr. Alexander also mentioned that many manuscripts that are submitted for consideration are inferior and non-publishable. He asked the EC members to call on professional colleagues and friends to submit to the journal to increase the manuscript pool. Dr. Alexander also mentioned that the journal mailing list has the same types of problems as the organization's membership list; i.e., journals still being sent to deceased members, or to incorrect addresses. He is working with the University of Florida Press to correct the problem. Dr. Alexander also suggested sending free issues of the journal (as well as online subscriptions) to academic institutions in the Global South in order to promote the organization and as a

way of soliciting additional journal submissions; possibly three or four institutions in each Global South region. This gesture would be funded by AGSS resources.

Dr. Hall mentioned that 25% of book reviews included in the JGSS were written by graduate students. Dr. Rodell stated that he agreed with Dr. Alexander's proposal of offering the journal gratis to Global South institutions. No resolution was passed approving this suggestion however. Dr. Parkinson suggested that the journal be included in JSTOR. Others suggested that this was a costly proposition.

Future Conferences

Dr. Hall proposed that the 2020 AGSS conference should be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. In keeping with the traditional pattern of AGSS conference site selection the 2020 meeting was scheduled to be held at a U.S. venue. However, Dr. Hall explained that since a Canadian venue abided by the North American theme of domesticity it could be considered. It was mentioned that Savannah had been under original consideration for the 2020 meeting during the 2018 Albuquerque conference. But the AGSS has been to Savannah three times during its existence. Dr. da Cruz mentioned that there is extensive road construction in the city and its environs and Savannah would not be a good choice for 2020; possibly 2023 would be a better date. Dr. Winchester stated his belief that Halifax would not attract as large a conference contingent as would Savannah. Dr. da Cruz proposed to accept Halifax as the agreed site for the 2020 AGSS conference from 11-13 October 2020. The proposal was accepted by a majority of the EC membership.

Dr. Szmedra spoke of Bulgaria as the potential site for the 2021 AGSS conference. The EC membership was in possession of an email from the events coordinator at the American University in Bulgaria in Blagoevgrad in which she declined the offer of hosting the AGSS because of the financial requirements of a host institution as stated in the AGSS website. Dr. Szmedra offered to work with Bulgarian contacts to determine the feasibility of having the conference in Sofia, Bulgaria's capital rather than in Blagoevgrad. Sofia, Bulgaria is therefore the tentative site of the 2021 AGSS conference pending the establishment of Bulgarian contacts willing to do the on-site preparatory work, the submission of a conference site proposal to the EC, and the agreement of the EC to the site proposal.

New Business

Dr. da Cruz suggested that a new logo for the organization be created. He also suggested that academic job announcements be included in the organization's website to make the organization better known among younger academics.

Patricia Moral accepted accolades for her significant contributions to the organization of the Buenos Aires meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Philip Szmedra

Secretary, AGSS