

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL AND GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY FOR
HISTORIANS OF THE GILDED AGE AND PROGRESSIVE ERA

Friday, April 8, 2016
Providence, Rhode Island

President Lloyd Ambrosius, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, called the council meeting of the Society for Historians of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era to order. Also in attendance were:

Robert Cherny, San Francisco State University
Stacy Cordery, Monmouth College
Chelsea Gibson, SUNY-Binghamton
Julie Greene, University of Maryland, College Park
Gayle Gullett, Arizona State University
Kristin Hoganson, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
Julia Irwin, University of South Florida
Mary Ann Irwin, Diablo Valley College
Benjamin Johnson, Loyola University, Chicago
Maria Montoya, New York University
Christopher Nichols, Oregon State University
Daniel Pierce, Cambridge University Press
Charles Postel, San Francisco State University
Heather Cox Richardson, Boston College
Anja Schöler, Heidelberg University
Amy Wood, Illinois State University
Jeremy Young, Grand Valley State University

After introductions, Lloyd Ambrosius noted that the minutes from the previous annual meeting (April 17, 2015) were approved by an electronic vote last summer, but asked if anyone had any questions or concerns. There was no discussion.

As was done last year, the reports from the committee chairs, officers, and editors were pre-circulated. During the meeting, each report was acknowledged, and members asked questions if they had any. We then devoted the majority of the meeting to specific agenda items related to some of the reports.

Executive Secretary's Report (Amy Wood)

Agenda Item: A database of scholarly experts to be posted on the SHGAPE website.

Wood reminded the Council that at last year's meeting, the Council discussed establishing a database of SHAPE experts by subfield to be posted on the SHGAPE website. Such a list could be accessed by journalists or documentarians looking to interview specialists on a particular topic or by museums or historical societies looking for speakers on a particular topic. The list could increase SHGAPE's visibility to the public and provide the benefit of exposure to our members. It could also bring established historians into SHGAPE. President Ambrosius had

asked Charles Postel, who initially conceived the idea, to work with Wood and Christopher McKnight Nichols to develop the database. This past fall, Postel had offered some suggestions on how to implement this database. Nichols, however, expressed reservations to Postel and Wood about the viability of such a database and its logistics. We brought it to the Council for further discussion.

Nichols elaborated on his reservations, which included concerns about how scholars would be vetted, and wondered whether this was something we wanted to prioritize as an organization.

Julie Greene suggested that we create a membership directory to be posted on the website that would include members' fields of interest. Daniel Pierce of CUP said that it would be relatively easy to provide such a directory. When people joined or renewed, they would be asked to select a fields of interest from a list. They could also "opt out" if they did not want to be in the directory. Discussion then ensued on the logistics of such a directory.

A motion was offered: *The Council moves to ask Cambridge University Press to create a membership directory, to be made public on the SHGAPE website, that would include fields of interests that members would check on joining or renewing their membership, with an option to "opt out."*

The motion was seconded. Ambrosius asked that Wood work with Postel and Cambridge University Press to implement the directory. Before the vote, there was further discussion of the logistics. Some wondered how we would gauge the success of the directory. Nichols said it could be measured by "hits" to it on the website.

The motion passed unanimously.

There was then discussion over whether this directory would serve as a speaker's bureau, much like the OAH's distinguished lecturers program, in which members would need to stipulate whether they would like to be asked to speak, or whether it would serve simply as an "expert's bureau," which the media or other members could access. The consensus was that it would serve as the latter. It was also noted that we could advertise the directory as a benefit of membership.

Treasurer's Report (Stacy Cordery)

Ambrosius thanked Cordery for her work on handling SHGAPE's lapse in our tax-exempt status and procuring a tax lawyer to help us pro bono. There was some discussion with Pierce from CUP concerning the amount of our royalty payments, which Pierce clarified.

Nominating Committee's Report (Robert Cherny)

Agenda Item: The election of a member of the nominating committee for 2016.

A motion was offered: *The Council should elect Richard Schneirov to the nominating committee.* It was seconded, and it passed unanimously.

Membership Committee's Report (Julia Irwin)

Irwin offered an update to her report, noting that memberships have increased since she submitted the report, though we are still lagging behind our numbers from this time in 2015. There was some discussion on why memberships might be lagging, which in part is due to a fewer people renewing this year. Ambrosius stated that he will send out a president's letter in November or December, 2016, that will remind people to renew. Kristin Hoganson said her president's letter will come out in January and will also serve as a reminder to renew.

Program Committee's Report (Kristin Hoganson)

Agenda Item: The allocation of travel grants

Hoganson noted the low number of applications for the new graduate student travel award to participate on SHGAPE-sponsored panels at the OAH, despite advertisements on the website and social media. She asked whether travel funding should be extended to the AHA conference and for guidance on the allocation of the funds.

Several issues were raised in the ensuing discussion. One, the issue of expanding the grants to contingent faculty was raised. It was suggested that a separate grant be created for contingent faculty and independent scholars or others without institutional support. Second, it was suggested that the amount of these grants be increased and that, ideally, they be given a name to enhance their prestige. There was much discussion about how to define a grant for non-students and what to call it. In this discussion, it was noted that we have a stronger presence at the OAH, so priority for these grants should be given to those presenting at the OAH.

A motion was offered: *The Council votes to increase the travel money for graduate students to \$1000 and to give the Program Committee discretion on how to allocate those funds.*

There was some discussion to clarify that this grant money would only be used for graduate students and that a separate grant would be created for non-graduate students.

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Discussion then continued on the creation of a separate grant for non-graduate students. The issue was whether it should be targeted to contingent faculty and independent scholars, or, more broadly, to any scholars who received their Ph.Ds six years ago or less. Maria Montoya suggested that we advertise it as a travel grant for faculty and then in our description of the grant stipulate what categories of scholars we will be giving preference to (contingent faculty, independent scholars, junior faculty, etc.)

