**Northeast Regional Honors Council**

**2013 Business Meeting Agenda**

Philadelphia, PA

Saturday, April 6, 2013 (6 – 7 pm)

1. **Welcome and Call to Order**

The region’s president, Dr. Roman (Saint Elizabeth College), opened the meeting at 6:02 pm. She welcomed the region’s membership and asked the other officers of the region to introduce themselves.

1. **Approval of Minutes of Nov. Meeting in Boston, MA, November 16, 2012**

Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. Shirley Myers, (Gallaudet University), presented the minutes from the November 16, 2012 business meeting, held during the NCHC conference in Boston. Dr. Brian Etheridge (University of Baltimore) made a motion to approve the minutes. Dr. Susan Dinan (William Paterson University) seconded the motion. The vote to accept the minutes passed unanimously.

1. **Treasurer’s Report**

Dr. Myers presented the treasurer’s report. She noted that despite having received almost all of the conference registrations, the treasury stood at just under $100K, a bit lower than the amount at the last report, and so continuing to represent a drop of approximately one-third of our usual treasury. Increased expenses, more scholarships, and the lack of a dues increase in ten years seemed to explain the drop.

Dr. Linda Kobylarz (Post University) moved to approve the treasurer’s report.

Dr. Joanna Gonsalves (Salem State University) seconded the motion. The vote to approve the report passed unanimously.

1. **Report on Philadelphia Conference**
2. **Report from Conference chair and president-elect, Lori Rubeling**

Lori Rubeling reported that we received a total of 282 submissions for the 2013 conference (plus ten more submitted after deadline). For comparison: Last year we had 246 submissions were received, with 238 presenting.

The break down of submissions is as follows:

* 6 faculty-led Creative Workshops
* 10 Interactive workshops
* 165 Paper presentations
* 69 Poster presentations
* 33 Roundtable discussions

Of these, the business/technology strand had the lowest number of submissions and an

acceptance rate of 60%. The other strands had an approximately 75% acceptance rate.

Other facts: Submissions were sent from 55 colleges and universities. 81 presenters

(28%) requested AV equipment. Each room with AV cost $900; we covered half of the

rooms with AV. 87% of submissions were accepted. Forty participants volunteered to

moderate, and over 35 students volunteered to participate in the scavenger hunts; city-as-

text, and registration duties.

Registration numbers: 429-10 cancelled registrations = 419. Of these 23 were free (13

minority scholarships and the rest 12th and 24th registrant free) = 396 paying registrations. Of

those, all were early bird member rates ($225) except for 16 registrations (at the second

phase membership rate of $255). Some institutions claimed member rates but have not yet

paid dues. The secretary-treasurer is following up with them. Some payments also have not

yet arrived so that the amount on the treasurer’s report is not the whole revenue—the rest

will be reported in the fall treasurer’s report in New Orleans.

Ms. Rubeling noted that we have contracted with hotels for 350 conferees but have had

over 400 for two years now. The question before us is whether we should seek larger

venues or limit the size.

One director complimented the conference chair (Lori Rubeling) by saying the director had been to five conferences, and this one had been the most engaging. The conference chair received a round of applause.

1. **Feedback from Student Caucus: Brent Barge (Lock Haven University) and Freda Raitelu (LaGuardia CC)**

GENERAL OVERVIEW

* Would like to have internet access for presenters
  + Even if not possible, be more clear to people in advance they need to download videos
* Please supply names and titles of people presenting with a student for roundtables
  + Email addresses for fellow round table presenters ahead of time
  + This request comes from a desire to integrate topics more; not just present sequentially and disjointedly.
    - Don’t want to have to change every 20 minutes
    - People didn’t follow them; this format was not productive for conversations
* Most active student involvement with sessions ever seen at a conference
* Names of co-presenters missing in program
* Bring back student art show for Niagara falls
* Food felt a little ‘flat’ (coming from a culinary major)
  + Dessert on Friday dinner
  + Would like to see a bit more negotiation with hotels with food aspects
* Provide quick overview of program
* Re-iteration/more knowledge that free internet was part of negotiated rate in hotel
* Keynote speaker addressed mostly faculty – find someone that is focused more on students/relate to students more
  + Primary audience of presentation is students
  + Sounded like a presentation that she had given before – didn’t adapt presentation for students
  + NOTE: During the business meeting, Dr. Bernice Braid (Long Island University, Brooklyn) commented that the high participation of students in the question-and-answer period the presentation provoked was surprising but highly desirable.

