

Middle States Division AAG Executive Board Meeting
Approved Minutes
SUNY Buffalo State, October 18, 2013

Present: Kelly Frothingham (President), David Fyfe (Vice President), Mark Blumler (Secretary), Jo Mano (Executive Director), Paul Marr (Past President and Editor, *Middle States Geographer*), Grant Saff (Regional Councilor), and AAG President Julie Winkler.

1. The meeting began at 11:47 AM.
2. The minutes of the Spring, 2013 meeting were approved.
3. Paul recapped the 2012 regional meeting at Shippensburg. Attendance was only average thanks to Sandy, as there were 13 or so refunds to registrants who canceled; for the most part because gas was not available in NJ and NY. The meeting went well, and seems to be rebounding in numbers. Paul pointed out that it wasn't just he who put the meeting together, that such events always require a group effort. He singled out for acknowledgement Claire Janzen, and the student participation. Mark praised the quality of the student presentations at the meeting.
4. Kelly discussed the 2013 meeting highlights. There are 84 participants, of whom 55 are students, 28 faculty, and one other. There are 46 papers, nine posters, 12 paper sessions and one poster session. The numbers are somewhat less than last year no doubt due to Buffalo's location at one end of the region, far from some campuses. She mentioned that Delaware, which has not participated in recent years, expressed some interest this time. David will follow up and encourage them to come next year, at York.

Mark reported that there were three entries in the Student Paper Competition, all graduate students, and that one paper was far too long to be considered. Since one of the others canceled her appearance, only one paper remains, which is an excellent one. There followed some discussion about ways to encourage more submissions; the call will go out in April, which hopefully will give students more time to prepare papers. There also was some discussion whether we should have a student poster competition. Julie noted that some other regional meetings do.

Also discussed was whether campus students should be allowed to attend for free – the consensus appeared to be that offering free attendance to those who volunteer for instance at the registration desk, is appropriate. Starting earlier on Friday was suggested, but it was pointed out that this would necessitate staying two nights, which might be exorbitant for students.

Buffalo State contributions to the meeting included but were not limited to folders, name badges and inserts, programs, signage, and the lunch that we were currently

enjoying. Cost for food was about \$38/ person, and because the event is at the student union, there are no fees for the rooms (a saving of about \$1000). There were some small fees for sound tech, bringing the total expenses to about \$2900. Total income as of today was about \$3100, with approximately \$500 in registration fees outstanding. Total meeting profit should be about \$700.

Next the issue of going to all online registration was discussed. Currently it is not possible to pay with a credit card. Most other meetings have sorted this out, and it will be on the agenda at the national meeting in Tampa. Hopefully others will share with us at Tampa how to do it. The Pennsylvania Geographical Society also successfully does online registration. There was agreement that we really need to make this change.

Kelly acknowledged the many contributions of others at Buffalo State, whose efforts were essential to the success of the meeting. Essential support came from faculty, the dean, students, and secretarial staff.

5. AAG is inviting Regional Chairs to a two hour luncheon and discussion meeting, followed by a two hour workshop, on Friday, April 11, 2014 at the Annual Meeting in Tampa. AAG funding will be offered to Chairs who go. Julie and Grant indicated that other Board members also were welcome. David and Mark will go on their own funding, and it was suggested that Kelly use the offered money to attend also.

6. Jo reported on finances. Costs have decreased since the *Middle States Geographer* went online. She distributed a handout showing meeting finances the past few years, which showed that generally speaking they have been profitable. Grant asked that the handout should reflect the payment of \$188 (4/30/12) for a three year contract with Bluehost for webhosting. The contract should expire in March 2015.

7. Paul reported on the *Middle States Geographer*. The current issue has 11 papers. Issues/concerns with the journal were discussed, particularly that there has been difficulty getting reviewers, and that the current issue was late. Normally it appears in June, and this year not until a few weeks ago. Adam can't be at the annual meetings, and so he doesn't network and get reviewers there. It was suggested that the Board serve as reviewers. Based on her experience when she was editor of the journal, Kelly stated rather that one needs to follow-up repeatedly with reviewers to get the review done promptly. Also, at Buffalo State they hired student help, but Adam cannot do so; moreover, at Buffalo there were several faculty who could work together, which facilitated matters. Shippensburg has 15 faculty, and it was suggested that Paul see if someone there can help. Grant suggested sending Adam a letter asking what he wants to do. The Board agreed to provide \$500 to support a student

8 Grant provided a time-shortened Regional Councilor report. The AAG is asking the regions for feedback as to the external pressures and opportunities faculty are facing. In response, Board members noted that lines are being cut, and new programs such as sustainability are taking enrollments. Sustainability is a double edged sword, because many departments are cherry picking courses to fit the rubric. We always seem to be behind the curve when it comes to new geography-related bandwagons such as sustainability, and globalization.

David said that currently, all is driven by assessment and outcomes; it was suggested that perhaps the AAG could produce a statement of expected outcomes in Geography. STEM is also affecting us because of the need to fight to have physical geography recognized as a STEM discipline, and GIS as a technology. Another external pressure is that professional programs are getting increasing support. The rise of certifications is another problem. We teach a skill set, we need to make that clear.

In further feedback to the Regional Councilor, the Board supported the proposed AAG name change. Also, we stated that we would be happy to accept Puerto Rico as a member of our region (the AAG will invite PR to join either SEDAAG or us). Finally, Grant asked Julie to explain the new AAG Childcare initiative; she brought up the suggestion that we provide a list of child care places for those attending regional meetings. Although it would require some effort on the part of the Regional President, we supported the idea. Patricia Solis does it for the national meeting, and can help.

9 Grant provided an update on the website. There is an institutional cost of about \$1300/yr, but that is not a cost to the MSDAAG. Grant had asked for some funding for a student in summer, and concern was expressed over relying on a student webmaster. This was resolved when it was recognized that Grant is the actual if not official webmaster. There appeared to be a consensus that we set a maximum budget of \$300/yr for the student help. One task is to get old data, and Grant indicated that was do-able.

10 Dave provided an update on next year's meeting. He has identified a hotel where it can be held, is positive food will be similar in cost to 2013, and will touch base with Kelly to make sure things get done. He should put a flyer on the web in April or even earlier to interest people in the competitions.

11 A photo of the Board for website is desirable.

The meeting adjourned at 1:32 PM.

Submitted by Grant Saff (Secretary)