

CANADIAN SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGION/SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE POUR L'ÉTUDE DE LA  
RELIGION

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING / REUNION DU CONSEIL**

Ottawa, Ontario

University of Ottawa CBY/A707A

May 30, 2015

9:00 am – 12:00 pm

**Minutes**

**Present :** Ruby Ramji, Alison Marshall, Paul Gareau, Spencer Bullivant, Marybeth White, Heather Shipley, Bethany Berard

**Regrets :** Judith Brunton, Samīkṣā Munro, Peter Beyer, Arlene Macdonald, Brenda Anderson, Catherine Caufield, Alain Bouchard

**1. Welcome/Bienvenue**

**2. Adoption of the Agenda/Adoption de l'ordre du jour :**

Moved by Paul Gareau, seconded by Marybeth White

**3. Adoption of the minutes of the April 2015 meeting of the Executive Committee/  
Adoption des procès-verbal de reunion du conseil du Avril 2015**

Moved by Ruby Ramji, seconded by Heather Shipley  
Motion carried

**4. Business arising from the Minutes/Suivis aux procès-verbal**

None

**5. Reports/Rapports**

**5.1 President/Président**

Rubina Ramji

Thank you to everyone for your hard work, it is awesome to work with you.  
CCSR business: they are focused on their book series and will confirm details soon.  
Keen for us to continue with Craigie but have no funding to support it.

We have stayed within our budget and maintained our travel fund, after the cuts, to support unwaged and graduate students; might consider increase when we are out of central corridor and lowering when annual meeting is central, can discuss.

We used to invite Congress rep to our AGM but no longer an option; want to communicate with them about the increasing number of pre-conference meetings and pre-conference requirements; perhaps unnecessary amount of work for our LACS/program chairs. Congress doesn't formally liaise with associations, hard to discuss these issues.

## **5.2 Secretary/Sécretaire**

Heather Shipley

Numbers for our listserv jumped substantially in January 2015 as the CFP deadline closed. We went from 300 recipients to 400 over the course of one week; the week following we were up again to 433 recipients, and most recently just under 450. The Friends of the CSSR connection has added tremendously to that list.

CCSR: The book series Pat Dold mentioned at our AGM is making progress; if all goes well it will be confirmed with McGill-Queen's in short order and their book series editor will seek a spot on our AGM agenda to promo it at Congress.

Otherwise, everything is going well re listserv and secretary role, work is still quite manageable as divided between secretary and communications liaison.

## **5.3 Treasurer/Trésorier**

Bethany Berard

Significant challenges to transfer signing authority; created a document to detail process for future treasurers, has been an unnecessarily complicated process (made more complicated by home branch in Winnipeg)

Will transfer home branch to Ottawa when Bethany relocates in fall 2015: even without an exec member in Ottawa, it will be more central for association

Still have CSSR funds in a community account; pros and cons to this kind of account.

Pros are that there are no fees; cons are that they only send a statement when a transaction has taken place in a given month (so no statements for months without transactions).

Other accounts have fees associated with them but might be worth it for sake of tracking monthly account balance

Three major bills have not yet been paid because of signing authority issues (SR, IAHR and CCSR dues)

Looking into getting an account with fees less than \$100, should be manageable expense  
Worst case scenario is to find another bank

Expenses: AV costs have about doubled in last 5 years, so have been modifying budget to reflect continued increase

Should anticipate costs for a new budget software, previous one is no longer viable, won't be more than \$100

AGM travel: under spent by over \$3000 in 2014, healthy balance in travel fund allocation

Proposal to increase travel funds to \$6500/year, modify amount to be covered for applicant from maximum of 75% to minimum of 50% (and could be more, depending on number of applicants)

Remain with policy that we will cover applicants who do not have other funding, in addition to focus on graduate students and unwaged

Modify application deadline for funding, so that members know in advance of conference that they are guaranteed funding to attend (and will receive funding after conference with receipts)

Give members 1 month after conference has ended to submit receipts; treasurer will decide what can be covered but change initial date of application to pre-conference so that members can plan attendance with funding in mind

Ties into other issues, such as abstract proposal deadline, membership deadline: modify all three dates and ensure both very strong advertising of these changes and also grandfather in member applications for funding in 2016 as a cushion

Three motions:

- 1) Increase travel fund from \$5500 to \$6500/year for the next three years:  
Moved by Ruby Ramji, seconded by Alison Marshall  
Motion carried unanimously
- 2) Travel fund pre-approval application deadline March 1, funds still distributed after conference with receipts:  
Moved by Ruby Ramji, seconded by Marybeth White  
Motion carried unanimously
- 3) Change wording of funding parameters from maximum of 75% to minimum of 50%:  
Moved by Alison Marshall, seconded by Marybeth White  
Motion carried unanimously

Will revisit and reevaluate the funding amount after three years to ensure we are not over our travel budget allocation, and also to make sure it is being used

Will revisit travel funding regarding executive funding of \$80, exercise restraint this year and reinstate it next year.

