

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

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING / REUNION DU CONSEIL
VIRTUAL MEETING AGENDA
APRIL 12, 2023 (15:00–17:00 EDT)

Minutes Submitted by Chris Miller, Recording Secretary, April 24, 2023

Present: Diana Dimitrova, Chris Miller, Paul Gareau, Zabeen Khamisa, Jacqueline Giesbrecht, Michelle Folk, Michael Gillingham, Rachel Brown, Kalpesh Bhatt

Regrets: Rubina Ramji, Qamer Hameed, and Samiksa Love

1. Welcome/ Bienvenue

Start time : 15.02 EST

2. Accept Agenda/ Accepter l'ordre du jour

MOTION : *Accept the agenda*

Moved: Paul

Seconded: Jacqueline

Motion carried unanimously

3. Minutes/ Procès verbal – March 29, 2023

CORRECTIONS: Jacqueline notes that only the undergraduate student paper award word limit was supposed to be increased.

MOTION: *Accept the minutes.*

Moved: Michelle

Seconded: Rachel

Motion carried unanimously

4. Updates

i. Treasurer

Several Executive members experiences issued with promptness in previous Treasurer. This position needed to be swiftly replaced, which was managed through an Emergency Executive Vote in October. Paul Gareau has stepped in as Interim Treasurer. Thank you to Paul for taking over this role

ii. Incorporation

Diana has looked into the incorporation process, which was suggested by our previous treasurer. Incorporation would change the CSSR's tax status. It would cost between \$5000-6000 to hire someone to do our taxes for us.

Because of these costs, Diana is less sure about the need for incorporation. Another change is that now more people have access to the CSSR bank account (Paul, Diana, Ruby, and future Treasurer) which brings more accountability

During discussion, Rachel notes that our registration process is archaic and sorely needs to be updated. A switch to E-transfer would be greatly welcomed. Replacing the Word document with an online webform is another needed change.

Zabeen notes that becoming not-for-profit would bring higher taxes, but would also bring greater accessibility, help us to modernize our systems and processes (such as taking credit cards for registration.

Chris suggests talking to other, similar academic associations about their incorporation status, their operating budget, and if/how incorporation has impacted them.

Michelle raises that incorporation also helps us with personal liability, especially since we are collecting personal and sensitive information about members. Michelle offers to reach out to Nonprofit Studies faculty at Luther College about incorporation.

As an aside, Michelle also notes that the Sunflower system needs to be updated. Chris suggests that a Google Form could be implemented for both conference submissions and membership registration, helping to digitize these processes. As a related aside, Zabeen shares that we can pursue alternatives to our website construction that would make building/updating our website easier, even allowing people without a technology background to make simple updates. These concerns will be passed along to Samiksa.

MOTION: *Pursue the process of updating/modernizing our website/registration systems*

Moved: Michelle

Seconded: Zabeen

Motion carried unanimously

iii. Honorarium for Executive

Due to inflation and other rising costs, Diana begins the discussion of raising the honorarium for Executive members from \$400 to \$600

MOTION: *Raise honorarium for Executive to \$600*

Moved: Michelle

Seconded: Jacqueline

Motion carried unanimously

iv. Digital Coordinator Position

This role has been fulfilled for the first year by Zabeen. This was initially established to be an exploratory, non-Executive role, with the possibility of becoming an Executive position.

MOTION: *Make Digital Coordinator an Executive role*

Moved: Michelle

Seconded: Paul

Motion carried unanimously

v. CSSR Webinars

The Canadian Corporation for the Study of Religion recently requested that their name/logo be added to all upcoming webinars as a sponsor of these events. Since the webinar series was initiated by the CSSR Membership Secretary, the Executive discusses whether/how to accept this request.

General discussion is that most of the work to coordinate these webinars is undertaken by the CSSR Executive members and Digital Coordinator. Raise the possibility that if CCSR wants to add their name to these events, that they can provide some sort of compensation or support.

MOTION: *Reach out to CCSR and offer them the possibility to co-sponsor our webinars in return for some degree of financial support*

Moved: Rachel

Seconded: Chris

Motion carried unanimously

5. Reports/Rapports

Programme Chair/ Présidence pour le programme (Michelle Folk/Qamer Hameed)

Congress 2023 is hosted by York University. Congress dates are May 27- June 2, 2023 making the start of our annual meeting Saturday, May 27, 2023. The CSSR President's Reception is scheduled for May 27 while the Executive meeting and AGM will be held later in the summer. This year the conference will be held in person for the first time since 2019.

