

**Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers  
Minutes for Special Board Meeting – May 21, 2018  
Salón Presidencial, Holiday Inn San José-Aurola  
San José, Costa Rica**

**Board Members present:**

Kendra McSweeney (Chair), Brad Jokisch (Vice Chair), Robert Kent (Treasurer), Rebecca Clouser (Secretary), Chris Gaffney (*JLAG* editor), Timothy Norris (Communications Coordinator), Patricia Solís, David Salisbury, Oliver Coomes, Matthew LaFevor, Catherine Nolin, Sarah Blue, Kristen Conway-Gomez, Christian Abizaid, Matthew Taylor, Martha Bell, Nathan Einbinder

1. Chair (K. McSweeney) called meeting to order at 6:55 PM; established a quorum was present.
2. General Business (K. McSweeney)
  - a. B. Jokisch will transition to Chair position on June 30, 2018.
  - b. K. McSweeney and B. Jokisch will meet to update the CLAG Handbook. Board will be able to review the draft of changes for approval at the next meeting.
3. Future CLAG Meetings
  - a. CLAG 2020: 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
    - Revisited Cuba proposal. Concerns included political climate, travel warnings (impacts university funding), unclear future under current U.S. administration, loss of members of the planning team as outlined in the original proposal, and CLAG's lack of meeting insurance should last-minute issues cause a problem with the planned destination.
      - **Board unanimously approved motion to not proceed with Cuba proposal at this time.**
      - K. McSweeney will notify J. Scarpaci.
    - Discussed alternative sites for 2020 conference as well as possible 2021 sites.
      - Antigua, Guatemala: M. Taylor and M. Steinberg have been in preliminary discussions with hotel.
      - Belize: issue of only having 1 person organizing.
      - U.S. destinations – Puerto Rico, Tucson, San Antonio: depends on if have people willing to organize.
      - Peru: M. Bell mentioned as possible future destination (but 2020 is too soon).
      - Consensus that M. Taylor and M. Steinberg are willing and ready to organize a 2020 conference in Antigua. After that can look at other locations discussed for future.
        - **Board unanimously approved motion to support a January 2020 conference in Antigua, Guatemala.**
    - K. McSweeney urged Board to think about how to celebrate 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
4. Governance
  - a. Difference between Chair and Executive Director needs to be more clearly specified. K. McSweeney and B. Jokisch will address this in their review of the Handbook.
  - b. B. Jokisch will coordinate vote for new Board members in June (replacing 5 people).

- Turnaround time for nominations/elections will be fairly quick, would like complete by June 30.
- Reminder to double-check membership status, as only those who have paid dues are eligible to vote.
- Board members should think about who to nominate for positions and who might be good for Vice Chair (must be a Board member).
  - T. Norris will send out list of members to generate ideas for nominees.
  - Suggestion to approach those who were nominated in past but not elected.
  - Board members rolling off can be re-elected (and can self-nominate).
  - Suggestion of including photos on ballot. Consensus that it is not necessary.

## 5. Membership (C. Abizaid)

- Membership growing, outlook is good. Faculty numbers rebounding, but not yet back to 2010 levels. Discussed ways to address this.
  - Idea to access information from UT Press for people who were members but are no longer.
  - Discussion of charging Membership Committee with coming up with plan for attracting former members (linked to 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as ideal time to re-join).
  - Discussed long-term goals: do we have a target number (no); would we cap membership (not likely to be issue in near future).
- Need to engage more with Latin American scholars and collaborators (especially students).
  - May not consider themselves 'Latin Americanists'.
    - Idea of removing 'ist' from name.
    - Idea of reworking logo (C. Gaffney has design people looking at this).
    - Could tie a launch of new name and new logo to 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
    - **Board unanimously approved motion to have full CLAG membership vote on the proposal to change the name to the Conference of Latin American Geography.**
      - B. Jokisch and D. Salisbury will work on wording of the proposal (also outlining motivation for the proposed change).

## 6. Communications (T. Norris)

- Website and membership subscription issues have become primary focus.
- Website
  - Is streamlining inner workings.
  - Shared Google Doc with Board, can view any time for updates on current projects.
  - English and Spanish versions of site aren't consistent. Considering having 1 multi-lingual site (with strategic elements, such as membership, in English and Spanish).
    - Discussed conflict of attracting more Latin Americans while also removing Spanish version of website (nice to have everything translated, but is question of time availability).
  - Considering migrating to a different platform (either different WordPress theme or a different platform altogether).
    - As depends on what happens with UT Press, will revisit this later.

- c. Update on streamlining membership renewal.
  - M. Steinberg to visit UT Press this summer to discuss ways to streamline membership registration and renewal.
    - Is a new journal manager at UT Press, makes this an opportune time for these discussions.
    - If possible, T. Norris will join M. Steinberg on the visit to UT Press.
      - Board noted that the cost of trip should be covered by CLAG.
      - After visit will send a proposal to the Board regarding next steps.
- d. Newsletter
  - Newsletter went out in Dec. 2017. While not currently a primary focus for the Communications Coordinator, T. Norris is willing to do next one.
  - K. McSweeney will announce call for submissions at closing session.
- e. Archive (Administrative)
  - Would be a space where Board could log on to access materials (past minutes, newsletters etc.).

