

**2010 Winter Meeting of the Policy Council  
Draft Minutes of Face-to-Face Portion at Cambridge, MA, USA  
January 15, 2010**

Attendance: Policy Council: David Andersen (VP Finance), Deborah Andersen (VP Publications), Bob Eberlein (VP Electronic Presence), Jay Forrester (Founding President), David Lane (President Elect), Brad Morrison (Secretary), Erling Moxnes (Past President), Rogelio Oliva (President), Aldo Zagonel (PC Member). Guests: David Packer, Jack Pugh, George Richardson, Khalid Saeed and Roberta Spencer (Executive Director)

**Opening**

Overview of Electronic Votes since the end of Summer PC Meeting minutes were posted: The motion to elect Etienne Rouwette as VP Member Services to fulfill Krys Stave's term (who resigned) through 2011 was passed unanimously

Electronic reports: Many came in late or have not yet appeared.

**Reports from the VPs.**

At Large: No report

Chapter Activities: No Report, but there is a member in India that is going through the steps of the formal process to propose a Chapter.

Electronic Presence: No report

Finance: End of year Budget Comparison Report and Revenue and Expense Report but no Balance Sheet because the 2009 year results are not completely tallied. We have gone to accrual accounting. Last year was closed out with about a \$28,000 surplus. Investments seem OK, and the Albuquerque conference closed out with about a \$29,000 surplus. The budget situation is similar to previous years: core operations are not paying for themselves, but beer games are still selling though 2009 was a low year. David Andersen's bottom line is that the Society is not sustainable with just the journal and the conference.

**Appointment:** An ad hoc investment committee to look at the Society's investments. Jim Thompson and Jim Lyneis have agreed to work with Roberta and David Andersen to review the investment strategy and make recommendations to the Policy Council.

Conferences:

Albuquerque 2009 – There are some reflections on the process for setting up and running the conference along with a proposal for how the process might be adjusted (another discussion item).

Evaluation survey from the conference could use some rethinking, and there is a very low response rate (about 65 from Albuquerque). It might be helpful to ask people what they would like to see for future conferences. This could be a new role for VP Member Services. George points out that a good survey with some history would be useful for the Program Chair and others involved in the conference. It was suggested to have Etienne work on updating the survey to get better and more actionable information.

Seoul 2010 – They have a new subject on Eastern Thinking and System Dynamics, and there is a Bonus Day with meeting based on same language. There will be a meeting to see if they can start an Asian Chapter. There will be no new threads, and some of the experimental threads were dropped. There is a big effort to get sponsorship and bring in speakers. The dates are July 25-29. The speaker on Eastern Thinking and System Dynamics is a former student of Khalid's, and he expects him to do a good job. This is part of the Qualitative System thread. Khalid will talk with the thread chair to emphasize the importance of having papers of good quality. David Andersen sees a great deal of uncertainty around the finances for the conference but feels some confidence that they will pull together. Call for Papers went out on time, but the registration brochure is somewhat delayed and will be going out on Monday, January 18.

The registration fee is set by a consensus between the conference and the central office. Raising the fee will decrease the chance of a shortfall. George wonders whether this type of question should be taken on by the Policy Council or should be left to the people who are dealing with it on a day to day basis. Dave Packer worries that the organizing committee is not on the hook as strongly as it might be because of the change in venue to Seoul. The proposal for a conference does have a proposed conference fee and the PC does vote to approve this. This is done a number of years in advance and might need to be revised as the dates approach. Khalid feels good about what the conference organizers in Korea will be doing and is worried about a high conference fee, especially compared to other professional societies.

Aldo points out that the Bonus Day was originally organized in order to try to increase hotel occupancy. This accident of nature seems to have repeated itself in Korea. Aldo does think that it makes sense to increase the registration fee for the conference.

The Society Program Oversight Committee consists of the current program chair, the upcoming program chair and the two past program chairs along with the VP Publications, VP Meetings, VP E-presence and executive director. There is discussion

on whether a more permanent person should be placed as the chair of that committee. This will be made a discussion item.

