**Northeast Regional Honors Council**

**Business Meeting Agenda**

Niagara Falls Conference Center

Saturday, April 5, 2014 (6:00-7:00 PM)

1. **Welcome and Call to Order**

President Lori Rubeling (Stevenson University) welcomed everyone in attendance and called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

1. **Minutes of Fall 2013 Meeting**

Executive Secretary-Treasurer Shirley Shultz Myers (Gallaudet University) presented a draft of the minutes from the business meeting at our fall business meeting held at the national conference in New Orleans on November 8, 2013. Ross Wheeler, Queens College, moved to accept the minutes; Peter Campbell, Ramapo College, seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

1. **Financial Report**

Shirley Myers presented the financial report. Julie Fennell, Community College of Allegheny County moved to accept the report; Andrew Martino, Southern New Hampshire University, seconded the motion. The report was accepted unanimously.

1. **2014 Niagara Falls Conference: Initial Report**

**Conference chair’s Report**

Helen Fallon, Point Park University and conference chair, reported 557 registered, with one walk in for a total of 558 which constitutes a new record. Breakdown of the 557 total:

* 458 students 99 faculty
* 80 institutions, 12 states
* Place as Text participants: 375
* Student Event: Casino - participants: 391
* 7 cancellations or no shows
* 8 people came but never picked up their tags

Helen Fallon also provided feedback on ways to improve conference planning and management:

* With such high attendance numbers the trend over the past few years, adding even 20 more registrants after early bird registration could be a problem for room capacities; we may need to think about closing registration earlier or capping attendance.
* Change proposal and decision deadlines to allow projections of attendance numbers and more time to plan for these numbers
* Proposal deadline: move back from mid-November to mid-October
* Decisions about proposals: move back from mid-December to a date shortly before Thanksgiving
* Submission system—need a receipt so people know their proposals went through. Some snafus occurred with failed submissions this past year. Luckily they were all resolved, but it would be better to have a confirmation of submission to avoid stressful corrections later.
* Confirm with members that excel sheets worked for registrations; some had problems—this might go into the survey monkey feedback (see below)
* Express appreciation to the NCHC registration service; our assigned staff person, Amber Klaus was excellent, and we should write or otherwise provide some gesture of our appreciation for her responsiveness and overall competence.
* Need more local hosts—local people who help significantly on city or place as text planning and for speaker suggestions and facilitation should not pay registration fees as a thank you for labor . Thank you to Dr. Rebekah Keaton (Niagara Falls Community College) for her help this year! Thank you also to Dr. Kathryn MacDonald (Monroe College) for her support for the student representatives and local hosting
* Moderators—we did not get enough faculty to volunteer. Suggest also asking for students to moderate as NCHC does. We could call a meeting to train, or simply use the moderator guidelines we provide faculty moderators.
* Budget for assistants and divide the work among more board members.
  + A conference assistant is essential given all the work expected of the chair for these ever larger registrants and more elaborate programming. This year Justin Karter earned every penny of his stipend. He contributed the idea and organized the service learning option on Place as Text day, and showed himself to be an ardent e-mailer and conscientious planner overall. Kudos!
  + An assistant is not the only solution to the ever-growing challenge of chairing a conference. Just as we had to split the secretary and treasurer jobs for the next term, we need to divide up the responsibilities and labor of conference planning. This summer at our planning meeting, the board will seek to divide up the labor more.
* Service Learning Option: Justin Karter added these comments
  + It was asy to work with established groups like Habitat. He went and students seemed to have a great time.
  + Building a house in a neighborhood was the task but first we learned about the neighborhood and habitat projects.
  + Much more interaction at this service learning—really best for this experience.
  + Four students from Post said they loved it and want it at every conference.
  + Have to see if that reaction is common via the survey monkey feedback form, but it seems students want this repeated.
* Bus travel for Place-as-Text options requires extra attention and planning. We will probably need buses again for Gettysburg. We hope the local bus company we contract with will be easier to deal with than the local one in Niagara Falls.
* Plan to have tickty-tack to use for putting posters and other material on walls. We may wish to ask people to bring their own. The conference center did not allow tape on the walls, probably a common prohibition at other hotels and conference centers, too. The staff at this conference center was extremely accommodating when we encountered this and other challenges; we were fortunate!
* Allergies, lent choices, and other food matters were with badges, but some attendees forgot to bring their meal tickets. The wait staff made them wait till last while they served everyone else, and they got angry at having to be served last. How do we make sure attendees remember food slips?
* We need a survey monkey for conference feedback and ideas for next year. Dr. Joanna Gonsalves started this assessment feature for Portland 2011. She will provide Helen Fallon the code and password to send this out.