FOOD

* Upset that not given choices at lunch (one vegetarian lasagna for all), plus Many people felt sick from lasagna lunch
* Need to know what’s in food because of allergies (onions, strawberries) = need to emphasize better where to enter dietary restrictions on conference registration
* Maybe fewer meals as people become more health conscious/aware/picky
* Subsidize food money to use outside
  + Incorporate famous foods of the place – get it for us as part of the hotel meals or stress where to go to get it in the local area.
  + Vegetarian meal Friday not was not as advertised – was not pasta as it said
  + Want more ‘substance’ for breakfast – fruits, eggs/protein

CITY AS TEXT

* Conflicting responses noted:
  + - Could have been a little more organized – where do they need to go
    - Preferred the more independent method last year.
* Students thought it was built more as a tour but “tour guides” were not knowledgeable.
  + - Mike from LaSalle was awesome
* Newcomers not clear on the point of City as Text.
  + - Not independent, not guided – mix of both. Need better preparation.
* Don’t want to be chained to one area/square.
* Some squares seemed to have more to offer.
  + - Some too much travel, not enough explore.
* Include some guided, and some unguided tours.
* Loved *Best Day* presentation
  + - Comments could have been coordinated a little better
* Not given enough time for City as Text

PRESENTATIONS

* Format of when to have questions:
  + - Better discussions in sessions where questions were held until the end.
    - More time for questions if presentation-question, presentation-question
    - When questions are held until end, last person gets more questions.
    - Want more time for questions (less time for presentations? Or more time per slot?) Perhaps set times in between presenters to be able to go to some sessions to see one presentation, and leave to go to another one. Others pointed out timing of one will not match another. But this issue of hopping sessions has come up several years.
* More precise categories for presentations needed
* Provide blank paper for people to write questions on (in program?)
* Roundtable discussions were too close to each othe so that it was hard to hear
* Need more space
* Mix non-discussion tables into the discussion areas
* Don’t put interactive workshops beside paper presentations because of noise
* Even mix of people that would like interactive workshops at one time slot and mixed through all different workshops
* Put workshops near each other
* Posters thrown in corner and way too close together – diminishes hard work
* Names of co-presenters in program—emphasized this point as critical
* Post outside of each room the schedule for that room –schedule of presenters
* Some hotels do this?
* Scrap paper and pens – part of SWAG exchange?
* Emails: bring your own paper
* OR – attach/add in end of program
* Door monitors while people are talking so no one can enter during a presentation
  + - Short break between presentations to allow people to leave respectfully

STUDENT EVENTS

* + Prizes for everyone in a group (photo scavenger hunt) – don’t split 1 card for many members
  + Vote on event possibilities on Facebook so they have input
  + Ask students/universities that are coming to organize different events
  + Saturday night party theme: each student make some kind of costume/thing out of no fabric
  + Some type of event that engages personalities that students will be brining
  + Bring back Open Mic Night
  + Organize/distribute SWAG better so not so much of a rush
  + Event at a place in the city/location?

COMMUNICATION is key – many students seemed confused as to expectations (come from

Honors Director!) More guidance given about how the conference works – maybe from

program level

* Pre-emails were ok, get more clear information on all aspects
* More emails, less information per email
* Easier link to the conference program – front page of website
* More access/information and easier access
* How about a PDF format to download to a smart phone?
* Search past projects/presentations – has it already been done?
* Access to previous programs/archives of presentations so there are no repeats
* Email someone who has presented on a topic previously
* Incorporate conference website with regular website [Done!]

