



executive council minutes

The Meeting of the Executive Council of the Grateful Dead Studies Association, Hyatt Regency, Albuquerque, NM, February 20, 2020.

Minutes by Jan Wright and Nicholas Meriwether. Approved May 14, 2020.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. with all members of the Executive Council present: Nicholas Meriwether, President; G. Ganter, President-Elect; Kurt Torell, Vice President; Jan Wright, Secretary; and Beth Carroll, Treasurer.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the Executive Council meeting held December 7, 2019, were approved without amendment.

2. Incorporation

Meriwether reported that California has approved the Association as a charitable organization; still awaiting Federal approval. California requires non-profits to file for renewal every two years or lose status.

Council expressed concern that the compliance requirements were more involved than anticipated. In the discussion, two officers noted that they knew of similar scholarly organizations that had not known of the compliance requirements and subsequently lost their non-profit status, creating problems for donors who had their contributions disallowed by the IRS.

3. Conference

Meriwether submitted a formal conference area proposal for a Grateful Dead area for the Popular Culture Association on February 5. In his email correspondence with the Executive Director, she was enthusiastic at the prospect of having the area. The SW-PACA Executive Director has been informed; she understands that the Association is entirely separate from the Caucus and appreciates that given the personnel problems with the Caucus it is critical for the Association to meet elsewhere.

4. Membership

Meriwether is developing the Association database. For cost and portability reasons, it is being built in Microsoft Access. All functions, tables, and queries have been defined and built; forms and debugging are next. No estimated completion yet. Meriwether noted that Access consultants may be willing to provide more high-level programming if the Association's needs warrant. Wright also owns and is familiar with Access.

Council explored whether regular membership dues of \$50.00/year would be sufficient to cover the costs of print copies of the journal, the conference program, and mailing. Discussion focused on the possibility that this might offer only a minimum level that only covers direct costs and not overhead, but Council agreed that setting a low membership fee would be appealing for several reasons, including the chance of attracting graduate students and adjunct faculty.

5. Website

A beta version of the Association website has been completed. A few remaining pages need to be completed, including constitution/bylaws, and some resource pages. Remaining hurdles include the membership application form and fee/payment functions. Membership applications must be approved by the Council before payment will be accepted.

Under the tab "Resources," other major Grateful Dead conferences will be listed. This includes the Scholars Caucus area, which is more complicated and is continuing to be developed: past meetings have been completed but programs are still in process. The first and most recent volumes of the program have been completed and the remaining years are being revised and uploaded as time permits. Programs will be available as PDFs for free download; print copies may be offered for sale as well.

Domain registration fees and monthly site hosting fees are being paid by Meriwether. Once incorporation is complete, the Association should assume responsibility.

6. Journal

The website for the Journal continues to be developed. The infrastructure is now complete except for an ecommerce function that will allow individual copies to be purchased. The CFP for Volume 5 will be posted and circulated once the Journal website is launched.

Print costs for the Association conference program are estimated at approximately \$700; the Journal is much larger and costs are higher. Volume 4 was almost \$1,500 with other volumes between \$900 and \$1,300 for a print run of 125 copies. About 25 copies are provided gratis for contributors, peer reviewers, and Editorial Board members.

7. Constitution

Council unanimously approved edits to constitution and bylaws presented at the Dec. 7, 2019, meeting. Additional revisions may be required as the process of incorporation is completed.

8. Affiliations

Torell suggested that the Council explore the possibility of enhancing the visibility of the Association through reciprocal relationships with similar organizations. This might provide a way to increase membership, conference participation, and journal submissions and circulation. Torell noted that partnering with the Owsley Stanley Foundation, for example, could expand the reach of the Association beyond academy. Affiliations could be accomplished easily via links on the Association website. Discussion raised the issue of differing missions and potential friction and Torell agreed to conduct further research and report to the Council.

9. Recruitment

Council agreed that membership recruitment effort should be international and interdisciplinary; all scholars, regardless of discipline or field, should feel welcome. Conference meetings will provide opportunities to demonstrate that inclusive approach.

10. Fundraising

Council agreed that development efforts must be structured to reward high-level donors as well as smaller contributors. Development should be done with a larger plan in place. Discussion of possible projects followed, including conference paper awards,

support for graduate students, research grants, subsidization of Journal volumes, and even an endowed Journal editorship position.

For membership levels beyond regular membership, such as Charter Members and Lifetime Members, the Association should consider providing a gift as well as some form of recognition in Association publications. Organizations commonly designate a portion of a donation for a commemorative gift. Council examined a sample plaque that Meriwether had bought and agreed that it or an equivalent was appropriate to recognize Charter Members for their support. Discussion of donor tiers emphasized the need for integration into a long-range development plan; this would include the Charter Member and Lifetime Member categories established by the bylaws. Council affirmed the basic structure set forth in the draft bylaws but agreed to review before final adoption, once a development plan has been drafted. Meriwether will write a preliminary plan for the Council.

Council agreed that donor gifts will not be made available for sale in order to preclude any chance of the perception of any infringement on Grateful Dead trademarks. Meriwether reported a positive discussion of the Association with Rhino Entertainment, which controls the Grateful Dead's intellectual property and trademarks; Rhino was pleased with the Association's communication and sensitivity and offered the possibility of providing complimentary merchandise for the Association to use as awards or auction items at conference meetings. Council applauded Meriwether for providing complimentary copies of the Journal to Rhino and Grateful Dead officers in order to ensure awareness and goodwill.

The next meeting will be scheduled for May. With no further business to discuss, the Council adjourned at 7 p.m.