

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday, June 2, 2008 at 3:25 PM

University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.

Meeting chaired by Shannon Purves-Smith, President CSSR-CSÉR

Present (11): Rebecca Carruthers Den Hoed, Stephen Pender, Monina Wittfoth, Tracy Whalen, Sylvain Rheault, Michael Purves-Smith, Shannon Purves-Smith, Pierre Zoberman, Tania Smith, Burton Urquhart, Jason Bermiller

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion: that the agenda be adopted with the addition of 8.2.0 (discussion of benefits of one special topic). Zoberman/Pender. Carried.

2. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES MAY 27, 2007

Motion: that the minutes be adopted as read. Carruthers Den Hoed/Whalen. Carried.

3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

3.1 Report on the conference of the Rhetoric Society of America (RSA)

The President reported that the CSSR decided not to attend the conference as an official group. The conference itself, however, was well attended by CSSR members and was very exciting and interesting. Burton Urquhart encouraged others to attend; he found the RSA to be a large, unified group of scholars and the meeting recharged him; he reminded others that the RSA meets every two years. Michael Purves-Smith added that over 900 people attended (however, the President pointed out that the quantity of people attending shouldn't be celebrated at the expense of the quality of papers presented, which was also good). Tania Smith was inspired by the political activism she witnessed at the meeting.

3.2 Update on the recruitment project

The President reported on her recruitment mail-out. She explained that she chose 155 websites for scholars whose areas of research reflected knowledge of and interest in rhetoric. To these 155 people, the President sent out a mini poster; a cover letter in English and French; a brochure; and a call for papers in English and French. The total cost was \$572.63. Twelve of this year's proposals were from these newly recruited members.

Stephen Pender asked if there might be other ways to recruit new members. For instance, each member could commit to bringing along 1 person next year, or the call for papers could be posted on H-Rhetor. Pierre Zoberman suggested that each member commit to forwarding the call for papers to all our contacts. Monina

Wittfoth suggested crafting a “special session” topic designed to attract new people (e.g., several sessions might have been filled with a special session on medical rhetoric). Jason Bermiller added that the cover letter that Shannon Purves-Smith sent out caught his attention; however, straight evangelism isn’t enough and mail outs tend to be expensive.

Arising from the discussion, Michael Purves-Smith suggested that a small committee be put together to look into recruitment strategies. Stephen Pender agreed, and suggested the committee report back in three months.

The consensus of the meeting was that the recruitment committee will consist of the following members: Tracy Whalen, Monina Wittfoth, Michael Purves-Smith, and Stephen Pender, with Stephen acting as coordinator and reporting back to the President with a report three months after the Congress.

4. PRESIDENT’S REPORT

4.1 Joint session with the Medievalists’ Society

The President thanked members for attending the CSSR’s joint session with the Medievalists’ Society in the morning. The session was well attended and was an interesting discussion of the oral tradition in relation to the internet.

4.2 Session on Wayne Booth

The President was sad to announce three cancellations in the Wayne Booth special session and the unfortunate absence of the session chair, Jeanie Wills. She thanked Tania Smith for generously volunteering to chair the session on such short notice. She also explained that session times would not be changed to “fill in the gaps” left by cancellations, in case reporters have planned to attend specific sessions at specific times.

4.3 Constitution

The President opened the floor to discussion regarding the suggested changes to the constitution.

The question of how long it takes to involve new members in the executive was raised. Stephen Pender expressed concern about how long it takes for members to cycle through their duties as members of the executive. He suggested that members think about shortening the tenure of members of the executive and raise the issue again at our next meeting. He recommended that a one year Member-at-Large be added to the executive, to help get other members involved in executive duties; the Member-at-Large’s duties would be determined by the executive.

The consensus at the meeting was that the constitution should be revised to include such a Member-at-Large; the following revisions were suggested (changes underlined):

§ 4.1.2.7 [added]

The Member-at-Large shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting for a term of one year. He or she shall perform duties as directed by the Executive.