**Student Representatives’ Report**

Our student representatives collect feedback from Student Caucus (which occurs the hour before the business meeting). Our two student representatives this year are Mr. Elvy Gerez (Monroe College) and Ms. Sara Payne (Point Park University). The feedback they collected has been posted on our Facebook page (see <https://www.facebook.com/NRHCHonors> ), and these notes are included here with extras added at the business meeting

* Open Mic night—A very enthusiastic response. Suggestions
  + Add more lighting for the stage
  + Mix up different kinds of acts
  + Post text of poems or video of acts on Facebook or main Honors website
  + Write song up or find ahead of time  (?)
  + Add Karaoke? Sign up during registration for songs
* Food came out fast; salads and desserts on the tables helped speed things up. A minor complaint was that some wanted a better vegetarian option.
* Posters: so many to see in the time allotted; consider limiting posters—becoming more selective or expanding the time.
* Ideas about Student Events or other mixed events
  + Encourage professors to come to student events or have one mixer with everyone
  + Bring back the scavenger hunt
  + Provide a list of faculty and their concentrations potentially for people at two-years looking for their next institution; allow a time to meet and mingle
* Opening Night Ice Breakers
  + Loved Human Bingo
  + Want more hands on activities
  + Also want more networking opportunities: Send email saying to bring business cards or contact cards; perhaps incorporate competition: best business card or collecting the most cards
* Place-as-Text
  + Place as Text strands did great job of splitting up schools
  + Change Place as Text into groups made of people from different schools
  + Get people another option if they were capped from PaT strands and put on waiting lists
  + Some people felt pressed for time
* Art Show is wonderful! But find a bigger room next time since it was too crowded to be able to view the art well
* Communications from Student Reps to student registrants:
  + Email more – develop personal emails and also shorter ones to break up information and provide a few “ads” to generate excitement and interest—refer to Facebook for more info.
  + Texting: text to students (create text subscription)
  + Twitter more; but current hashtag did not make it easy to find
  + Should NRHC have an app? A student could create an app   
    Volunteer call did not come in time
  + Have registrants add a phone number for texting or email address or both for these communications
  + Encourage Honors directors, coordinators and deans to set up a distribution among their students about NRHC matters; talk up the region!
* Ideas for Gettysburg!
  + Ghost tour
  + Students introducing speakers
  + More time for posters
  + Fill Sunday more
* Ideas for events between conferences—in addition to the option of sleeping bag seminars:
  + Camping trips - meet-ups
  + Meeting the reps before (?)
* Business meetings are open to students, but this fact needs promulgation among students. There seem to be quite a few assumptions about how we work so that the board needs to do a better job of making our work clearer.
* More student representation
  + Consider having a rep for each state for more student input; or increase student reps on the board from two to four (since the organization or conference attendance is growing)
    - Although a constitutional amendment would be needed for this expansion, for now we could stipulate that the top two vote getters would be the official board representatives, but the next two could be assistants or some other position to help re-imagine student representation.
  + State reps could foster more student to student interaction rather than depending on input from only two student reps on the board; these students could carry out specialized tasks for the conference, too.
  + State reps could meet via Skype and provide input to the two student board reps—functioning as an advisory committee to the two board reps
  + Students should vote for reps [Note: Our constitution stipulates that voting requires membership; students who pay $20 currently have the privilege of voting.]
  + More students could mean more social media help; ideas for connectedness:
* Send out email newsletters asking what's going on
* Provide T-shirts to take pictures with and post on Facebook
* State reps could reach out to other institutions for help with social media

NOTE: Dr. Peter Campbell, newsletter editor and webmaster volunteered to work with students to determine how to have more student input.