The theme of Congress 2023 is *Reckonings and Re-imaginings* and is summarized (see attached program chairs' report from October 2022 for more information).

The early bird registration deadline for Congress 2023 was March 21, regular registration was April 1, and on-site registration is open as of May 26. There is a new underemployed attendee registration category defined as someone who is "employed part-time, seasonal or temporary and attending or presenting at an association conference."

This year, Chris Miller is supporting the program co-chairs in LAC responsibilities and has helped confirm the location of the conference rooms is sufficient for meeting needs.

Additionally, Paul Gareau has kindly been providing meeting notes from the Congress 2023 conference planning meetings where he is able to attend.

To date, the association signing authority, fees for Congress, membership list, conference details, rooms requests, association greeting table form, A/V and catering forms have been submitted to the Federation through the Congress portal.

A reminder on the Child and Dependent Care Subsidy was sent to presenters on April 7, 2023. We have 1 child/dependent care subsidy available. The number is based on membership size and those eligible may be presenters, moderators, chairs, or respondents at Congress with membership in good standing with the association, registered for Congress, and with submission of a 250-word application to the association. We are required to endorse someone by April 14. It is a reimbursement up to \$200. The Federation will notify the association of the acceptance/rejection of our nominee by May 2. The recipient has to submit financial forms to the Federation by May 9 and will be reimbursed through their bank accounts by June 30, 2023.

The CFP closed January 31, 2021 this year. The draft program includes the following:

39 individual papers were submitted and grouped into 6 panels (adjustments will be made for any withdrawals).

1 workshop on Publishing Your Book on the Study of Religion.

3 roundtables including:

- From Their Mouths to Our Ears: Listening to a Generation on Living out an Ecological Spirituality,
- Author Meets Critics: Religion, Spirituality and Secularity among Millennials,
- The Handbook of Religion and Migration: Author Reflections.

2023 Plenaries part 1 and 2: Possible Roles, if Any, of a Scholar of Religion Regarding Promotion of Public Knowledge and Understanding of Religion.

The graduate student luncheon will be held on Monday May 29, 2023.

CSSR President's Reception is on Saturday May 27, 2023 from 5pm-7pm at McLaughlin College 014.

Congress 2023 President's Reception Hosted by York University is on Sunday May 28 from 5pm-7pm at Scott Library.

We are not scheduled to host the Craigie/International Speaker in 2023.

The program requires moderators, please let us know which sessions you are available to moderate and encourage other members to step forward as well. A reminder could also be included in the next newsletter with the updated program (see

attachment). Adjustments will be made up to the conference as history shows that people can withdraw leading up to the conference.

We look forward to having a successful conference this year and would like to thank everybody for your help and ongoing support.

Discussion: We have currently received no applications for the Childcare Subsidy for Congress. So that we are still able to take advantage of this funding, Michelle suggests that we open up the possibility of Executive members who may qualify submitting a nomination. To avoid any conflict of interest, Chris will take over from Rachel for the evaluation/submission of our nomination to Congress. Any members who wish to apply have until Thursday to submit their name and application materials to Chris. He will submit our nomination before the deadline on Friday.

Diana raises that Tim Jensen may wish to speak briefly at the President's reception. Michelle notes that past receptions have been fairly informal, and we should be able to accommodate this. Other activities during this event will include Diana welcoming everyone to our conference, announcing the Book Prize winner, and other funding/award opportunities through the CSSR.

Rachel asks Michelle to send her an Excel file of all presenters at our conference, which will allow her to verify that everyone is a member in good standing.

