



## Northeast Regional Honors Council Business Meeting Minutes

Saturday, April 2, 2016

6:00PM-7:00PM

Hyatt Regency Cambridge, MA

President Joseph McGinn welcomed everyone to the Cambridge Business Meeting.

- McGinn proceeded by seeking approval of the Chicago 2016 Business Meeting Minutes drawn up by Executive Secretary Karlyn Koh. Draft copies of these minutes were circulated amongst the membership in attendance.
- Linda Kolbylarz made a motion to accept the Minutes.
- Kerry Johnson seconded the motion.
- Joseph Moser made these points:
  - The region could explore the possibility of a book/reading club for its students. McGinn invited faculty members to volunteer to develop this idea.
  - Art show: Suggested that a concurrent call for student art work be made along with call for paper and panel proposals. Immediate Past President Helen Fallon said that the region has tried doing this, and it led to much confusion amongst students. Justin Karter, the conference coordinator, reiterated that it was confusing.

A vote was called, and all were in favor of approving the minutes.

### **Cambridge conference report: President Elect Andrew Martino and Conference Coordinator Justin Karter**

Martino noted that the conference had 580 registrants, the highest the region has ever had. The acceptance rate of proposals was 77%. He noted that the hotel used was very expensive. Further, the region usually pays the conference speaker \$500, but this year we paid \$1000, which was well worth it given the audience response to Michael Patrick MacDonald. It took three months to get MacDonald, and the ability to sell books was an incentive. The region spent \$2000 in total to get MacDonald, who sold 40 copies of his book.

As a further point for comparison, food and beverage costs were higher than usual:

Gettysburg: \$57,000

Cambridge: \$80,000

Karter explained that in an effort to keep costs low, no Saturday breakfast was offered. However, working with the Hyatt Cambridge was very smooth. Further, the student representatives found sponsors for student prizes.

Martino noted that the region cannot hold big city conference and end up having to subsidize expenses. The region will also try to actively pursue sponsors.

Martino and McGinn extended a big thank-you to Justin Karter for all his work on this and past regional conferences.

Martino also pointed out that the City as Text speaker, Charles Sullivan, was wonderful speaker too. He donated his honorarium of \$500 to the Cambridge Historical Society.

McGinn invited feedback from members at the meeting. Feedback included:

- Criticism about the vegetarian options not being palatable. Karter said that Executive Treasurer James Buss worked with the hotel to create a specialized menu in order to keep costs down. Martino pointed out the special dietary needs like kosher were offered. Concern was expressed about conference attendees who have nut allergies; Fallon suggested that such allergies should be made known to servers during meals.
- Students did not get communication about student events.
- Karter said that moving forwards, we can distinguish faculty and student moderator volunteers.
- The fact that there was no food for students on Thursday night was pointed out as an issue.
- There was a suggestion that a directory of attendees be published on the online program.
- A request was made for more clarification about roundtables and presentation guidelines.
- A suggestion was made about having separate instructions for moderators of panels and roundtables.
- There was an issue of moderator no-shows.
- Karter noted that roundtables are relatively new, so conference organizers can be clearer about communicating what it is about. Roundtables also need to be put in larger rooms, and there should not be more than one roundtable per room.
- Fallon pointed out that the Friday poster session and Art Show were very successful.

### **Report from the Student Representatives**

Nathalie Waldschmidt noted that the conference was an incredible experience. Twenty schools participated in the Honors Olympiad. Since January, the Student Representatives sent out weekly emails, and used an Instagram account to create buzz. They also posted regularly on Facebook. Students really liked the Open Mic and Honors Parade.

Keyla Zapata apologized for some students not getting emails. She thanked everyone for bringing items for the swag bags.

Zapata reported from the Student Caucus that students loved the keynotespeaker, and enjoyed the poster sessions and Art Show.

The audience praised and thanked the Student Representatives.

### **Executive Treasurer's Report (see Appendix)**

Faculty Representative Leanne Wood read the report on Buss's behalf. Key points include:

- 1<sup>st</sup> asterisk on the Report refers to the fact that this sum also includes \$8000 in membership fees. Buss will separate conference registration fees from membership fees after the conference.
- The "Cash on Hand" item at the bottom of the report may seem low, but reflects differences in the way the region paid for conference expenses (denoted by double asterisks). Unlike previous years, this year, the region was asked to pay for the entire cost of the conference in advance of the event itself. Therefore, the region incurred all the hotel costs while waiting for registration payments to be deposited.

Indeed, the region's conference vendor, YesEvents, confirmed that another \$29,000 in registration fees has come in. Further, \$8500 in registration fees has not been paid yet.

In addition, the region has been asked to place a \$7500 deposit for the 2018 conference in Providence.

With this in mind, the region actually has \$100,000 on hand once we clear all the expenses of conference. This is in sync with the balance of between \$100,000 to \$130,000 the region has had over the past three years.