Washington 2011 – July 24-28, Hyatt Regency room rate is \$169 for up to 4 people, and they offer a student/staff rate of \$129 (for up to ¼ of the rooms). Roberta will go to Washington DC for a pre conference planning committee, and there are a number of companies that are interested in the conference. Jay suggests that MITRE might be willing to be a sponsor. Roberta worked with the hotel's Audio Visual Department and they were able to meet our budget requirements.

This conference site was generated by the home office without a local proposing team.

2012 – No report. We still have the proposal for St Gallen from the summer.

2013 – Boeing Company in Seattle is looking at potentially putting in a proposal.

Publications: Discussion about the layout of the Journal starting with the January issue and discussion about the contract.

Executive Director: We had a good year financially. Arrangements for the conference are going well. Membership is down slightly from last year. The tiered dues structure does seem to bring in slightly more money than we would have gotten with the \$90/\$45 membership fee.

## **Discussion**

**Conference sites:** Proposal to limit conference sites to large cities in the US and Europe

Rogelio thinks the analysis is pointing us toward more centralized locations for the conference. One possibility is to just do it in Boston every year. Another possibility would be alternating between Boston and somewhere in Europe. One of the jobs of a local sponsor is to narrow down the number of possibilities. This can be a lot of work if the central office is required to find the location. Another possibility would be to work with one chain of hotels in different cities. For North America we have managed to run the conference with very limited local help. David Andersen mentions that the APPAM conference is run every other year in Washington DC at the same location – they actually sign a 16-year contract. Khalid worries that the size of the conference cannot really change with that type of model. Jay thinks that if we depend on people making proposals we will end up with poor conference locations.

The decision to go to Asia was based on a policy that we should rotate out of the US and Europe on occasion. Aldo points out that signing long term contracts may preclude any consideration of alternative sites since we will already be committed on location.

In terms of reaching our goals it may be that something other than the conference should be what will be held in other areas. Jay thinks there is not enough focus in conferences on improving the quality of the conference. He thinks it may need to be a smaller conference in order to do this. The frontier of the field should be put forward by the conference. Khalid thinks that there is sufficient diversity in the field that there is a need for accommodating the interests of different people. Khalid suggests that the proposal suggested by some of the past presidents be adopted.

Rogelio thinks we should accept attractive proposals from other people.

With the default being a site that we have chosen, only extremely good bids would win them over.

Aldo suggests that we consider holding a biennial (once every two years) conference instead of annual conferences which would allow regional conferences held every other year. Regional conferences could serve as a mechanism for promoting activity in other areas. The Society could use some of its resources to pay to help with these local conferences. If we are taking the conference out as a means of promoting more international activities, we need to put other resources into place in order to meet those needs. This might be much more valuable than holding the annual conference in the same location.

David Lane mentions the European workshops on system dynamics and believes that this type of mechanism is much more effective for broadening the development of system dynamics in other places. George suggests there might be a role of the Society to develop international activities and take the duty of developing activities in other regions. An advantage of creating a new officer with such a role would be that the rest of the world would perceive the Society as not simply ignoring the rest of the world.

Erling asks what the utility function is for people who attend the conference. If they like variety there may be value in moving between different locations. If we find locations that have low cost this will make them attractive.

David Lane will formulate a motion to hold the conference at default locations in North American and Europe in order to decrease costs and improve quality. The motion will also bring attention to new and ongoing initiatives that increase the outreach of the Society to other parts of the world.

### **Carbon Neutral Conferences**

Aldo wanted to create a conversation around the impact of conference activities on the environment. For Albuquerque they put in place a mechanism (through Carbonfund.org)

to allow people to offset their carbon output that resulted from conference attendance. Assuming this is a good thing to do, how can it be made more effective? Including it in the conference registration fee would increase the participation rate. Aldo suggests that it would work best if the offset was included in the conference fee and people had an opt-out option. Aldo has offered to contribute ten cents per dollar raised, up to \$500 per year for 5 years to the Society.

Khalid asks if this is an activity that is not necessarily part of the mandate of the Society, though this would apply only if the money were utilized by the Society. The carbon fund proposal comes from a number of people, some of whom are from the Environmental SIG, who have put work into this, but it is not something that has been put forward formally by the SIG. George is torn on this in the sense that he would like to see global warming reversed but is not convinced that this would actually make any difference. And that if we were serious about this then we would forsake a physical conference and hold an electronic conference instead.

