Minutes of the Association of Global South Studies (AGSS) Executive Council Meeting
Merida, Mexico
13 October 2025

Minutes taken by Lauren Eastwood and Cathy Skidmore-Hess (Philip Szmedra sustained an injury prior to the EC meeting and was therefore unable to attend).

Executive Council (EC) members in attendance:
Ryan Alexander
Joseph Bangura
Lauren Eastwood
Olufunke Fontenot
Michael Hall
Brian Parkinson
Cathy Skidmore-Hess
Alwen Yeung

EC members absent:
Sabella Abidde
Yassaman Saadatmann
Danielle Smith
Philip Szmedra

Agenda Item 1: Greeting and Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 19:08 by President Joseph Bangura.
Agenda adopted (unanimously).

Agenda Item 2: Election Results

Michael Hall reported that only 25 votes were cast. Last year there were 42 votes cast. Lauren Eastwood suggested candidates provide a brief bio (for the next election) so that voting members can better evaluate their choices. Hall indicated that it would be implemented in the 2026 election process.

Results:
Ryan Alexander was elected as Vice President/President-Elect.
Assefaw Bariagaber was elected as Executive Council Position #2.

Hall continued with a discussion of the membership of the EC. He noted that Jose de Arimateia da Cruz has resigned his position as Chair of the Information Services Committee. This changes the quorum of the EC to 9 from 8. Hall suggested that Brian Parkinson be nominated to serve as Chair of the Information Services Committee. Olufunke Fontenot called for a vote on this nomination (after Brian Parkinson's acceptance of the nomination). There were 5 votes in favor and 2 abstentions.

Agenda Item 3: Discussion of 2026 Conference Site

Lauren Eastwood briefly presented the proposals for the 2026 conference site. She reminded the EC that, based on the CfP that she had prepared and circulated earlier, a prior preliminary discussion of two proposals had been held by the EC at a virtual meeting. It was decided to wait until the in-person meeting to make a decision. The two proposals were (1) Cameroon and (2) Morocco. Subsequent to this initial discussion, Michael Hall had submitted a proposal to hold the 2026 conference in Rio de Janeiro.

The general discussion included points about the need to attract new members and to ensure that conference attendance is as high as possible, given the financial struggles that AGSS is currently experiencing. Latin America has great appeal in this regard. Some of the most highly attended conferences have been held in Latin America. There were general concerns raised about the expense of traveling to Cameroon, in addition to the yellow fever vaccination requirements (that might be a deterrent to participants). There was also a discussion about more fully incorporating local institutions and scholars in global south venues. After general discussion, a vote was proposed and taken. It was unanimously decided that the conference be held in Rio de Janeiro from October 11-13, 2026.

Lauren Eastwood asked a point of procedure about next steps. She was interested in knowing who would be in charge of notifying those who had submitted the other proposals that they had not been selected. It was decided that the VP/President Elect would be charged with communicating the results of the EC's deliberations on conference sites. It is the Executive Director's responsibility to solicit proposals and make them available to the EC for consideration. However, the VP/President Elect will notify proposers of the results of the EC deliberations. There was a discussion of how to get more attendance at the meeting, with several EC members underlining the need for all EC members to recruit. It was noted that we would like to have at least the same number of people who attended the Merida conference, but that would not be possible without promotion by all.

Agenda Item 4: Journal Editor's Report

Ryan Alexander reported that for the long-term health of the journal he felt he must step aside. However, he was willing to serve through the spring to help the transition to a new editor. It was then motioned that if the organization failed to hire a new editor that Ryan would continue with additional compensation (Ryan has since rejected the additional compensation)
One of the points that Ryan Alexander made involved the fact that he has advocated for no longer paying a copy editor $300 per month, since the University of Florida Press provides copy editing services. The EC voted on this proposal, and it was approved.

Agenda Item 5: Treasurer's Report (N/A)

There was no Treasurer's report. However, a discussion of finances took place.

Speaking with the permission of Danielle Smith, Cathy Skidmore-Hess conveyed the financial situation of AGSS. She stated that current rate of spending and membership, AGSS will be without funds within 3 years.

Lauren Eastwood raised concern that many proposals regarding financial strategies that had previously been voted on and approved were not implemented. Lauren suggested that life members pay an annual fee to receive the journal, membership and conference registration fees be re-evaluated each year. Going forward, membership fees would correspond to the calendar year. A conversation followed discussing investment strategies. Danielle Smith as treasurer would be authorized to explore and select investment strategies

Agenda Item 6: Executive Director's Report

Lauren Eastwood summarized the points that were made in the ED report she had circulated earlier. The main issues were that there were only 12 members who were not life members prior to the registration process for the Merida conference. Given the fact that there is no other source of income for AGSS, it is imperative that the Association attract new members.

She indicated also that she has experienced significant challenges in the role of Executive Director related to the fact that there are very few articulated processes related to the workings of the Association. Since the majority of the functions of the Association were formerly overseen by Harold Isaacs and by others who took on tasks associated with the workings of the AGSS, several important elements currently fall through the cracks. There

needs to be an Operations Manual and EC positions need to be associated with specific tasks (with identifiable processes and instructions on how to execute those tasks). There also needs to be much better communication. Lauren Eastwood said that she would take on the task of initiating the process, but that those who hold other positions in AGSS should write sections pertaining to their own positions.

Agenda Item 7: New Business (and Update on Editor's Search)

Brian Parkinson briefed the EC on the status of the search for a new editor for the Journal of Global South Studies (JGSS). Ryan Alexander had notified the EC of his interest in stepping down by 1 October 2025. Brian Parkinson, Sabella Abidde and Olufunke Fontenot were asked by the president (Bangura) to serve on the committee. Brian Parkinson and Olufunke Fontenot conducted zoom interviews of several candidates in late September/early October of 2025 and identified two potential candidates.

A discussion ensued regarding the possibility that no editor would be chosen by January 1, 2026. It was decided that if there were no decisions made about the Editor by this date, that Ryan Alexander would continue in the role of Editor, but with a larger stipend to offset the fact that he is no longer able to obtain a course release from the current Dean at his institution.