At the end of the student report, Dr. Joanna Gonsalves (Salem State University) commented that the two student reps did a great job, and they received a round of applause.

1. **Old Business**
2. 2014 Conference in Niagara, NY: April 3-6, 2014

Dr. Laura Frost (from Point Park University) reported for Helen Fallon (Point Park University), incoming president-elect and chair of the conference in Niagara Falls, 2014. Dr. Frost reported that the chair is excited to plan for this conference in this location. She asks that everyone send ideas and comments to her at hfallon@pointpark.edu

Determining the theme will be Helen Fallon’s first task to bring to the planning meeting on July 28 in Niagara Falls. Dr. Joseph McGinn (Towson University), acknowledging that the town of Niagara is not attractive, suggested we consider a border theme. Dr. Bernice (Long Island University, Brooklyn) observed that the reason people do not like our side, this border town of Niagara, could itself be interesting to explore. Perhaps City-as-Text might become Border-as-Text or Nature-as-Text.

Mr. Justin Karter, grad assistant at Point Park University, said that Buffalo has great history; he grew up there, worked at the University of Buffalo Honors College, and did tours of neighborhoods so that he has a useful background for the City-as-Text component of the conference. History in this area: Tesla, the Underground Railroad, Seneca Falls, and the place McKinley was assassinated.

Our venue is on the scale of the Sheraton Society Hill in Philadelphia. The Niagara Falls Conference Center we will be using is brand new. It includes a 45 seat film theater. We can hang things there, such as student art. Down the street from the conference center is the Niagara Falls Culinary Institute, which offers dinners and also sandwiches for lunch, all prepared by students of the institute.

The two local host institutions are Niagara Community College (Dr. Rebekah Keaton, director) and Daemen College (Dr. Matthew Ward, director). Other local hosts are always welcome. Perhaps an institution in the Buffalo area would support planning.

Please start encouraging students to get passports if they want to go into Canada. Dr. Keaton noted that people with a NY driver’s license can get a low-cost day pass.

1. **2015 Conference in Gettysburg, PA: April 9-12, 2015**

Lori Rubeling reported that the location of our conference, Wyndham Hotel, is a brand new facility with an elegant ballroom and a five-star chef. The movie theater there seats well over 250 and costs only an additional $250 to rent: We could show *Gettysburg* and/or *Lincoln*. Also available is a 2006 film on the Gettysburg Battle called *Fields of Freedom*.

In an Industrial Park, the conference hotel and conference location is not picturesque. On the positive side, another hotel for overflow is right next door. Trolley service runs every half hour from the hotel into town. Nearby is a café, which seems a nice place for students to socialize.

1. **Proposed Amendments to the Constitution**

Dr. Myers referred attendees to the printed document outlining the changes to the constitution, all having to do with allowing online voting and written communications. The proposed amendments had been distributed during the business meeting in Boston (fall 2012), sent out via e-mail and posted at our NRHC website. Dr. Susan Dinan (William Paterson University) moved that the amendments be accepted. Dr. Braid seconded. The amendments passed unanimously. As a result, our first online election will be held in May as well as online voting on a dues increase (see D. next).

1. **Proposal to Raise Annual Dues**

Dr. Myers referred attendees to a printed document explaining the rationale for the dues increase and the impact on all other fees as outlined by our constitution. This proposal had been distributed during the business meeting in Boston (fall 2012), sent out via e-mail and posted at our NRHC website. The proposal is to increase dues from $50 to $100. The rationale is as follows: The region has not raised dues in over 10 years despite rising costs of services and supplies, subsidized conference fees, increased numbers of scholarships (both in number/kinds offered and applications), and increased needs for support of at least two positions on the board, the conference chair (the president-elect’s role) and the newsletter editor/webmaster, possibly also the secretary-treasurer.