Graduate Student Member-at-Large/ Étudiants des études supérieures (Michael Gillingham)

Student Ambassador Program

Now in its seventh year, the Student Ambassador program is continuing to run. We have added two Student Ambassadors to the list since my last report for a total of 13 Student Ambassadors for this year. Our two newest ambassadors are Faezeh Izadi (University of Calgary) and Ankita Choudhary (University of Toronto). We have continued to advertise for new Student Ambassadors on our website and through the newsletter. I sent out two updates to the ambassadors in January 2023 reminding them about opportunities for funding and also reminding them about the call for papers for the CSSR meeting at York University during Congress. I had a request to write a letter confirming the membership and involvement of a Religious Studies graduate student named M. Morad Bkhait (UQAM) and I was able to do that. I am hoping to see some of the ambassadors at the CSSR meeting this year.

Graduate Student Programming at the Annual Meeting

I checked with the current Student Ambassadors for suggestions for the Graduate Student programming at the 2023 Annual Meeting. There was a strong interest in having someone present on early career publishing opportunities and strategies for graduate students and

early career scholars. I checked to see if there was funding available to bring in a speaker and was told there is not. I am hoping to ask someone from our list of registered presenters to serve in this way. Suggestions are welcome! I also sent my recommendations into Chris Miller for the meal option for the graduate luncheon at the event.

Student Reps Joint Project

I've been involved in a conversation about planning some joint events with student representatives from other organizations similar to CSSR in Canada. This conversation has been headed up by Lauren Strumos, student representative of the CCSR. We are currently working on plans for a webinar for MA and early PhD students on writing and presenting conference papers, and the difference between a conference paper and journal article. This is tentatively being planned for May 2023. I will share more details about this soon.

Thank You

I am very thankful to Chris, Samiksa, Rachel, Michelle, and Diana for the help they've provided me at various points this winter and spring. I am looking forward to our time at York University as we gather to meet and share our work with each other.

Discussion: Based on discussions with the Graduate Student Representatives, Michael is looking for suggestions of potential speakers for the graduate student luncheon who can talk about publishing in the later years of the PhD. Paul suggests reaching out to people affiliated with the CCSR book series and McGill-Queen's University Press. Rachel also shares that she can give a talk on navigating the disappearing academic job market if needed.

Membership Secretary/ Secrétaire des membres (Rachel Brown)

Membership Numbers for 2023 thus far:

We have 82 folks, with some more to process, signed up and paid for 2023. The breakdown of membership categories is as follows:

Regular Members – 40

Associate receiving SR through CSSR – 9

Associate receiving SR through other society – 6

Student receiving SR through other society – 15

Student receiving SR through CSSR – 12

This is a really healthy enrollment for this time of year. I imagine we will get quite a few more as we get closer to Congress. I plan to cross reference the list of presenters with our membership list and remind those who haven't renewed/signed up yet to do so. If I could get an excel file of all of the presenters from the Program Co-Chairs that would be incredibly helpful to expedite this task.

Membership Enrollment Process:

I have heard repeatedly from members that our membership process is archaic and not very straight forward. People would like to see an easy fillable form on the CSSR website with an option to pay directly through the website as well. Is this possible? Can we hire someone to do some website development to make this happen? I think this will help to stream line the process for our members, but also for me, the membership secretary.

With what happened in the fall, with our former treasurer being unreachable/not communicative, it made my job incredibly difficult and led to quite a bit of embarrassment for our organization. If the membership secretary had more access to the data up front, and didn't need to rely on the treasurer to email confirmation of e-transfer this would help things to run more smoothly.

Future plans:

I have honestly just been trying to stay afloat in this position this year, and processing a ton of back logged membership applications/receipts. I am hopeful that this next year will be more smooth and that we can work toward streamlining the registration process. Then, we can start working on bigger membership drives, and thinking about other perks that we can offer to our members.

I would still like to think about a mentorship program/coffee with a senior colleague program that we could provide our members. But that will have to be put off to next year.

Discussion: In addition to the discussion earlier about the challenges with our current system for registration, Rachel raises that relying on E-transfer presents a barrier to international scholars who wish to join the CSSR. This suggests further reasons why this system needs to be overhauled, possibly through incorporation or some other means

Communications Officer/ Agente des communications (Samiksa Love)

