



## **Minutes of the Popular Culture Association Governing Board Meeting, April 4, 2023, Marriott Rivercenter, San Antonio, TX 4:00 PM Central Time**

Chair Colleen Karn called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm; Secretary Beth Downey called the roll and confirmed the existence of a quorum:

**Voting members present:** Sue Matheson (President), Sherry Ginn (VP/President Elect), Nicole Freim (VP Area Chairs), Brenda Boudreau (VP Awards), Elwood Watson (VP Diversity), Debbie Phillips, Robin Reid, Jen Atkins, Peter Cullen Bryan, Beth Downey (Secretary), Colleen Karn (Chair), Tiffany Weaver (Treasurer), David Moody (via Zoom).

**Voting members absent:** none

**Non-voting members present:** Carl Sederholm (JAC Editor), Novotny Lawrence (JPC Editor), Kathy Merlock Jackson (Past President), Phil Simpson (Endowment Chair), Gary Burns (Historian)

**Non-voting members absent:** Lily Kunda, Melissa Vosen Callens

**Approval of minutes:** Downey brought forward edited minutes for Board Meetings dated 12 August 2022, 3 February 2023, & 3 March 2023. Boudreau moved to approve; Ginn seconded. All minutes were approved by the board with none opposed.

**Welcome to Guests:** Karn welcomed Jim Okapal, member of the Ethics Committee; Heather Porter, newly elected board member; and Kristen Morgan of Etherio (formerly Meeting Expectations).

**Announce New Board Members:** Incoming President Ginn announced new members of the board; newly elected trustees Heather Porter and Heidi Nickisher, and newly appointed VP of Awards Traci Roberts-Camps, who will be taking over from Boudreau, who was elected VP/President-Elect.

**Etherio Report & Community Brands Information (Kristen Morgan):** Happy to meet everyone in person. Mahesh Rathi is setting up badges. Mica Wade will run Registration, Sabine Vante is main conference coordinator, Steve Gigantiello does logistics and AV. Home base will be the office behind Registration 2. Salon G&M will be the Book Room. Everything is on the Third Floor.

Final attendance estimate: 1,461 conference registrations – breakdown to follow:

- 101 area chairs
- 21 exhibitors
- 48 guests
- 1,183 presenters
- 85 non-presenters
- 15 retired members
- 6 staff

PCA will be implementing a new print on-demand for badges this year. We will also be collecting/recycling badges and lanyards. Day passes can be purchased at Registration 2.

The Community Brands contract has been signed and Etherio is beginning to create specs and website navigation. Etherio will be reporting back to the board in 4-6 weeks with an update.

Questions re: hotel wi-fi. For now use room numbers to login, using Bonvoy.

**Conference Update (Morgan & Matheson):** Please send receipts with reimbursement form as soon as possible, preferably before leaving San Antonio. This includes meals, luggage fees, mileage, land transportation (taxis, rideshare). There will be an awards luncheon, breakfast and hors d'oeuvres at the concierge lounge, plus several events with food served. Speakers fees, etc. have been handled. Tours are going well, ghost tours added another Friday night tour because the first one filled up.

**Financial Report (Weaver & Matheson):** Balances and expenditures were reported. Balances were low, to be expected for this time of year. Only expense left was \$750 for artwork (listed under *other*). AV, food & beverage won't be in until hotel bills, but we should come in under budget. Endowment investment accounts: as of April 4: \$1,578,000; it was closer to 2 but the market corrected. Community Brands: Billing has been signed, Etherio made the deposit, so they will bill us for that.

**President's Report (Matheson):** Most of the year was spent pivoting back to onsite conference thanks to Etherio. In addition to all other duties, Matheson negotiated another 5-year contract for office at Jerome Library and confirmed Summer Research Institute at BGSU. She has been dealing with a lot of conference issues, travel grants, election revisions, getting sponsors and book room participants, also has been the "complaint department" but most members have been pleasant, helpful and kind as we adjust to growing pains. Thank you to all of the board members for their leadership and service. Special thanks were made to Kathy Merlock Jackson and David Moody as they end their terms on the board, as well as Colin Helb, and Melissa Vosen Callens for her work as Digital Media Director.

**Awards and Award Ceremony (Boudreau):** There was an award winner in every category except for documentary film. Eight of the award winners will be here. We have created a digital badge that can be used for promotion by the authors/scholars. Developed a TOR for the VP of Awards, plus a list for the future VP. There will be a raffle in the book room.

