

**Minutes of the virtual Zoom meeting of the Governing Board of the Popular Culture Association, Tuesday, July 20, 2022, 3:00-5:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada).**

Chair Colleen Karn called the meeting to order at 3:04 PM; Secretary Beth Downey called the roll and confirmed the existence of a quorum.

**Voting members present:** Sue Matheson, Sherry Ginn, Nicole Freim, Brenda Boudreau, Novotny Lawrence, Debbie Phillips, Jen Atkins, Peter Cullen Bryan, Colin Helb, David Moody, Beth Downey, Colleen Karn, Tiffany Weaver

**Voting members absent:** Robin Reid

**Non-voting members present:** Kathy Merlock Jackson, Gary Burns, Melissa Vosen Callens, Carl Sederholm, Ann Larabee, Lily Kunda, Lynn Bartholome

**Non-voting members absent:** Phil Simpson

Brenda moved to approve the minutes from the meeting held June 28, Sherry seconded. Discussion followed and corrections were made to clarify wording and give more detail. Colleen called the vote to approve the minutes, and the motion was approved.

**2022 Virtual Conference Feedback.** Kathy said the majority of comments were complimentary, though a few comments were made about making sure panel moderators recorded panels to the cloud rather than their own drives, and making those recordings available. Most negative comments seemed to be mostly about holding the upcoming conference in Texas. Many who attended town hall have since joined the San Antonio Advisory Committee. While most agree that 2022 was a great conference, how can we improve? Beth suggested giving panelists the choice of having their own papers recorded rather than the area chair making a blanket decision to record or not record panels at all. Colleen thinks we should extend promotion to general universities and grad schools to increase attendance. Nicole indicated that Robin and Lynn revised instructions to Area Chairs, including where to post CFPs. Kathy pointed out that: Society for Cinema and Media Studies does an online preconference, and that maybe we can do one as well (Children's Literature Association may be interested)? Lily reported that the grad student town hall was a success, she would like to do it again and come up with other programming for grad students. Jen asked Lily if grad students asked about publishing. Lily is not sure, but would like to try a writing mentorship program as an idea for next year.

**Board Diversity Training.** Novotny Lawrence proposed we do a diversity informational session during or even before the next conference. PCA was originally going to do one in 2020, but Covid canceled the conference; Bruce Campbell was going to lead the session in Philadelphia. Novotny says we need to start doing this training sooner rather than later and on a regular basis, particularly because association members tend to turn to BIPOC members for questions about diversity statements. We need to do better, while conceding that all have biases and are still learning. Can we have an action item to move forward with San Antonio? We don't DO

diversity, we LIVE diversity. Novotny made a motion to have a diversity information session at the 2023 conference; David Moody seconded. Brenda asked if this would be pre-conference? Novotny and Kathy were going to have it as part of the Board Meeting originally. Brenda mentioned that Area Chairs could benefit too, and that the town hall brought up requests for training for microaggressions. PCA could have either two sessions (one for Board, one for area chairs) or one for both. Colleen added maybe there are online modules that people could take before the conference? Jen agreed with all, an hour just opens conversation. We want to invite people to facilitate the conversation, construct our time to bolster efforts to have training BUT also offer ways to construct anti-racism in pop culture, and normalize the conversation. Novotny suggested post-conference surveys to see how we are doing. We are also creating the bell hooks award. Colleen called the vote: motion passes unanimously.

**2023 National Conference:** June Town Hall (see separate Town Hall minutes document): Peter says there was productive discussion, Colleen was a good moderator that kept tempers down. They formed a committee and tried to make it diverse (faculty, independent scholars, grad students). Colleen thanks Peter and Brenda for their work. Sue says we have to decide today if the conference will be face to face or virtual. For comparison, in our last in-person conference in Washington, D.C. we had 2600; it's been closer to a little over 1,000 the last two virtuals, which is why Lynn is estimating 1-1.2K for San Antonio. We have to factor in cost of marketing, speakers, etc. Last time in San Antonio, we were co-conferencing with Southwest PCA, and numbers were still down. Lynn thinks we have no choice, even though we were going to have another town hall in August, but we can't wait til then. Lynn may have ideas to entice attendance. Jen has an idea for how to do a hybrid option. Peter says overall average scale of 7 out of 10 are in favor of meeting in Texas. Brenda moved we go to San Antonio, Peter seconds. Jen says there will still be people who can't go to an in-person conference at all, Texas or not. Maybe just for this year there's a possible option? Below is the example that Jen offered during the meeting as a success in the Dance Studies Association conference (Jen provided a more clear outline below to add to the minutes):