- Via Wood, Buss also provided a conference comparison between Gettysburg and Cambridge (see Appendix). Food and A/V costs have been far more expensive in the latter. Buss pointed out (via Wood) that this conference comparison (unlike the Treasurer's Report) uses known expenses and revenues in this comparison, and that \$1000 in sponsorships that should be coming in. Buss projects that the conference will net a \$10,000 loss.
- Buss noted that this net loss is the cost of doing business in a big and expensive city like Boston without dramatically raising registration rates. The Executive

Board understood this and decided it was more important to keep the conference affordable to as many institutions as possible. However, the region should move back to a mid-sized city next year.

Kathryn MacDonald made a motion for the Treasurer's Report to be approved; Werner Steger seconded it. The Report was unanimously approved.

### **Website**

Web Editor Christopher Brittain reported that most traffic to the website arose from the conference. He will explore ways to drive more traffic there in the summer. He also asked members for feedback on the conference portions of the website, and for people to send him conference pictures, and reflections.

Shirley Shultz Myers noted that homepage pictures, when clicked, led to Gettysburg conference information, rather than the Cambridge conference pages. Other feedback:

- The conference pages should be clear about whether poster boards and clips would be provided on site.
- Create a forum for discussion on website. Brittain noted that this may be difficult to do on the website, but discussion can be directed to another platform. He can explore creating a listserv or a LinkedIn group.
- Email list of attendees can be sent via PDF to members.
- City as Text: Students needed more direction, and more prior information could be sent out to the students. Gives them an assignment that they can complete before the conference.

### **Election of new Executive Board members**

McGinn announced that four positions on the Board are open: Vice President, Faculty Representative, and two Student Representatives. The following nominations were taken from the floor.

Vice President: Tony de Luca

Faculty Representative: Melissa Antinori

Two Student Representatives: The current Student Representatives reported that they have a list of 11 students who nominated themselves. These students will be contacted with information about the elections.

McGinn brought up the possibility of expanding the circle of Executive Board members to have four Faculty Representative positions, two from community colleges, and two from 4-year colleges. Doing so would entail a Constitutional amendment.

Fallon explained the need for more Faculty Representatives to help with the increase in workload. Faculty Representative Rebekah Keaton noted that the conference is growing, and that there are many more proposals to read.

All Board members receive a \$600 travel reimbursement.

Fallon moved that the Constitution be amended to expand the Faculty Representative positions from two to four, with two members each from community colleges and 4-year colleges.

Bernice Braid seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Matthew Ward proposed a friendly amendment to stagger the Faculty Representative positions. All approved.

### **Other Business**

Finally, members in attendance wanted a discussion about the issue of hotel room shortage at the conference. Martino said that the hotel will provide the final count after the conference.

Braid suggested that the hotel be asked to release more rooms.

Karter pointed out that problem is that people book more rooms than they need, and dropped at last minute.

McGinn suggested that people be asked to place a deposit when they reserve rooms.

Steger suggested that people be only allowed to reserve hotel rooms after they register for the conference.

Martino said that after the conference, he will get the list of colleges who dropped rooms last minute. Further, students should only request AV if they really need it.

The meeting wound to a close with the announcement that next year's conference will be in *Pittsburgh, PA, April 6-9, 2017*.

McGinn adjourned the meeting at 7:17pm.

*Respectfully submitted by Karlyn Koh, Executive Secretary*

Encl: Appendix

**NRHC Financial Update**  
**April 2016**  
**Cambridge, MA**

<b>Opening Balance (July 2015)</b> .....	<b>\$124,089.13</b>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$69,619.71</b>
Registrations for Cambridge (and memberships)	\$69,619.71*
Memberships (known)	\$1,280.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>(\$118,970.75)</b>
Winterim Scholarships .....	(\$1,500.00)
Travel Expenses of Executive Board.....	(\$4,838.00)
Officer Stipends.....	(\$4,500.00)
Conference Pre-Planning Meeting .....	(\$421.22)
Hotel Expenses from 2015 Conference.....	(\$91,737.48)**
YesEvents fee for 2016 Conference Registration.....	(\$3,177.50)
Misc. Expenses for 2016 Conference.....	(\$4,273.61)
Web services.....	(\$1,022.94)
Deposit for 2018 Conference (Providence) .....	(\$7,500)
<b>Current Cash on Hand</b> .....	<b>\$74,738.09</b>

## CONFERENCE COMPARISON

	<u>Gettysburg 2015</u>	<u>Cambridge 2016</u>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Food and Beverage	\$57,293.20	\$80,508.70
Audio/Visual	\$5,396.65	\$11,228.78
Place as Text	\$3,651.22	
Misc. Expenses	\$10,063.47	\$4,694.83
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$76,404.54</b>	<b>\$96,432.31</b>
<b>Revenue</b>		
Registrations	\$93,587.84	\$97,489.71
Sponsorships	\$500	\$1,200.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$94,087.84</b>	<b>\$98,689.71</b>
<b>Excess</b>	<b>\$17,683.30</b>	<b>\$2,257.40</b>

\*This includes about \$8,000 in memberships that need to be separated and \$29,650 of registrations that have yet to be deposited from YesEvents

\*\* This will change considerably, as we have received nearly all possible revenue but still have roughly \$15,000 in outstanding expenses

Best estimate is that the conference will net a \$10,000 loss