

**Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers  
Board Meeting Minutes – April 23, 2015  
Jackson Boardroom, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Chicago, IL USA**

**Board Members present:**

Andrew Sluyter (Executive Director), Karl Offen (Chair), Kendra McSweeney (Vice-Chair), Robert Kent (Treasurer), Rebecca Clouser (Secretary), Chris Gaffney (*JLAG* Editor), Matthew Fry (Webmaster), Claudia Radel, Gerardo Bocco, J. Christopher Brown, Christian Abizaid, Jörn Seemann, Jeffrey Smith, Luis Sanchez

1. Meeting was called to order by Chair (K. Offen) at 6:50 AM. Vice-Chair (K. McSweeney) issued a reminder/update regarding the CLAG party that evening at Blue Frog's Local.
2. Executive Director's Report (A. Sluyter)
  - a. Membership whitepaper (distributed prior to meeting):
    - Likely to reach/exceed 200 members for 1<sup>st</sup> time in years, but always good to have more members.
    - Comparison to Latin American Specialty Group (LASG), which has around 400 members.
    - Ideas for increasing membership.
      - Changing prices.
        - One of the last things we would want to change.
      - Holding next CLAG in the U.S. (New Orleans) may help.
      - Changes to *JLAG* also seen as important.
      - Discussed requiring authors who publish in *JLAG* to join CLAG.
        - Concern of putting additional hurdles for publishing in *JLAG* (would like to encourage more submission).
      - Discussed giving people who publish in *JLAG* a complimentary membership for a year as a recruitment tool.
        - Would be a consistent message as already provide author with a complimentary copy of the issue in which their article appears.
        - Need to advertise it somewhere (submission page of the journal).
        - Need to discuss the logistics with UT Press (what if publish in 3<sup>rd</sup> issue of the year – when does it start/end, how process the free subscription, etc.).
        - **Board unanimously approved the motion to do a two-year experiment of free membership for authors who publish in *JLAG*.**
      - Discussed issues with membership/subscription process.
        - Idea of having automatic renewals (would need to opt out/cancel rather than renew).
        - Idea of having a 3-year membership (potentially at a discounted rate).
          - A. Sluyter will check on multi-year renewals.
        - Issues with subscription process through UT Press – is not clear that becoming a subscriber to *JLAG* means becoming a member of CLAG.

- Changing how it is presented online (with an emphasis on becoming a member of CLAG, and not just a *JLAG* subscriber).
    - Could UT Press make changes to the interface?
    - Could we take over process? (we currently pay UT Press for this)
      - Issues regarding workload, continuity (Board members are short-term positions), security issues of taking in money online, etc.
        - M. Fry will check regarding webpage security issues.
    - Could other companies do this service? How compare to UT Press? (unclear what we pay UT Press for this service).
      - In future will receive more detailed statements from UT Press, so will have better idea.
  - Discussed how to increase CLAG's presence at AAG meetings.
    - Mentioning CLAG in sessions/panels.
    - Potentially becoming a corporate member (~\$5000), we could then sponsor things.
    - Clarifying difference between CLAG and LASG (on the LASG webpage).
- b. Conferences
- General discussion regarding conference locations (U.S. vs. Latin America).
    - Many like the alternating schedule.
    - Issues with poor attendance at last U.S. conference (Colorado Springs), but possibly due to other factors not related to U.S. location.
    - Is also a function of who submits proposals for hosting the conference.
    - Having U.S. ones in the summer; Latin American ones in the winter.
    - Discussed having a formal policy for alternating.
      - Is the general idea, but not currently a formal policy (no commitment to making it a formal policy at this time).
    - J. Seemann proposed idea of having 2020 conference in Muncie, IN at Ball State (would be 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary from 1<sup>st</sup> CLAG meeting – also held in Muncie – in 1970).
  - Discussed registration costs for conferences.
    - Should be structured so that non-members pay a higher registration fee than members (to reward members and encourage non-members to join).
    - Is easier to implement when CLAG organizes the conferences, but when joint meetings occur it could be more difficult to realize.
    - **Board unanimously approved the motion to structure conference registration costs so that non-members pay a higher registration fee than members at CLAG organized conferences. In the case of joint conferences, CLAG should pursue this position in its negotiations.**
  - CLAG 2017 New Orleans
    - A. Sluyter is moving forward with research/preparation for this (distributed report prior to meeting).
      - Even though in U.S. will still be expensive. Discussed ideas for making it less expensive.
        - Holding it in a part of New Orleans that is not as expensive.