A second motion was offered: *The Council authorizes \$1000 to help fund travel to the OAH for post-Ph.D. faculty. The Program Committee will submit a proposal on how to word this grant to the Executive Committee, consisting of the officers and the three Council members serving their last year, who will approve or amend the proposal.*

There was clarification that this money would be kept separate from the travel funds for graduate students.

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Julie Greene suggested that we revise our dues structure so that contingent faculty could pay less to join. There was general agreement on this issue.

A third motion was offered: *The Council asks the Executive Committee to consider adjusting our dues structure based on different membership categories by occupation or income. The Committee will bring specific recommendations to the Council next year.*

The motion was second and passed unanimously.

Development Committee's Report (Charles Calhoun)

Ambrosius explained why the Development Committee had been inactive this year. When he accepted the position as chair of the committee, Calhoun had told Ambrosius he would not be available to devote time to it until 2016 and opted to turn the position down. Ambrosius asked Calhoun to serve and was willing to wait because he trusts that Calhoun will devote himself to the task enthusiastically once he can. There were no questions or comments.

At Ambrosius' request, the council offered several suggestions for the Development Committee:

- Last year the council voted to authorize the Development Committee to raise funds for a best book in GAPE history. This campaign should go forward.
- The Committee could raise money to subsidize the editorial process for the Journal, especially as universities are increasingly unwilling to offer institutional support
- The Committee could raise money to endow the travel grants
- The Committee could raise money to create a best conference paper prize

These last three suggestions were not discussed or voted upon.

Website and Online Outreach Committee's Report (Chris Nichols)

Agenda Item: Advertising on the SHGAPE website

Nichols opened the discussion on the possibility of selling advertising space on the SHGAPE website, noting that doing so could be a great source of revenue for the organization. We allowed the OAH to advertise on the website this year for no fee because of all the ways the OAH supports us as an organization. But we could open space for other organizations or university presses to advertise on our site. Nichols noted that there were 1,000 unique visitors to the site last year, so there is good potential there. There are a number of issues to consider, however, including how much to charge, how we would decide whom to allow to advertise, and the potential implications of selling ad space. A brief discussion of these issues ensued.

A motion was offered: *The Council authorizes the Website Committee to consider the logistics of selling ad space on the SHGAPE website and to present a proposal to the Executive Committee and Council to act upon.*

The motion was seconded. It passed unanimously.

The Graduate Student Mentoring Committee's Report

There were no questions or comments

The Fishel-Calhoun and JGAPE Best Article Prize Committees' Reports

There were no questions or comments

The JGAPE Editors' Report

Agenda Item: The search for a new editors or editors in 2016-2017

Benjamin Johnson and Robert Johnston have announced that they will be stepping down as editors at the end of the 2017-2018 academic year. They recommend that the new editor(s) be selected so he/she/they can begin in the academic year 2017-2018 so that there is a year of transition between their first year and Johnson and Johnston's final year. For that reason, a search for a new editor needs to begin in Fall 2016.

Ambrosius announced that the SHGAPE officers have decided to create a search committee using the same criteria as last time. Wood will be the chair or point person for the committee. The committee will also consist of Hoganson, Cordery, the new vice-president who will be elected in November, as well as two past or current members of the JGAPE editorial board, to be named by Ambrosius. The committee will make the selection of the new editor(s), taking into account Johnson and Johnston's recommendations. Hoganson asked the Council to offer recommendations or suggestions for possible applicants.

No motion was necessary. There was no further discussion.

Additional Items

1. H-SHGAPE

Ambrosius informed the Council that last year, the H-SHGAPE editor resigned and the SHGAPE executive committee approved the merger of the H-SHGAPE Editorial Board with the Website and Online Outreach Committee since their functions overlap. The H-SHGAPE editorial board this includes Christopher McKnight Nichols (chair), Nicole Phelps, and Robert McGreevey. Lloyd Ambrosius, Amy Wood, and Stacy Cordery, as SHGAPE officers, serve as ex-officio members. There were no questions or discussion.

Ambrosius announced that H-SHGAPE book review editors, Julia Irwin and Stephen Prince, have decided to resign. With approval from the Executive Committee, they co-chaired a search for their replacement and decided that Jay Driskell (Hood College) was the best candidate.

A motion was offered: *The Council elects Jay Driskell to be the new book review editor for H-SHGAPE.*

The motion was seconded. It passed unanimously.

2. The Graduate Student Caucus

Chelsea Gibson reported that graduate attendance was low at the Graduate Student Caucus she organized for the OAH. Only five people showed interest, and only one of those students was present at the OAH. Gibson explained that without tangible benefits, in the form of professional development, awards, or publications, it is difficult to draw students into the organization. The *Journal of Women's History*, for example, offers a graduate student competition to get published in the journal. Johnson noted that JGAPE fields submissions from graduate students.

There was then a discussion on how to use social media more effectively to engage graduate students. Our Facebook site has hundreds of members, but we use it only to post announcements or links to open JGAPE access. We could use it to post actual content related to GAPE history to generate more interest in SGHAPE and build community. Jeremy Young and Gibson offered to post such content, and Julia Irwin and Wood said they would allow them editorial access to the Facebook page to do so.

Hoganson noted that the SHGAPE website's "member spotlight" feature could also be used more effectively to build community and make graduate students and junior faculty feel more welcome. There was discussion about how to do that and Council members were encouraged to send Nichols bios and pictures. Ambrosius noted that the officers would be meeting with Nichols the next day to discuss updating the website.

Ambrosius then adjourned the meeting.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Amy Wood
May 26, 2016