How these proposed institutional dues affect other dues fees when we follow the current By-Laws: Affiliated individuals: No more than 50% of institutional dues. Current: $20. Proposed: $40. Unaffiliated individuals: No less than 75% of institutional dues.Current: $30 (not in compliance with the By-Laws which require dues of $37.50). Proposed: $75.00 (could lower it by amending By-Laws). Student members: No more than 50% of affiliated member dues. Current: $15 (not in compliance with the By-Laws which requires dues of $10, half of the current $20). Proposed:

Since the amendment to our constitution to allow online voting passed, the vote on this proposal will occur with the election for board members in May 2013.

Discussion:

Dr. Patricia Warunek (Fairleigh Dickinson University, Metropolitan campus) informed us that when she was on the board, the dues were raised from $25 to $50 because of the same problem of revenue and higher costs. And that increase occurred in the Nineties.

Dr. McGinn wondered if we might reward those who renew annually with a fee of $100 while re-established members might pay $125. Dr. Lorna Ronald (Queens College) suggested we reward continuous members by lowering the fee to $95 while charging re-establishing members $100. Dr. Linda Kobylarz (Post University) cautioned that keeping track of who is continuous and who is not can be time-consuming. Since we are all busy people doing things on a volunteer basis, let’s keep things simple with one rate. Julia Fennell (Community College of Allegheny County) suggested a different reward: Put institutions who have been members for at least 10 years in a drawing and give one free registration to a student from winning institution.

Dr. Michael Taber (St. Mary’s College of Maryland) suggested allowing payments for multiple years. The form could include a box to check how many years were getting paid this year. Dr. Myers commented that record keeping is somewhat more complex, but we have been doing this kind of record-keeping for a few institutions already.

1. **New Business**
2. **Amendment to Constitution to define institution for dues purposes**

Dr. Myers proposed following the NCHC definition in their constitution: “Institutional membership, open to institutions of higher learning as well as to other private and public organizations supportive of honors education. In the instance of an institution with physically separate campus locations, each campus location shall pay institutional member dues if it has its own budgetary responsibility, curricular authority, or admits students to the honors program or honors college on its campus. Each institutional member shall designate a representative who may cast the vote of the institutional member.”

A proposal to modify our constitution along the same lines will be presented this fall in time for a vote at the business meeting during the NCHC conference in New Orleans.

A brief, informal discussion indicated a consensus that the NCHC definition is a reasonable one to adopt for the region as well.

1. **Future NRHC Conference sites**

Dr. Ross Wheeler (Queens College) discussed possible conference sites for both 2016 and 2017.

2016 sites we have quotes on include Hartford, Connecticut; Portsmouth, New Hampshire; the DC area; and the Boston area.

Dr. Wheeler noted that strong local support is critical to a successful conference and needs to be in place before a contract is signed. He noted that Portsmouth has local support already and is an interesting place to see; we have not been there before either.

Dr. Dinan noted that the Philadelphia conference was somewhat pricey and still drew over 400 people. She wondered if we could have the same experience for a place like Boston. She noted that the national office might share useful information on planning a conference for Boston because of the 2012 fall conference NCHC held there. Dr. Gonsalves suggested a more affordable location close by might be Cambridge. Dr. Kobylarz noted that she attended a conference at the Westin Hotel on the waterfront in Boston with room rates of $150-$155, but the number of attendees may have justified the good room rate since attendance was around two thousand.

Dr. Wheeler explained that the board has eliminated Brooklyn from consideration because while the Marriott there had reasonable enough room rates, the food costs were prohibitive.

DC requires hotels away from the center of town. Dr. Taber noted that the peak time of cherry blossoms occurring around the time of our spring conference probably would mean no real deals would be available.

2017: We should consider sites we have visited before. We do not need to wait a dozen years to return as we are with Gettysburg (the last conference there was in 2003, and the next one is in 2015).