Aldo thinks this proposal is simply a way of having people reverse the externalities that they are imposing on the atmosphere. Jay thinks that the carbon mitigation efforts of such organizations as Carbonfund.org will simply not work and that they take the focus off of the root sources of the problems – rising population and industrialization – and will just make these things that much worse. Therefore he does not feel that it is ethical to give the impression that this can be solved in this way. Khalid thinks that the efforts themselves may actually be counterproductive since stimulating research effectively increases industrial activity.

Aldo still does not see any people with positions in leadership who have a way to achieve prosperity without growth. David Packer notes that this is a classic shifting of the burden, but that this is not necessarily as black and white, as some mitigation of symptoms can be valuable. David Lane thinks that there are too many different things mixed up in the written proclamation promulgated. Erling sees that there is a lot of uncertainty here and that this is a good reason to have an opt-in approach to the problem.

The opt-in choice will be in place for Seoul, and also for Washington unless a change is made. After that, what happens depends on volunteer work, since Allyson Beall committed to only three years.

### **Conference Organization and Logistics**

Making the position of Chair of the Society Program Oversight Committee a more permanent placement for a number of years instead of rotating out each year. Rogelio thinks there is institutional learning and that should reside in a position that lasts more than one year – at least a three year appointment. This makes sense to most people,

and since the committee is an Ad-Hoc committee the President can make this appointment.

Having a professional organization run the conference. We will put off any more discussion of this until after we see how Washington works out.

### **Proposal for reorganizing conference finances**

Clarification of roles and responsibility and a realignment of budget and expenses. There is lots of uncertainty around how many people will show up at the conference and whether or not the sponsorship will be realized.

Some recommendations from Aldo about the conference: Carbon offsets should be incorporated. Discussant sessions should continue: in a day, one block of six sessions devoted to this. Special events around K-12 went well and were appreciated. This might be included every other year opposite the CLE which holds biennial conferences. Program chair and local organizers work closely together.

Proposal to split up necessary items expenses and set registration fees to cover the necessary items. Then look at the target surplus of \$25,000 and figure out where this should come from. The first suggestion is to set the registration fee at a price that covers all costs. Then, break up the items into different categories.

There is agreement that breaking up the financial responsibility between the local organizing committee and the central office in a clear way is important.

### **Publications**

Rejuvenation of the Publications Committee was started in Albuquerque. There was discussion about this comment and about ways to improve the impact of the SDR. There are some issues with the quality of papers being published in the SDR. The editorial process that is currently in place might be changed somewhat in order to strengthen the overall quality of the papers that are being published. George was nominated as the chair of the publications committee and has put together some thoughts from the earlier history of the journal that might help think about the things that could be done with the SDR. For example, in the original formulation of the journal, Associate Editors were selected in particular areas so that any given Associate Editor had a discipline assigned and they were charged with producing at least 1 paper from their area every year. There were about 20 areas that were there. These could be done by regular submissions, or by getting it from your friends, or if neither of those worked you would write it yourself. We have moved away from that area focus to the current open submissions approach, and the Associate Editors no longer have this charge.

There may be some ideas from the earlier way of doing things that might help us as a guide for the future.

David Lane points out that place of publication is increasingly considered important. Some journals have been quite deliberately trying to raise their reputation and have done quite well in improving these performance measures for journals. It makes sense to do this, keeping in mind that we need to keep articles connected to reality and not simply theoretical. Now might be a good time to try to improve the quality in the articles.

The Publication Committee members are George Richardson, Brian Dangerfield, Graham Winch, Yaman Barlas, Deborah Andersen, David Andersen and Roberta Spencer. The role of the committee is to advise the VP Publications, so it makes sense for the VP Publications to chair it and it probably does not make sense to have the Executive Editor on the committee. One of the first charges of the committee is to figure out its role and, given that, who its members should be. Rogelio would like to get some action. David Andersen is worried that this will end up with simply another layer of management that might end up doing the same thing that the current editorial board is charged with.