- Provide a way for members to note in their submission whether they are asking to present virtually or in person
- Accept only a percentage of virtual submissions and be clear/transparent about that up front; This could function on a first come, first served basis.
- Apply panel parameters for virtual participation:
- Either 1/2 or 2/3 of the panel must present their work in-person
- One person on the panel must commit to contributing zoom link for the session
- Could require that virtual participation will only be approved for preformed panels or that preformed panels get priority acceptance
- Registration fee will remain the same as in-person or might even be slightly higher to offset contract costs. We would need to be clear/transparent about this up front and provide a brief explanation around this decision and how it enables us to host a hybrid conference this year (but that we'll find alternate routes next year).
- Ideally, though understandably difficult, we'd rotate the panels so that we have a higher chance of achieving the 1500 people staying for 2 nights (per the hotel contract)

Sherry said Heather Porter has experience with transportation and security. Nicole asks can we amend Brenda's motion with an addition for virtual?

**Amended: "I move that we go to San Antonio in person, focusing on safety and security and pursuing an online component if possible." Peter seconds the amended motion. Colleen calls for a vote; motion passes with 10 yes, 2 no.**

Jen asks, what if we can't get to where we need to be re: safety/security/virtual? Standing committee has the responsibility to do their best to get us there. Brenda noted the San Antonio committee has specific action items they are addressing. Melissa points out an alternate virtual conference separate from PCA in-person isn't inclusive, so be careful how it's presented. Nicole asked what to tell Area Chairs putting out CFPs? We can't say we are definitely doing virtual because what if we can't? Sue says Nicole can tell them the motion and go from there.

**Website Support.** Colin did a cost-comparison analysis. RebelMouse has a discount they are offering for PCA that is well over 50% off, a discount that they do for other nonprofits. RebelMouse wants us as a showpiece. They fold in email newsletter and hosting. They have a commitment to diversity; RebelMouse is trans-owned and social justice oriented. Sue asks how long the discount is for (is there a limit, does it go up after a year, etc.). They are willing to do it year-by-year, not looking to jack up the rate after a year or anything. They see themselves as partners rather than vendors. Brenda asks about contracts; RebelMouse is open to working with us on our terms. Colin suggests a two year contract. There was discussion as to whether there was a "prenup," i.e., what happens if after two years we aren't happy? The site is still ours, they would hand us the keys, help us move the whole thing back to Drupal or WordPress if we wanted. Brenda asks who's responsible for putting content on the website? We would need to have an employee or board member handle that, but they can help us figure that out. Would areas have their autonomy? Possibly! Novotny asks, can we get a rate locked in considering the economy? And we're asking a LOT for a board member to do (adding content). Where content comes from may be aspirational. Brenda moves to pursue a contract with RebelMouse, seconded by Novotny. Colleen calls a vote; the motion passes unanimously, 11-0 (Weaver had to leave early).

**Borderlands in Popular Culture Special Topics proposal.** Jen submitted a proposal to have a special topic area addressing Borderlands in Popular Culture, as one of the special topics reflecting social issues in Texas as well as other areas. Beth seconds the motion. Discussion ensues and it is pointed out that there needs to be a chair for the area in order to handle the CFP and submissions (Tentatively CFP goes live 8/15, submissions start 9/1.). The motion is tabled for the next board meeting.

**Conference Company:** as this involves hiring and personnel, Colleen made a motion that the board go into Executive Session, Beth seconded. The Board went into executive session, and exited the session at approximately 5:15 pm.

Colleen scheduled another time-limited executive session the next evening at 7 pm ET to complete personnel business.

**Colleen adjourned the meeting at 5:20 pm.**

Humbly submitted,

Beth Downey  
PCA Secretary