Need to consider that in future we might have other unanticipated expenses: we, didn't pay for AV in the past and could be expected to cover room bookings in future

Student essay prizes: one cheque has not been cashed, although it was sent out (removed from books)

Reducing teleconference budget, use of Skype is less expensive than service

Could consider increasing student lunch budget, but cost rarely exceeds allowable budget

Bethany received a request to apply for funding for Craigie lecture from CSBS; Ruby will draft a response that we did not get a request to fill out the interdisciplinary fund application through Congress so cannot put forward any money towards it (we do not receive interdisciplinary funds from other associations unless they receive money from Congress)

#### **5.4 Membership Secretary/Sécretaire aux admissions**

Arlene MacDonald (in absentia)

Although membership is fairly consistent over last few years, we are currently at 136 members, which is a bit low considering meeting is in Ontario

Drop in student membership in 2015 from 27 students to 17

Problems with connecting abstract submission deadline with membership payment; discouraged people from submitting when they were not sure their abstract would be accepted

Suggesting separating membership renewal from abstract submission deadline (in December), have membership renewal deadline in March so that confirmation of acceptance is in hand and if they do not renew/become members, they will not be removed from the program

Working with Samīkṣā and Marybeth to streamline membership tracking, currently still dual system (which enables accuracy checks against website tracking)

Congress requires yet another type of tracking, not difficult work but time consuming

Motion to change membership renewal/deadline to March 1:

Moved by Ruby Ramji, seconded by Heather Shipley

Motion carried unanimously

#### **5.5 Nominations Committee/Comité pour les nominations**

Peter Beyer (in absentia)

Member-at-Large – Program Co-Chair

Graduate Student Member-at-Large

Thanks to Alison Marshall who has given many years of service and much time to conference program, great to have you mentor Marybeth along the way

MAL: David Feltmate has agreed to run

Graduate student MAL: Alyshea Cummins has been nominated, potentially also Saliha Chattoo will put her name forward

And nominations will be taken from the floor as well

#### **5.6 2014 Programme Chairs/Présidences pour le programme**

Alison Marshall and Marybeth White

Planning went smoothly because of the work of Paul Gareau and Spencer Bullivant; Spencer in particular did a tremendous amount of work

Will need LAC for next year at Calgary; Spencer might be there and would be willing to help out if so (also Morny Joy is at Calgary, might have a suggestion)

Thanks to Samīkṣā for all her assistance, particularly after the initial program went out – lots of changes and corrections needed to be made  
Will work with Samīkṣā & Arlene on streamlining the SUNFLOWER system, will help with program development next year

Have a live theatre event after president's reception and a documentary premier, different kinds of events this year on the program

Crossover panels David Feltmate set up with CSA are in Fauteaux, which is not really close, perhaps in future years work to have them in the same building (organized by CSA, out of CSSR control)

Craigie Lecture: Catherine is going to contact other associations to see if it will continue as it has in the past

Work of LACs is necessary, particularly in times of restrained funding but need to find way to communicate with Congress re LAC burnout (and increasing number of meetings)

Had been contacted by a member who felt that retired/long-time members who are participating in a panel (in their honour) should not be required to pay to participate (either membership or registration)

Another member said that those with limited funding, particularly coming from far away (US), in a co-organized session, should have some forgiveness of fees and membership

We have an associate member fee of \$50, these special cases can be non-member and pay this when invited to be on a panel

We are out of pocket if we are co-sponsoring and they are using our rooms and resources, so we need some financial commitment and associate member fee is quite reasonable

New MAL will take over Twitter account, perhaps coordinate with new grad student MAL, ensure it continues to be active and connect it with Facebook page

Abstract submission date will change to December 1 (system is already open, people can send abstracts now)

Make sure to send notice of the new deadline on a monthly basis when the call is ready and circulate reminders

Members will be notified by February 1 as to whether their abstract is accepted (and then will need to become members by March 1)

## **5.7 Graduate Student Member at Large/ Conseiller étudiant**

Judith Brunton (in absentia)

Wants to thank exec for support and patience as first year of PhD was being navigated; capacity for innovation as grad student MAL was limited

Has been communicating via email with graduate students, struggled to find key people to send updates to – had been hoping it was going through community networks

Had updated information on Facebook but unsure how successful that was  
Planning graduate lunch with Paul and Christine; working with Paul was a great experience

Grad lunch this year features Emma Anderson, will present on creativity in communication  
Looking forward to welcoming incoming grad MAL and transferring information; will indicate need to connect with graduate students and find key people to distribute information

Thanks to Heather & Samīkṣā for ongoing communication and for creating the graduate section on the website and listserv

Some communication issues in last year; universities in Quebec in particular were not made aware of CSSR opportunities, especially the student essay competition  
Graduate lunch information hadn't been posted to Facebook page until May 29 (two days before lunch)

Need to create better system of communication for grad MAL; use of departmental contacts to circulate information (dept secretary but also find reps for graduate associations)

Bethany created a CSSR brochure for a school project, happy to update it and circulate – can be used to encourage new student members to join and to communicate about student opportunities

Will develop a guide for the roles and responsibilities of the graduate rep; clear that what Aldea had been doing was not necessarily transferred to Judith (Marybeth will draft and circulate)