## Break

**Ethics Committee (Ginn, Okapal, and Reid):** Two cases were investigated, the committee also drafted documents and reviewed processes and procedures. Okapal created documents to support the Code of Ethics. Four motions were brought to the board, one for each document to be approved and posted on the website. Okapal said we handled the last case just as we should have as a board. It was not a rubber-stamp; we debated and modified it. These documents should be reviewed and revised every year based on changes in the world and society. We need processes...we had emergency situations that came up, but out of that we were able to develop these documents and will guide and inform our processes. We have the authority to remove bad actors from the conference, but we don't have a PROCESS to do that. We don't *have* to give them due process but it doesn't mean we *shouldn't*, either. Training will be a big part; Okapal will contact the Title IX people at his institution to find guidelines to handle sexual harassment claims. Ginn moved for the Board to accept 1) the Terms of Reference for the Ethics Committee, 2) the Memorandum template, 3) the revisions to the anti-discrimination policy, and 4) the Dictionary of Terms. Reid seconded. Discussion followed, some grammar and

wording changes were made for clarification, a friendly amendment was made to change “ascertain” to “identify” in one section. Karn called a hand vote; motion passed unanimously.

Person who was disciplined emailed us. Reid moved that Ginn respond to the person and copy the Ethics Committee members and the attorney, to remind him of the proper procedures. Karn seconded the motion. With a hand vote, it passed unanimously.

**Bylaws (Ginn):** Committee met three times, created TOR, codified the historian, corrected typos, deleted references to Executive Director, revised elections, made recommendations for the future. One recommendation is that the VP of Programming and Area Chairs is elected only by the area chairs, not the general membership. Ginn moved that in section 3.1, Appendix 2, extend definition of member by being in good standing and follow PCA Code of Conduct; Brenda seconded. Friendly amendment; amend 3.1 to include the code of conduct, delete the definition of member from appendix 2. Vote was called, the motion passed unanimously.

The other bylaw amendment would add duties to the president; serving as or appointing a member of the board to serve on the ethics committee. Ginn moved, Boudreau seconded. Matheson thought there should be distance between the president and the ethics committee and voted no. The President already hears the ethics complaints. A roll call vote was called; the motion passed 8-4.

**Area Chair Committee:** called for volunteers from the general membership and only got one response. Freim thinks there should be more Area Chairs than Board Members on the Committee. This will be a standing committee; 4 Board Members, 5 Area Chairs. It's time to do a serious review of area chairs, term limits, standards/responsibilities. Wants reviews from presenters to be a part of selecting area chair awards going forward. Reid: problems with area chairs not being prompt with acceptances, not even showing up for their own areas, gets stagnant, etc. Downey: Do we do post-conference evaluation? We should develop a survey perhaps with Etherio to assess the conference each year; we can ask about Area Chairs then.

**Timeline for Chicago (Ginn and Freim):** CFPs should be finalized by August 1, website live by August 15. Deadline for papers November 30, Travel Grant Applications due December 15. Want to stick with the deadlines; if the proposal is extended it pushes EVERYTHING back. Makes grants especially sticky; compromise could be that only presenters who made the initial deadline will be eligible for grants.

**Gift Card (Ginn):** To show appreciation to Melissa Vosen Callens for all the work she has done for PCA this year, we should give her a \$500 gift card to say thank you. Reid seconded the motion to send Melissa a thank you gift, \$500 and a San Antonio token. The motion passed unanimously

## **Dinner Break**

**Paying for Membership when registering, not submitting an abstract (Simpson and Karn):** Bartholome implemented the current system which required paying membership when submitting an abstract; the belief was that this would boost membership. Problem was people would submit the abstract, not register or attend, then have their name and abstract in the program anyway. Motion from Simpson: change the payment of membership to registration instead of at submission of abstract. Reid and Karn both seconded. Ginn agreed that If you don't pay registration you don't get in the program. Matheson needs data, look at the DC program. Lower registrations this year may have been due to Covid or San Antonio. The board

should be wary of gatekeeping, making grad students pay fees upfront which keeps them from submitting. Simpson says early career scholars don't have the funding that veteran faculty do. After discussion, it was concluded that a possible presenter should be a member if applying for funding. What conferences require membership before submitting papers? Freim said stick to the "drop dead" date (drop people from program if they haven't paid). Simpson asked who hasn't submitted because of this policy? Porter has data from SciFi Fantasy Area. 2018, 108 submissions, 17 were dropped. in 2019 there were 80 submissions, only 5 dropped. Jackson pointed out PCA's fee isn't very much. Freim asked, could it be a reduced reading fee? Could membership be refunded if we don't accept your paper? Simpson proposed a friendly amendment, if paper is rejected, membership is automatically refunded. A vote was called. Matheson abstained from the vote. Motion passed with 11 yes votes.