One such past example is Pittsburgh. Julie Fennel said she and others from Pittsburgh would love to do another conference there. Dr. Wheeler will ask for quotes for hotels in Pittsburgh for 2017.

Other possibilities named were Newport, Rhode Island; Puerto Rico; and the Sagamore at Lake George, NY. Providence hosted a conference before, when Dr. Peter Deekle (Roger Williams University) provided local support. During the business meeting in Boston, Dr. Luis Camara from the University of Puerto Rico encouraged us to consider Puerto Rico. The last conference was in 2000. It was noted that airfares were never going to be as good as the last time, but NCHC had also been approached; we could find out their information to help us in deciding. Dr. Wheeler noted the Sagamore had low attendance and was expensive. The place is exquisitely beautiful. An earthquake made the conference even more memorable for those who attended.

1. **Call for Nominations for the Executive Board**

Dr. Gonsalves announced the open positions on the board for this year:

**Vice President**—as always, the start of a four-year cycle: the first year allows the vice-president to learn about conference planning and all other board matters; the second year, president-elect involves chairing the conference planning; the third year, president, involves conducting business meetings and providing an address at the conference luncheon on Saturday. Dr. Gonsalves, who is completing that four-year cycle this year, revealed that she had gotten involved on the board after only two years of directing. She found the experience incredibly enriching and helpful for learning how to enhance her own program.

**One Faculty Representative**—a two-year commitment with one consecutive term possible. Faculty representatives help with planning the conference and participate in all board business.

Newsletter Editor/Webmaster—a two-year commitment, with no term limit. According to our constitution, the “Editor/Webmaster is expected to have a working knowledge of web design/publishing and social media. The Editor/Webmaster is responsible for the creation and maintenance of the Council's website and web-based newsletter.” This year the board has contracted with Lori Rubeling to re-design our website.

**Two Student Representatives**—one year commitments, with subsequent re-elections possible. The two student representatives help plan the conference but are particularly responsible for the three evening student events; they may help with City-as-Text organization and discussions as well. They also maintain communication with students via Face book and occasional e-mails as the conference approaches.

Dr. Taber nominated Dr. Joseph McGinn (Towson University) for vice president. Dr. McGinn accepted the nomination.

Dr. Lorna Ronald (Queens College) nominate herself for the position of faculty representative.

For webmaster/newsletter editor, outgoing Dr. Brian Etheridge (University of Baltimore) nominated Dr. Peter Campbell (Ramapo College). Dr. Campell accepted the nomination.

Brent Barge and Freda Raitelu reported that students nominated the following individuals: Elvy Gerez (Monroe College); Raven Gomez (LaGuardia CC)—later withdrawn; Sara Payne (Point Park University); and Katie Sherman (Salem State University).

1. **Announcements**
2. **Call for Material for NRHC Newsletter**

Dr. Brian Etheridge, webmaster and newsletter editor, shared the email to use for submissions to the online newsletter: [nrhchonors@gmail.com](mailto:nrhchonors@gmail.com)

1. **2012-13 Scholarship Recipients (Partners in the Park, Winterim, Honors Semesters)**

Dr. Myers noted that we had no Winterim or Honors Semesters opportunities/applicants, but we did have five applicants for Partners in the Parks programs; all have been awarded contingent on the submission of a reflection within a month after completing the program.

1. **Partners in the Park Raise in Tuition**

Dr. Myers noted that tuition has been climbing. Our $500 limit matched most tuition charges, but many now are $600. The membership in attendance agreed to support the board in raising the limit to $600 for next year.

Dr. Myers added that the board may look again at all our scholarships and limits. Right now we support ten Winterim or Honors Semester applicants but only five Partners in the Park applicants. The individual award limit has been $500 for both programs.

1. **Motion to Close the Meeting**

Dr. Gonsalves made a motion to end the meeting; Lori Rubeling seconded. The motion passed, and the meeting came to an end.