WEBSITE AND SERVER

- Website running smoothly at this time. I continue to be vigilant about bots/hackers trying to create accounts on our website.
- Hostpapa: is where our domain name is hosted since it offers .ca domains. Bluehost site nameservers are pointing to the Hostpapa domain name. We still have some credit on our account through Hostpapa so we will use the remaining amount to continue renewing our domain there every year. The most recent renewal was December 2022, and next one will be in December 2023. The total amount for renewal was \$23.72 (paid in December 2023), and we still have \$76.94 left in our account.
- Bluehost: Bluehost continues to be our web hosting provider, and the website is regularly maintained and backed up. Through Bluehost, basic web hosting was renewed until February 2025, and the SiteLock Security Essential feature renewed until February 2023. SiteLock Security Essential was paid for in February 2023 (\$131.52 CAD) and I was reimbursed by our CSSR Treasurer shortly afterward.
- A reminder that if the website ever goes down, it is very likely due to the index.php file needing to be re-uploaded properly, so please let me know if you ever notice the website is down (in case I don't notice it).

SOME WEBSITE CHANGES WE MADE SINCE LAST MEETING

- Posted 2023 Membership poster throughout website and in weekly newsletter.
- Updated Student Ambassadors for 2022-2023.

WEBSITE TO DO AFTER OUR MEETING TODAY

- Change due dates for [Book Prize](#) for 2023.
- Change due dates for [Essay Contest](#) for 2023. Poster needs to be updated every year with new deadlines so it would be helpful if Members-At-Large kept a template to reuse each year for use in posting to website and on Twitter.
 - Link to new instagram account posted on our website under “Connect” menu?
 - Does website [FAQ section](#) need revision?

SUNFLOWER

- SUNFLOWER (our automated paper submission system) ran smoothly during autumn 2022.

MEMBERSHIP DATABASE

- There are roughly 842 members within our website’s database as of April 9, 2023 (minus a few duplicates), up from 804 in October 2022.
- Thank you to our Membership Secretary Rachel Brown for diligently updating members’ membership status on the database as she receives notice of their payments from our Treasurer, and creating new profiles for them if they are new members. The website database is usually consistent with the list we send to CCSR (formerly we sent this to SAGE).

CCSR WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

- Our Mailchimp newsletter service is still running smoothly. As of April 9, 2023, we have 552 subscribers to our Mailchimp mailing list (it fluctuates as people subscribe and unsubscribe. In October 2022 it was 555).
- “SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER” option is still on our website’s home page as well as under the “Connect” menu.
- Thank you to other CCSR Executive members who also send news to post onto the website and include in our newsletter each week.

CCSR YOUTUBE CHANNEL

- CCSR Zoom Webinar Series sessions recorded and uploaded to the CCSR youtube channel for members. The CCSR Youtube channel is listed on our website under the “Connect” menu (<http://cssrscer.ca/?q=node/1515>). New videos are announced in the CCSR newsletter.

CCSR FACEBOOK PAGE

- Facebook page is unofficial and not regularly maintained by anyone on our Executive. It has been abandoned and references to it have been removed from our website and newsletter.

CSSR TWITTER ACCOUNT

- Access given to Graduate Student Member-At-Large, Communications Liaison, and new Digital Coordinator for posting.

CSSR INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT

- New account created and maintained by Digital Coordinator. Information to be sent to Samiksa to post to website.

THANK YOU

- Thank you to all the executive members for all your individual and team work throughout the year. It continues to be a pleasure to work alongside you to help the CSSR thrive.

Treasurer/ Trésorier (Paul Gareau [Interim])

Interim Status:

I had to step in and take over as treasurer from Ted this winter. We are hoping to secure a new treasurer at the AGM in June 2023.

Clear Up BMO Account:

Once we have elected a new treasurer for the CSSR, we need to clear up the BMO account for who has signing power. I will bring in the minutes from our next AGM to make sure our account is up-to-date.

Travel Funds:

As of the deadline of April 1, 2023, there were 6 claims with a total of **\$3,359.76**.

Account Status:

Current

- Community Account: \$21,564.77
- BMO Mutual Funds Investment January 1st, 2023: \$67,389.66
- Total Income: \$88,954.43

E-transfer:

E-transfer is working out well. We had international members who couldn't access the BMO e-transfer. We sent them a way to wire the money. Unsure if they were able to complete their membership at the time of this meeting.