**Land Acknowledgement:** Downey moved that the PCA do a land acknowledgement statement for current and future conferences: "BIRT the Popular Culture Association acknowledges that the 2023 conference is taking place on the traditional lands of the Payaya Band of the Tāp Pīlam Coahuiltecan Nation. And that moving forward, the PCA board research the indigenous peoples of future conference sites and draft land acknowledgements reflecting them." Bryan seconded. Discussion followed; Atkins and Reid both said it would be a good start but needs more; work with indigenous people at conference sites, invite them to do the acknowledgement, can be part of speaker series, connect a service project or donation, other ideas to make it more than a gesture. Karn called the vote, motion passed unanimously. Conversation resulted also in a motion from Bryan to form the Chicago conference committee, which also passed.

**Gary Hoppenstand Donation to Jerome Library:** The PCA has donated \$3000 to purchase materials for the library for several years, and the Board must approve this each year. Sue moved to donate the Funds; Karn seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: 11 yes, 1 abstained, motion passed. It was pointed out that we can't keep dipping into the Endowment. Last dip was a loan, we have to factor that in.

**May meeting:** Karn announced that the next Board meeting would be held 4-6 pm Eastern time on May 12, virtually on Zoom.

**VP of Diversity and Outreach Report (Watson):** Watson reported that he has been working with Lawrence, reaching out to HBCUs, getting on Survey Monkey after the May meeting, surveying marginalized groups, hosting a reception at conference. He announced that the Diversity Committee will meet Thursday morning, and there is a Diversity Speaker Series on Friday.

**VP of Programming and Area Chairs Report (Freim):** Freim found a few panels where area chairs aren't registered. Need some relief chairs for a few panels, will send out a list after the meeting for board members to pitch in.

**JAC Editor Report (Sederholm):**

- The JAC Board Meeting will be Wednesday 9 am in Salon C.
- Switching from MLA to Chicago Style.
- Journal acceptance rate is 33%.
- Award Winners:
  - 2022 Jones Award went to Arianna Avalue, PhD candidate, UT-Austin: "Elio and Oliver's Romantic (Grand) Tour: Gender, Genre, and Media-Induced Tourism in *Call Me By Your Name*."

- 2022 Bode Award went to Kel Karpinsky, Assistant Professor of Information Technology and Interlibrary Loan, City Tech-CUNY, "The Iconography of an All-American Icon: Sailors, Homoeroticism, and Mid-Century Queer Cultural Politics".
- Had Special Issues on Zora Neale Hurston and Fashion. Need papers on Asian-American culture.
- Upcoming issues and CFPs include Black Women and Dance (2023), The Evangelical Imagination in the End Times of "White Christian America," (2024), Christmas, Spike Lee, Vietnam War Literature / Culture Revisited, Critical Prison Studies, Gothic and American Politics.

**JPC Editor Report (Lawrence):**

- JPC Board Meeting will be Thursday in Salon I at 10 am.
- Looking for more members for the Editorial Board; ask Lawrence if you are interested in serving, particularly in the areas of music, social media, and other topics.
- Award winners:
  - Russel B. Nye Award for the Outstanding Article 2022 was Traci B. Abbott's "Trans Brides in the History of Trans Representations: All That Glitters (1977) and Sense8 (2015-2018)." Volume 5, Issue 5 (October 2022).
  - William E. Brigman Award for the Outstanding Graduate Student Paper 2023 went to Kris Vera-Phillips, "I would Rather Die: Postcolonial Analysis of Rebel Speeches in Star Wars: Andor."

**Historian Report (Burns):** Preservation Committee meeting Thursday. Showing Marsden/Ray Browne interview from 1988 same night as Birthday Party. History of PCA Panel at 9 am Friday. Working on lists of board members, Popular Press books, collections and anthologies, journals, oral history interviews (done and need to do), memorials.

With that, the meeting was adjourned at 8:09 pm.

Humbly submitted,

*Beth Downey, PCA Secretary*