§ 4.1.2 [revised]

The membership of the Executive Committee shall consist of the President, the Past President, the Vice-President, the Secretary-Treasurer, and a Member-at-Large.

Arising from the discussion, the question of staggering the election of members of the Advisory Committee was raised. Sylvain Rheault commented that he didn't feel staggering was necessary. Pierre Zoberman reminded others that we need a quick way to involve new members. Monina Wittfoth suggested that five new members be elected every year, instead of every year. Michael Purves-Smith suggested we move it as is, with only the one amendment regarding the new member at large.

Arising from the discussion, Stephen Pender offered thanks to the President for all her hard work on the Constitution. All members concurred.

Motion: that the revisions distributed by the President and the amendment regarding adding a member at large to the executive be accepted. Michael Purves-Smith/Wittfoth. Carried.

Motion: that the wording for §4.1.2.7 be accepted as read. Wittfoth/Pender. Carried.

5. VICE-PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Vice-President had nothing to report.

6. SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

The Secretary-Treasurer was unable to attend the conference; however, she forwarded her financial report to the Vice-President to be presented at the meeting on her behalf. As it stands, the financial statement doesn't add up.

The Secretary-Treasurer's financial statement is attached.

Motion: to table the report and await a corrected financial statement from the Secretary-Treasurer. Rheault/Zoberman. Carried.

7. RHETOR UPDATES

The Past President explained that he has encountered some delays in the production of *Rhetor* 3, owing to the fact that he recently was blessed with a new daughter and to the fact that his father recently died of cancer. He is currently pursuing the possibility of indexing *Rhetor*. He received nine submissions in total and will send the submissions to reviewers next; he plans to be finished next year.

8. 2009 CSSR CONGRESS

8.1 CSSR attendance at the FedCan conference at Carleton University, Ottawa, ON, May 23rd to May 31st, 2009

Motion: that the 2009 meeting of the CSSR/SCÉR be held as a part of the 79th annual Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences to be held next year at Carleton University in Ottawa, ON. Rheault/Whalen. Carried.

8.2 Topic for the Congress 2009 Special Session

8.2.0 Benefits of choosing one special topic

Monina Wittfoth brought up the issue of choosing only one instead of several topics for the 2009 meeting. She indicated that it would be easier to recruit new members with an appealing topic, and that choosing a few topics each year might be more appealing for new members than one special topic. She identified a need to draft specific topics in areas where good research is going to be done.

Shannon Purves-Smith pointed out that it was hard enough scheduling all the papers with only one special topic, and with presenters dropping out at the last minutes, these “special topics” risk falling apart and fragmenting the conference.

Monina Wittfoth expressed concern, despite scheduling challenges, that this year’s topic was not very strong. Rebecca Carruthers Den Hoed suggested that a cluster of topics be drafted, rather than just one, to broaden the appeal of the special session(s) each year; further she suggested choosing a theorist as a topic might not have strong enough appeal. Jason Bermiller suggested balancing a mixture of topics: perhaps one pointed special session in addition to a wider topic for the whole session, or a topic that includes both a theorist and a theme.

Michael Purves-Smith recommended forwarding the question to the recruitment committee. However, Rebecca Carruthers Den Hoed expressed some concern that the conference topic should not be considered solely a recruitment issue; topics should be selected to meet and challenge the research interests of current members, as well.

The consensus of the meeting was that the Advisory Committee be left in charge of selecting one or several topics for the 2009 conference. The Advisory Committee will choose a topic in time for the call for proposals (CFP).

In relation to this discussion, the question of when the CSSR CFP deadline should be was raised. The consensus at the meeting was that an the CSSR CFP deadline should be earlier this year: i.e., in September, rather than December. This earlier date would be more competitive with the CATTW deadline, which falls in mid-September. Tania Smith pointed out that, with a later CFP deadline, the CSSR risks “losing” scholars who submit a proposal to CATTW (early) and then “burn out” later in the fall and submit no further proposals. Shannon Purves-Smith also pointed out that an earlier deadline would give the Advisory Committee more time to vet proposals, and give the President more time to schedule the papers.