David Lane views this as simply a way to raise the game of the journal. Khalid has a specific suggestion – a lot of journals publish a conference journal. If this was made the responsibility of the Program Chair, it might both raise the quality of the conference papers and bring out high quality papers. This was the responsibility of the Associate Editors in the past, not for a specific issue, but for papers in general. That activity seems to have died out.

If we need a different set of members for the Publications Committee, then we should make the change. The committee is charged with determining who should be the members of the committee; that membership will in turn need to be approved by the Policy Council. That committee will then be charged with working with the Editorial board to determine ways to raise the impact factors, quality and visibility of the journal.

### **Negotiation with Wiley**

An ad-hoc committee for negotiating has been appointed consisting of Brian Dangerfield, Roberta Spencer, David Andersen, Deborah Andersen and George Richardson.

We should try to wrap this up as quickly as possible but effectively have until the end of the year.

### **Awards Committee**

The Jay Forrester Awards Committee was asked to specify the term for its members. They said that 1) they have members, 2) members will not serve a fixed term, 3) the chair term is flexible, and 4) the committee decides when the members will be replaced

The Awards Committee discussed low nominations for JWF Award at the last conference, and it was decided to simplify the nomination process which has been done on a new web form.

Membership of the Awards Committee: David Lane and Erling Moxnes were dropped out of the rotation in 2010 and have been reappointed to serve 2010-2012

### **Administrative Committee**

Set up a subcommittee on investment consisting of Jim Thompson, Jim Lyneis, Roberta Spencer and David Andersen VP Finance, (ex-officio)

### **Nominating committee:**

The Nominating Committee is pleased to nominate the following slate of candidates for Officers and Policy Council members to take office January 1, 2011. President-Elect: David Ford, Secretary: Brad Morrison (re-appointment), VP Finance: David Andersen (re-appointment), VP Chapters: Tim Haslett (re-appointment), PC 1: Allyson Beall, PC 2: Peter Hovmand, PC 3: Len Malczynski PC 4: Markus Schwaninger. For three weeks (January 7 – 28, 2010), there will be online discussion of the Slate of Candidates. An electronic vote on Slate of Candidates will commence on January 28 and the system will be open for one week of voting, until February 4.)\

**Bylaws:** Changes in the bylaws in the more recent years have been incorporated on the web version, but there is still some work to do going backwards.

**Conference Selection Committee:** No report

**Strategy Committee:** Erling has reduced the ambition to more modest goals and has proposed initiatives that come out of strategic thinking. They are aiming to write some guidelines for publishing quality, especially abstracts. The focus will be conference papers, but it will likely be useful for student papers as well. Kim Warren has taken responsibility for publicity. Bob Eberlein has said later on model repositories. David Lane has looked at SIGS and Chapters activities. Dennis Meadows has suggested web based self-certification, and Andreas Groessler and Etienne Rouwette are looking into doing something with this idea. There are some funds budgeted for some of these activities, but so far there are no concrete proposals.

VP Members is now responsible for SIGS so this title is a little bit inaccurate. Roberta is hoping that Etienne will be able to take on activities to increase the membership of the



Society. Aldo points out that many people do not perceive membership in the Society as providing significant value.

**Conference Scholarship Committee:** We will do the same thing as last year but the rooms have not been figured out yet.

**Dues and Conference Fees:** No report.

**Society Program Oversight Committee:** No report.

**Known motions:**

That Jim Lyneis and George Richardson be approved as program co-chairs for the 2011 conference.

That the proposal put forward by St Gallen University to host the 2012 conference be accepted.

That Elke Husemann and David Lane be approved as program co-chairs for the 2012 conference.

Documentation of duties: Meeting tomorrow

**Terms of membership:** Not designated for some. David Lane will revisit this in his term.

**Member Relationships:** Mailing list is currently closed.

**Value of Linked In/Twitter:** No action taken.

**Assistant VP Finance Appointed:** David Andersen asked that IkJae Chung, who works with him at Albany, be appointed as Assistant VP Finance. Rogelio appoints him to this role.

Meeting adjourned 5:00 PM.

Recorded by Secretary Brad Morrison.

Please send any corrections or comments to [bmorriso@brandeis.edu](mailto:bmorriso@brandeis.edu).