Outgoing Expenses:

- SR subscriptions were paid out to the CCSR for 2022 and 2023: \$920 + \$1,540 = \$2,460.
- IAHR dues will be sent out this week. Fees are 2.40 Euro per member, after the exchange and wire transfer fee it worked out to 489.09.
- Zoom account: Is now paid directly from the BMO account.
- Annual Fee (March 8th): \$200.00 + \$10.00 tax = \$210.00
- Monthly Cloud Storage (8th of every month): \$53.00 + \$2.65 tax = \$55.65

Incorporation:

Ted had maintained that we should incorporate as the best long-term strategy for the CSSR. We need to be clear we want to do about this moving forward. Is it in our best interests to incorporate or to continue as we are? Is this something that we need to bring up to the AGM?

Discussion: Since we have a number of different accounts (not just bank accounts, but also social media, email, Zoom, website, etc.) Zabeen willing to help and undertake the project of consolidating all of this information so that present and future Executive members can more easily access any accounts as need arises

Recording Secretary/ Secrétaire archiviste (Chris Miller)**Meeting Poll**

Thank you to everyone for submitting your responses to our meeting poll! Thank you for helping us to find a time that works for the greatest number of members.

Emails

Whatever email you received my Doodle Poll invite is the address that I have on file for the CSSR Executive Mailing list. If there is an alternative email that you check more frequently, or that you want all CSSR info to go through, please let me know and I will update my list

Congress – Local Area Coordinator

I have also had the pleasure of working as the Local Area Coordinator for our upcoming meeting at Congress. Looking forward to connecting with everyone at York University in the Spring!

President/ Président (Diana Dimitrova)

CSSR President Report
April 11th, 2023
Diana Dimitrova

Congress 2023

I am happy to say that we shall have our next conference with Congress (at York University, Toronto) and in person from May 27th to May 29th. Our Programme Chairs Michelle Folk and Qamer Hameed, our LAC Chris Miller and our Past President and Federation Representative Paul Gareau have been working very hard on this. Our preliminary program has been posted – it looks amazing! Thank you so much, Michelle, Qamer, Chris and Paul!

We'll have some great events for our graduate students – thank you, Michael for organizing all this! And thank you, Chris for your help!

Website and newsletter

Thank you, Samiksa for all your help with the website and the newsletter, which function beautifully!

Membership

Our membership numbers are steady and as we know, most members pay their dues before the conference, so I expect the numbers to go up in the coming few weeks. Thank you so much, Rachel for your wonderful work!

CSSR webinars 2022-2023

Additionally, Zabeen Khamisa has been preparing our new CSSR webinar series – this was another amazing and exciting year. Marc Dumas and I co-chaired a CSSR webinar on a book published in the collection “Matière à pensée”, PUM, which I am co-editing with Marc Dumas, the other 3 webinars were chaired and moderated by Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme and Zabeen Khamisa. Thank you, Zabeen!

New Executive Position – Digital Coordinator and New Interim Treasurer

We plan to have a new executive position “Digital Coordinator”, but this will be decided at our spring executive meeting on April 12th, 2023.

Treasurer-situation

We have also replaced our Treasurer Ted Malcolmson. Paul Gareau has kindly agreed to take on the duties of Interim Treasurer until the next AGM. Thank you so much, Paul!

Student Essay Winners : PhD and MA 2022

NAME:	TITLE:	PSEUDONYM:	DEGREE:
Catherine van Reenen	On the Limits of Auto-Critique in the Study of Religion	Essay 3	PhD vanreenc@myumanitoba.ca
Ian Greer	Angrezi Shariat: Islamic Law in 20th Century Britain and its Colonial Antecedents	Essay 6	MA ian.greer@aucegypt.edu

I would like to thank Alyshea Cummins and Jeanine LeBlanc for their excellent work. Paul sent a check in the amount of \$300 to Ian Greer and a check in the amount of \$650 to Catherine van Reenen – this is the monetary value for the awards. The deadline for the next competition will be August 1st, 2023. Thank you, Jacqueline and Kalpesh!

CSSR book prize 2022 and President's Reception

We will honour the winner of the CSSR book prize at the CSSR President reception at Congress 2023. Thank you, Ruby and all committee members for your hard work on selecting the winner!

CCSR Meeting

I attended the CSSR meeting on January 21st, 2023. Lori Beaman's term is coming to an end and the current vice-president of the CCSR – David Keussens of the Université de Sherbrooke will take over the presidency in May 2023. The AGM will take place on May 24th at 1pm.