Arising from the discussion, Stephen Pender suggested a topic that would fit with the theme and location of the 2009 Congress, and touch on the topic voted on by CSSR members last year (rhetoric of the body): Neoliberalism and the Body Politic. The consensus of the meeting was that this topic should be forwarded to the Advisory Committee for consideration.

9. WEBMASTER’S REPORT

The webmaster reported that the new site is up and running. Plans for the upcoming year include the following: trying to anchor the site to the cssr-scser.ca domain (rather than having ucalgary.ca/~rcarruth show up); getting the French pages of the site proofread; trying to get our google ranking up; developing a wikipedia article on the CSSR; and posting some photos on the website.

10. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

10.1 Advisory Committee

After discussion, Monina Wittfoth was nominated as the graduate student member of the Advisory Committee. Monina Wittfoth was elected by acclamation.

The consensus at the meeting was that a Member-at-Large should also be elected to the Executive Committee. Pierre Zoberman and Rebecca Carruthers Den Hoed nominated Stephen Pender, but he declined the position. Tania Smith nominated herself, and Pierre Zoberman voiced his support for her nomination.

Motion: that nominations for Member-at-Large be closed. Rheault/Pender. Carried.

Tania Smith was elected by acclamation.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 Future conferences (in conjunction with the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences)

2009 Ottawa (Carleton University)

2010 Montréal (Concordia University)

2011 Fredericton (St. Thomas University & University of New Brunswick)

2012 Waterloo, Ontario (Wilfrid Laurier University & University of Waterloo)

11.2 CSSR Proposals

CSSR Proposals were not discussed at the meeting.

11.3 Conference Programming

Tania Smith reported an unofficial idea circulating in CATTW, which was communicated to her by Roger Graves: namely, that CATTW is proposing forming a larger group (e.g., Writing and Discourse Studies in Canada) that would function as an umbrella group for smaller rhetoric and writing societies in Canada. This larger umbrella group would hold parallel sessions at the Congress and submit joint applications for SSHRC funding.

Members raised several issues that have been raised in the past regarding fears about declining CSSR audiences as a result of parallel sessions, fears of being swallowed up by a larger group, fears of losing our disciplinary identity, and concerns about unequal society cooperation. Stephen Pender proposed that, as Member-at-Large, Tania Smith explore these issues during her tenure. Tania agreed and the consensus at the meeting was that Tania should report back to the executive throughout the year with any findings.

Pierre Zoberman raised the possibility of holding a joint session with the Society for Renaissance Studies two years from now. Shannon Purves-Smith encouraged him to act as the CSSR's contact on this matter.

12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

Motion: that the meeting be adjourned at 5:30 (??) PM. Carruthers Den Hoed/Whalen. Carried.

Respectfully submitted by Rebecca Carruthers Den Hoed.

CSSR FINANCIAL STATEMENT/ÉTATS FINANCIERS

May 26, 2008

Opening Balance (May 2007) 3606.93

TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS

Postage (Shannon Purves-Smith) 24.45
VP Expenses (Shannon Purves-Smith) 13.15
Grad Banquet refund (A. Moldovan) 20.00
Language Services linguistique 255.00
Congress 2007 Muffins and cookies 55.70
CFHSS (coffee and AV services) 184.10
Recruitment and Publicity mail outs (S. Purves-Smith) 572.63
Postage (Jeanie Wills) 26.84
USD US/CDN Adjustment 60.00
Postage (Dec Katja Thieme) 10.35

Monthly bank fees 70.22

TOTAL (as of May 28, 2008) 1292.44

TOTAL DEPOSITS

Memberships at 2007 Conference (Deposited 31 May 07) 485.00
Memberships since 2007 Conference 476.46

TOTAL (as of May 26, 2008) 961.46

Bank balance as of May 31, 2008 3280.90