**5. Looking Ahead: 2015 Conference in Gettysburg, PA**

President Lori Rubeling, Stevenson University, described the location of the conference:

* The hotel is the Wyndham, a newish hotel. Nearby is a second hotel for overflow
* The hotel and conference center are 2 miles from downtown Gettysburg
* The complex is attached to a movie theater with 8 theaters, and we have reserved one—it presents an interesting new opportunity for conference programming
* This year, 2014, Gettysburg is elebrating its sesquicentennial. It is possible we may be able to capitalize on that milestone at our 2015 conference

An idea for planning this conference:

* Use survey monkey to have theme ideas from students—more than a slogan, but something that addresses all the area offers. Perhaps offer three or more ideas for themes and get survey input [I assume this did not happen?]

**6. Future Conference Dates and Locations**

2016 Conference in Cambridge, MA: March 31-April 3, 2016

2017 Conference in Pittsburgh, PA: April 6-9, 2017

**7. More ideas about future conference locations for 2018 and beyond**

* Dr. Rachelle Goldsmith, Kingsborough Community College, mentioned Saratoga NY—the challenge for that location is how to get there. We did have a conference at Lake George one year at the historic resort and ended up with small attendance.
* Dr. Goldsmith also mentioned Rochester, NY
* Capital district in Albany, NY. This would be a new location.

**7. Minority Scholarship Discussion**

Shirley Shultz Myers explained that this scholarship has become popular. The original limit was 10 with each institution eligible for up to two scholarships. But the number of applications the last two years meant each institution could get only one, and we went over our limit to 13 both years.

Discussion resulted in the suggestion that when we send an email to the region about minority scholarships for this year, we will include the criteria we currently have, and add one that asks students to write a justification of why they deserve this minority scholarship. The board will take up details of this change in criteria.

**8. Constitutional Amendment defining membership for dues purposes**

Dr. Shirley Shultz Myers referred to the announcement of this amendment at the fall meeting and, as required by the constitution, in a 60 day notice by email. For the record, here is the wording:

**In the instance of an institution with physically separate campus locations, each campus location shall pay institutional member dues if it has its own budget.**

This amendment passed unanimously.

An issue related to defining membership came up at the fall meeting concerning the place of for-profit institutions in our membership. Dr. Myers noted that we already have one such member. But since this issue had emerged nationally, the executive board considered it. The board decided not to make any distinctions or to exclude any institution based on its profit or non-profit status.

**9. Honors website and newsletter**

Dr. Campbell, editor and webmaster, introduced his student assistant, Danielle Corcione. They are looking for contacts for news and desire to make the website more active. They ask directors/coordinators/deans to solicit stories and photos and videos from students. They also need to coordinate with Facebook postings.

**10. Board Election and Nominations**

Dr. Myers announced that an election for these positions would be held in about a month from the date of the business meeting.

She also announced that the board has decided as a pilot to divide the secretary and treasurer roles, and provide stipends for the secretary and the treasurer to use for themselves or their assistants. If this division seems viable, we can amend the constitution to reflect this change.

Note: The current position of secretary-treasurer is an executive one charged with oversight. The board will have to determine how this oversight function will occur with the division of these two roles.

Nominations:

Faculty representative: Dr. Rebekah Keaton, Niagara County Community College

Vice-President: Dr. Andrew Martino, Southern New Hampshire University

Student Representatives:

Jhenny Bedoya, College of Saint Elizabeth

Nicholas De Fiore, Rochester Institute of Technology

Carolynn DeWitt, Fitchburg State University

Andrew Johnson, Lock Haven University (later withdrew)

Xavier Medina, LaGuardia Community College

Maame Quainoo, College of Saint Elizabeth

(Note Secretary and Treasurer candidates came after the meeting.)

Secretary: Dr. Karlyn Koh, LaGuardia Community College

Treasurer: Dr. James J. Buss, Salisbury University

**11. Announcements**

Lori Rubeling, as NRHC president, was contacted by the University of Alabama to recruit for their Honors Dean. If interested, email Ms. Rubeling.

Dr. Joseph McGinn, NRHC vice-president, is stepping down as dean of the honors college at Towson University to become provost of the University of Maine at Farmington. He still intends to complete his presidential cycle, particularly to chair the Gettysburg conference—with support from the board.