At the last meeting, Lori Beaman asked Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme to put the wording "CCSR webinars" on the CSSR webinars, which deal with books published in the Series, but by projection, possibly to all CSSR webinars. I pointed out that I would need to consult with the CSSR executive on this point, as so far, this has been done only by CSSR resources, including the CSSR Zoom account, digital coordinator, organization, publicity, etc.

I would like to thank you all for your amazing work!! Thank you!

Past President/ Anciennes présidente (Paul Gareau)

Current Executive

- President and Representative to the Corporation: Diana Dimitrova [2022–2024]
- Past-President and Academic Freedom & Tenure Committee: Paul Gareau [2022–2024]
- Appointed Executive Member: Rubina Ramji [2020–indefinite]
- Recording Secretary: Chris Miller [2022–2025]
- Treasurer: Paul Gareau [interim 2023]
- Membership Secretary: Rachel Brown, University of Victoria [2022–2025]
- Communications Liaison & Website Administrator: Samiksa Love [2010–indefinite]
- Members-At-Large: Kalpesh Bhatt, University of Toronto [2022–2025] & Jacqueline Giesbrecht, Queen's University [2022–2025]
- Programme Co-Chair: Qamer Hameed [2020–2023] & Michelle Folk, PhD [2018–2024]
- Graduate Student Member-at-Large: Michael Gillingham [2022–2024]
- SQÉR Representative: Stéphanie Tremblay
- Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (CFHSS) Representatives: Paul L. Gareau [2022–2024]

Nominations for 2023

This year the following positions are reaching the end of their term:

- Programme Co-Chair: 2023–2026 — Alison Marshall
- Treasurer: 2023–2026 — Christopher Austin
- Digital Coordinator Position: 2023–2026 — Zabeen Khamisa As always, we will also accept nominations from the floor at the AGM.

Nominations for 2024

Keep in mind that there are three positions up for renewal or nomination in 2024:

- President
- Programme Co-Chair
- Graduate Student Member-at-Large

Members-at-Large (Jacqueline Giesbrecht and Kalpesh Bhatt)

We've recently been in conversation with Samiksa about this year's essay contest, confirming details so that the website is ready for advertising. This week, I (Jacqueline) made a new [poster](#) for the competition! The submission deadline will once again be on August 1st.

As discussed at the previous meeting, last year's undergraduate entries were not as polished as we would have liked. Hopefully, the new word limit (2500-5000 words) will draw some students taking upper-year courses or doing independent studies. Samiksa has already updated this information on the website.

Discussion: As a way to honour past winners of the student paper awards, MALs will work to organize a webinar in August where the winners can present their research. It would be good if this can be done moving forward in future years/competitions

6. Additional items/ Des articles supplémentaires

i. Open Access Grant

The CCSR has a grant to help scholars assume the cost of open access for work that they publish. Diana is going to follow up on this new grant and see how we can promote it among our membership

7. Next Meeting/ Prochaine reunion

Chris will be distributing a poll to the Executive to determine a date/time for the pre-Conference Executive Meeting (likely in May) and the CSSR AGM (likely in June)

8. Adjournment/ Adjournement

MOTION: *Adjourn the meeting.*

Moved: Paul

Seconded: Zabeen

The meeting adjourned at 17:15 EDT.

CSSR Appointed Executive Member Report (submitted April 23, 2023)

The CSSR Book Committee has chosen the following book as the winning manuscript for 2021.

Nadeau, Denise Marie. *Unsettling Spirit : A Journey into Decolonization*. McGill-Queen's University Press 2020.

Unsettling Spirits is very relevant to the study of religion and quite timely. This book is a thought-provoking exploration into the settler experience and working towards being an ally of decolonization. It is a reminder of the importance of situating oneself and fostering self-awareness when studying communities and ways of life.

Throughout the book, Nadeau highlights Indigenous knowledge systems and worldviews, helping the reader understand how settler knowledge constructions and their practical manifestations are real barriers to Indigenous progress and self-determination.

The author turns a spiritual quest into a dialogue deconstructing settler identities. It is a study looking inward to meaningfully engage with decolonization.

Cheers
Ruby