Create a clear mandate for the rep, what we expect and what you can do for yourself  
Include Christine Cusack and Paul Gareau's contact info as mentors in student role  
New student rep for CCSR, Marie-Josée Blanchard, will work with new CSSR rep to find ways to connect two associations

Paul to suggest at graduate lunch the designation of official "Central Associate Grad Rep," "Western Associate Grad Rep," etc., get people from key universities and locations across Canada involved and use their networks

New ideas to follow up for future programming: Creation of undergraduate sessions on programs, for local undergrads where conference is being held, connect it to courses that were taught in the year – use part of final day that is currently without session

New graduate student rep will need to develop Facebook and Twitter activity, integrate Bethany's brochure, and be in touch with departments

## **5.8 Communication Liaison/Liaison de la Communication**

Samīkṣā Munro

Friends of CSSR/newsletter very active, lots of news and dynamic circulation  
SUNFLOWER works well for conference organization, is already backed up and ready to use again next year

Have administrator pages for several key roles - membership, secretary, program co-chairs – only viewed by these exec members and have files useful to position; can add more or modify in future if we want

More connection with Facebook page would be good; Heather & Samīkṣā have added more grad content to newsletter, but still need more graduate student specific content  
Have next CSSR Twitter administrator use program like HootSuite to connect Twitter & Facebook and maybe also link to graduate section of site, will update all with same content

PayPal: should consider synthesizing with membership to streamline systems, working with Arlene & Marybeth

Costs associated with website: have a moderate amount we pay to Sean Munro, he was resistant to taking any money for his work, but should consider possibility of having to pay more in future

## **5.9 Student Essay Awards/Prix pour les essais étudiant(e)s**

### **a) Undergraduate Essay Contest/Concours d'essai pour Undergraduate étudiant(e) du 1er cycle**

Brenda Anderson (in absentia)

First place: Claire Dunn, Concordia University, “Muslim Women through the Orientalist Gaze: Western Perspectives pre and post 9/11”

Second place: Benjamin Sherick, University of Calgary, “Islam Observed: Issues of Interpretation in Religious Histories”

Motion for approval of awards: moved by Ruby Ramji, seconded by Alison Marshall  
Motion carried unanimously

This year had about 30 papers submitted, which is great.

### **b) Graduate Essay Contest/Concours d'essai pour Graduate étudiant(e) du 1er cycle**

Catherine Caufield (in absentia)

PhD Winner: Yasmin Merchant, University of Alberta, “The Karbala Narrative, Performance, and Politics in Iran”

MA Winner: Roxanne Korpan, University of Regina, “Androgyny and Authority in the *Apocryphon of John*”

Only had 4 submissions for PhD and 6 for MA, need more submissions in the future.

Motion for approval of awards moved by Alison Marshall, seconded by Paul Gareau

Motion carried unanimously

### **5.10 CSSR Book Prize**

Peter Beyer (in absentia)

This year we awarded a book prize for a first published book, between the years 2011-2014

Winner: Alison Marshall, *The Way of the Bachelor: Early Chinese Settlement in Manitoba* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2011).

Other two submissions were excellent and deserve honorary mention:

Hillary Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked: American Christians and Holy Land Pilgrimage* (New York: New York University Press, 2014).

Sarah J. King, *Fishing in Contested Waters: Place Community in Burnt Church / Esgenoôpetitj* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

### **5.11 Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion/Corporation canadienne des sciences religieuses (CCSR)**

Rubina Ramji

They are focusing on their book series, we should receive more information soon. Also undergoing transition with Studies in Religion to an online submission system.

### **5.12 Société québécoise pour l'étude de la religion (SQÉR)**

Alain Bouchard

Paul Gareau is looking to reinvigorate the association with Marie-Josée Blanchard, new CCSR student rep; will speak with Alain to see about restarting the association and to expanding it to Francophone scholars outside Quebec (perhaps inquire if they are willing to change the name to incorporate other Canadian Francophone scholars)

Find ways to connect through Religion and Diversity Project to Quebec/Francophone scholars; have lost a lot of Francophone involvement in CCSR

Could add extra day to annual meeting to add Francophone sessions

## **6. Local arrangements Representatives Congress 2015**

Spencer Bullivant and Paul Gareau

Online system worked well, Spencer was able to navigate it without issue  
Should create a best practices guide for Congress LAC – issues, tricks, etc.



Most issues had to do with catering – things like finding out late that tablecloths had to be ordered (and paid for); if tables are in such bad shape, tablecloths should be offered free of charge

President's reception; catering was strict about ensuring the food order be equal to alcohol order (it's a licensing issue), would stop serving booze if they ran out of food (never an issue but they mentioned it)

Another issue was AV, cut-off is noon for half-day use and no wiggle room, we have sessions that go until 12:15 and they wouldn't extend deadline

If continues to be an issue, we will modify our schedule

## **7. Other business/ Varia**

- a) Local Arrangement folks for next year's Congress/ Les gens de arrangement local pour le Congrès de l'an prochain

Will ask Morny Joy; see if Spencer will be there as potential LAC

**8. Adjournment/Ajournement** : Moved by Ruby Ramji, seconded by Heather Shipley : 12:15pm