## 7. Honors Committee

- a. Board extended its gratitude to Honors Committee, chaired by C. Brannstrom, for excellent job done on an enormous amount of work.
- b. New Honors initiatives
  - New awards proposed in order to ensure we are honoring full spectrum of membership.
    - Discussed ‘early career’ award and *JLAG* publication award.
    - Concerns raised regarding having too many awards, difficulty with having enough nominees.
      - Was noted that is not necessary to fill each award every time.
    - Concerns raised regarding costs (paying for awardee registration at conference, cost of plaques).
      - Registration is biggest cost, plaques are relatively minor.
      - *JLAG* award wouldn’t necessarily need to be same as others (i.e. certificate rather than plaque).
    - **Board tasks Honors Committee with coming up with a proposal for one or more new awards that we can vote on via email.**
  - Proposal to tie honoree award cycle to CLAG conference cycle (18 months).
    - **Board unanimously approved motion to tie honoree award cycle to the CLAG conference cycle.**
  - Streamlining application process for student awards.
    - Field awards: having a form for advisor to sign noting that he/she has read proposal and supports application (to replace the letter of recommendation).
    - Travel awards: streamlining application for these minor awards.
    - **Board tasks Honors Committee with coming up with a plan for streamlining the process for student awards.**
      - The new guidelines can be included in revision of the Handbook.

8. Finance Committee (R. Kent)
  - a. Brief discussion of CLAG expenses, revenue and proposed budget.
  - b. Voted on recommendations made by Board at non-quorum meeting in New Orleans.
    - New line item for *JLAG* lecture (\$2000).
    - New line item to cover the annual payment to Syracuse for CLAG archive (\$250 per year) plus the \$1000 we currently owe from past years.
    - Raising *JLAG* editor stipend from \$4000 to \$5000 per year.
      - **Board unanimously approved the budget and all of these recommended budget changes.**
  - c. Board reiterated its gratitude for all of R. Kent's work.
  
9. Publications Committee (K. McSweeney)
  - a. Discussion of role of Publications Committee.
    - Agreement that Publications Committee should be maintained and repopulated after next Board elections.
    - Articulating its role and how could be more useful (is not clear in the Handbook).
      - Assisting with nominees for *JLAG* lecture (C. Gaffney noted this should remain as task for *JLAG* Editorial Board, not Publications Committee).
      - Indexing: how to improve where *JLAG* is indexed.
      - Getting the archives online for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
      - Assisting with outreach (to other publications in Latin America and geographic organizations in Latin America).
      - Working with the Springer Series (SpringerBriefs).
    - K. McSweeney and B. Jokisch will re-visit C. Gaffney's previously compiled list of ideal tasks for the committee and will clarify its role in the Handbook.
  
10. *JLAG* Editor Report (C. Gaffney)
  - a. Readership has reached record levels.
  - b. Changed the layout (now using a two-column format), would like feedback regarding this.
  - c. Due to extenuating circumstances, latest issue of *JLAG* did not get out prior to AAG.
    - Going forward it should be goal to have issue out by time of AAG.
  - d. Suggestions for making *JLAG* go to a higher level of circulation.
    - Invest more heavily in copyediting.
    - Increase targeted special issues.
      - In August will be a special issue on China and Latin American relations (is translating abstracts into Mandarin).
      - Another upcoming special issue on Petro-Geographies.
      - Discussed idea of having a formalized/contractual agreement with guest editors to keep publication date of special issues on track.
        - Contract is excessive, but could lay out expectations in a memo of understanding.
    - Maintaining new *JLAG Retrospectives* (inviting senior CLAG scholars to reflect on articles published in *JLAG* at least 10 years ago).

- Discussed having a special issue for 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary related to this (revisiting old articles). Would be something for new editor to take up right away.
- e. Marketing campaign update
- T. Norris and C. Gaffney have had conversations with data management firm to do electronic promotion campaign for *JLAG* (targeted email blast).
    - Issues with not actually getting email addresses ourselves. However, could be good investment if we have extra revenue.
    - This is tabled for now.
  - P. Solís has large collection of contacts, needs time to go through and identify what can share.
- f. *JLAG* Lecture
- Received positive feedback on 2018 lecture at AAG.
    - Approximately 50-60 people attended, many non-CLAG members.
  - Selection process for next year's speaker (at AAG in D.C.).
    - Question of whether should be *JLAG* Editorial Board or Publications Committee (this year was ad hoc). C. Gaffney reiterated should be Editorial Board.
- g. New *JLAG* Editor Search
- Search Committee has been established (chaired by J. Seeman). Also includes some members of Editorial Board, CLAG leadership (B. Jokisch and M. Steinberg), and an outside person.
    - C. Gaffney has recused himself to avoid conflict of interest.
  - Deadline is May 31<sup>st</sup> and position starts in August.
  - Question of whether Board makes final decision.
    - Search Committee recommends a candidate and then Board votes on it.
  - Should include guidelines for this process in the Handbook.
- h. Board recognized and thanked C. Gaffney for the hard work he has done in transforming *JLAG* and increasing readership.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Clouser, Secretary