- Could still then have field trips to interesting parts of the city and CLAG members can always travel on their own to other parts of town.
    - Moving the conference from Jan. to Sept. (which would be low season and cheaper).
      - Idea of taking poll at business meeting to see if people prefer Sept. over Jan.
  - c. CLAG archive
    - Currently housed at Syracuse (as arranged by former Executive Director, D. Robinson).
    - Need to establish a protocol for each CLAG officer to assemble a group of basic documents and then Executive Director will pass them on to the archivist.
3. Treasurer (R. Kent)
- a. Submitted report with summary of expense/revenue (2013-2014), the 2015 approved budget, and the proposed 2016/2017 budget.
    - Discussed budget draft proposals (distributed prior to meeting).
      - Overall, not many changes.
      - Will likely see major reduction in publication and shipping costs this year (2015).
  - b. Discussed increasing student conference paper awards.
    - Currently at \$1000; although this year increased to \$2000 (4 @ \$500) related to the donation from Barbara Fredrich.
    - Question of how budget works in relation to awards (annual budget vs. 18 month conference cycle).
    - Discussed increasing to \$2000 or \$4000 or even \$5000.
      - Seen as an investment in the future.
      - We can afford it (and still have healthy emergency fund).
      - **Board unanimously approved the motion to increase student conference paper award budget to \$4000.**
  - c. **Board unanimously approved the budget as amended.**
4. CLAG 2015: Fortaleza, Brazil (J. Seemann)
- a. Upcoming conference will be May 26-30, 2015.
  - b. Updates:
    - Field trips have been posted. Local organizers would like participants to deposit money ahead of time. J. Seemann noted that it would be easier not to, and that he would work something out with local organizers in the meantime.
    - He is not the organizer, but a go between (and he is not located in Fortaleza).
    - Not many CLAG members going (approx. 40), because of cost. However, reasons for choosing Fortaleza for the conference included outreach, establishing contacts with Brazilian geographers, recruiting new Brazilian members to CLAG, etc.
    - While there are not many CLAG members attending, there will be about 200 papers in total.
  - c. Board expressed gratitude to J. Seemann and C. Brannstrom (not present) for all of their hard work.
5. *JLAG* editor report (C. Gaffney)

- a. Updates:
  - C. Gaffney expressed his thanks to all who have helped make the transition smooth.
  - 14(1) issue is now out.
  - Has also updated the submissions guidelines.
- b. Issues
  - Many costs of running *JLAG* were internalized to Syracuse with former editor, D. Robinson. C. Gaffney does not have the capacity to do that. Looking for ways to de-centralize the editorial management from the hands of the editor.
- c. New directions/Responses to issues
  - Discussed creating a more inclusive editorial team (including adding additional Associate Editors and relying on the International Editorial Board more).
    - Would like to increase number of Associate Editors from 2 to 3. Also having issues with some members of Editorial Board not responding.
      - Discussed importance of finding an editorial board that would support breadth of the journal.
      - K. Offen presented idea of providing modest honorarium to the Associate Editors (e.g., \$1000)
        - Was noted that this is more of a service activity, not something that should receive an honorarium.
      - C. Gaffney should exercise his power to a)increase the number of associate editors from 2 to 3 and b)re-do the editorial board (replace those who do not respond).
        - Will make announcement at business meeting that we are looking for collaborators for editorial board (and if no time, will send out an e-mail).
  - Discussed including different types of content in *JLAG*.
    - Limiting the number of book reviews per issue and replacing with more editorial board-approved op-ed and/or commentaries, current events pieces, 'from the field' pieces, etc.
    - Idea of publishing CLAG honors again.
      - Question of how to get changes moving in regards to do this (is editor approved to go ahead and ask a scholar for an opinion piece, etc.?).
        - Can get approval via the publications committee.
        - It was generally agreed to task the publications committee with a greater role than they currently play.
  - Discussed moving *JLAG* to an editing/publishing platform that would include an automated review system.
    - After researching several (including Elsevier, Sage, Wiley, and Taylor and Francis), Taylor and Francis emerged as the best fit (they also do the *Annals* and many other regional journals).
      - Pros: could increase views, author reach, and potentially CLAG revenue (T and F would distribute 20% to 40% to CLAG). Also would help with the editorial process (more professional, automated, etc.).
      - Cons: would be getting into the corporate publishing journal world. Also, would mean breaking with UT Press (issues in terms of who then does the membership element).

- Discussed alternative models – which would provide an automated review system/team based platform, but not necessarily be corporate publishing company (suggestion to check out what Antipode uses).
  - Recommended that K. Offen (CLAG Chair) and A. Sluyter (Executive Director) task the Publications Committee (chaired by M. Steinberg, not present at meeting) with the following high-priority items:
    - Find some type of online dashboard/independent manuscript processing agency to get through this year of investigation, before moving to potentially larger changes.
    - Also have committee working on a document to present to the Board regarding an overhaul in vision of *JLAG*, with tasks and deadlines.
      - R. Kent noted that the finance committee should also be involved at some point (as would involve finding the short-term fix of an online dashboard and bigger discussions of a larger change).
      - Board will need to vote on changes proposed in the document. Agreed that online voting would be fine.
6. CLAG webpage (M. Fry)
- a. Updates:
    - Added Twitter component.
    - Wants to add a section where we solicit classroom materials (syllabi, etc.).
  - b. Suggestions from the Board
    - Include links to blogs.
    - Hosting spaces for networks of scholars.
      - M. Fry noted that currently could link to such a network, but if the network doesn't already have a site, would need to look into the process of how it would work.
  - c. End of term
    - M. Fry's term ends in October and graduate student (Levi) leaves in May. Has another student coming in, so may be able to continue.
    - M. Fry agrees to stay on for at least another year.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:15 AM.

Respectfully submitted  
Rebecca Clouser, Secretary