

**46<sup>th</sup> Annual Byzantine Studies Conference  
The Virtual BSC**

**Governing Board Meeting of the Byzantine Studies Association of North America, Inc.**

Saturday, October 24, 2020 6-7PM (EST)

Held via Zoom

Minutes (approves 12/9/2021)

Present: Ben Anderson, Roland Betancourt, Hannah Ewing (minutes), Cecily Hilsdale, Brad Hostetler, Lynn Jones, Tia Kolbaba, Fotini Kondyli, Byron MacDougall, Leonora Neville, Alex Riehle, Ruma N. Salhi, Felege-Selam Yirga, and Alice Isabella Sullivan.

Not present: George Demacopoulos; Meredith Riedel.

**1. Call to Order** (Ben Anderson)

**2. Election of New Executive Officers** (slate approved at Thursday's board meeting):

President: Lynn Jones  
Vice President: Byron MacDougall  
Secretary: Alice Isabella Sullivan  
Treasurer: Tia Kolbaba (re-election)

Motion to approve new executive board: Cecily; seconded Leonora. Motion passes.

Introductions of new members.

**3. Approval of Agenda** (Lynn Jones as new presiding officer now)

Motion to approve: Fotini Kondyli; seconded: Roland Betancourt. Motion passes.

**4. Nominations for and Election of Communications Officer**

Self-Nomination: Brad Hostetler  
Unanimous election by the board.

**5. Listserv Transition**

Confirming movement of listerv (within next 6 weeks, before Yahoo Groups expires) to new platform. Hannah will work with Alice and Brad during the next six weeks on this transition. Will be using Google groups as the new platform.

**6. Confirm date to send comments to Galina regarding new website; prepare for website launch** (See Appendix A)

Cecily: Proposes everyone till take a look at the website, and send comments to Galina within the next week. She can consolidate the messages and send to Emmanuel. Group consensus that they will do this.

Lynn: Recommended that you view the website in “incognito” mode given the insecure-server message.

**7. Establish post-conference attendee Survey questions**, set date to send out. Alice and Brad will be responsible for the survey, with help from Hannah.

Questions/topics desired for coverage:

- Demographic questions (Ben)
  - People’s positions, e.g., grad student, contingent, etc. (Lynn)
- Questions on potential hybrid format (Cecily)
  - Would you come to a hybrid session next year (Lynn)
- Your attendance. First time? (Cecily)
- Types of programming desired (Cecily)
- Did you attend the Business Lunch? If not, why? (Lynn)
- Ideas/feedback for online conference, if we do this again next year (Byron)
- Byzantinists of Color question—ask people to identify/not (Ben, Leonora)
- Did BSANA’s advocacy around diversity affect your decision to attend the BSC? (Ruma)

One survey; to be sent to BOTH the listserv and people who attended the BSC this year. Byron will harvest information on people who attended the BSC.

Draft of questions to be circulated to Lynn, etc., ahead of being sent out on survey.

Reminder: Lynn should be writing the post-conference Presidential Message, including results of Business Lunch, etc.

## **8. Diversity and Inclusion Committee**

Currently committee members = Ben Anderson, Byron MacDougall, Fotini Kondyli. Will report the findings of their survey of our BIPOC membership (using data from BSC survey and any other discussions) for discussion at the January meeting.

Of new board members, Roland, Ruma, and Felege elect to join this committee.

## **9. Virtual Board meeting in January.**

Alice Sullivan will send out poll to Board to set date for meeting.

## **10. Confirm Re-allocation of funds to CDs.** 10K to remain in checking, 30K in savings.

Lynn and Tia will move forward with this, per Thursday’s board discussion.

FYI item for the new board members.

**11. Discussion of graduate student prize monies**, beginning 2021 conference; currently 1K per year

Came up in Ballard/Jones report of 2019 that this money may want to be reconsidered. Discussion to reconsider it. Discussed quantity of prizes, amount of money per prize, and hierarchy of prizes issues. After lively discussion, group voted to give 3 prizes, ranked 1-3, each with a prize of \$300 cash. Additionally, hope to encourage book donations (from DO or senior scholars) for winners as additional compensation.

**12. Formation of an Advocacy Committee?**

Issue was raised at the Thursday board meeting. Advocacy should be decided by the membership, not just the president. After discussion, general consensus that we should have this committee. Roland pointed out that other organizations already do this. Conclusion to add this question to the BSC survey, for the membership's view.

Will take up the answers to the survey at the January board meeting before progressing.

For members of this committee, may tap the people who were nominated for the board but not elected this year. Will not rely on self-nominations to this committee.

**13. Proposal for Graduate Student Committee** (See Appendix B)

Relationship of this committee to the BSANA board not currently determined. Alice recommended the MAA's graduate committee as a good model. Lynn suggests the graduate students should drive the shape of the committee; likely they should report at the Business Lunch.

Suggestion by Fotini that questions related to this committee could be included in Dar's Jaharis programming survey. Perhaps information on contacting someone if interested in nominating or self-nominating to the committee.

Majority of the board voted to create a Graduate Student Committee.

**14. DO liaison**

Current make-up of this committee is Alice-Mary Talbot, Annemarie Weyl Carr, Alicia Walker, Holger Klein (chair), and the BSANA president ex officio. That would be Lynn now, though Ben expressed willingness to continue on committee if needed.

Discussion about the value of this committee, especially in light of the new search for the program director in Byzantine Studies.

Board agrees that we should keep this liaison committee in place.

**15. Formation of new ad-hoc fundraising committee, to handle: 1) Early Career support; 2) Byzantinists of Color Fund; 3) Alternative grad student prizes**

Discussion was favorable as to the need for fundraising, but many members expressed reluctance to move forward with it at this particular time. We need more data from the Diversity and Inclusion committee about how we'd spend the money, and also we don't know how the free-membership issue will affect finances yet. Let's be specific and convincing before we ask for money (Fotini). COVID-era concerns on finances of donors (Ruma). Committee exhaustion (Leonora).

Based on discussion, proposal that we focus on addressing tiered memberships before we do fundraising (Lynn). Voted approval passes motion.

**16. Confirm 20-25% limit on graduate papers accepted for 2021 BSC with Program Committee Chair.**

FYI. Lynn will reach out to Galina to make sure the cap is observed in 2021.

**17. Adjourned 7:05 PM.**

Motion to approve: Lynn; seconded: Leonora. Motion passes.

## **Appendix A:**

Email from Emmanuel Bourbouhakis re: website progress

This is the link to the template of the site, provisionally hosted on Inforest's server,  
<https://bsana.inforest.com/>

We are still working on the colour scheme (this is obviously not a “royal purple” and the yellow is too garish). I've asked for the palette so as to find a suitable mix. We also need better images and identifying captions. Many of the ones currently there are place-holders taken from open access sites online. Hagia Sophia notwithstanding, it would be great if we could avoid cliché and showcase some lesser known visuals. I'd hoped the Art Historians could be of more help with this. More important is the culling of obsolete text from the old site and the filling in of the individual sections with up-to-date information, including how to become a member, which I have foregrounded on the Home Page. To that end, the Home Page will feature a rotating set of announcements and features items of broad interest to the field, alongside the BSC announcement (with an image), in the hope of generating more traffic and keeping BSANA on colleagues' radar. We've had a spate of podcasts, recorded lectures, as well as interesting publications, that could be featured before being archived on the site. Which brings me to “Resources”, the other anticipated traffic generator: the aim is to populate this with links and (very) short descriptions of the many online resources available to the field (I would argue for both open and restricted access resources, since this is designed to inform and not just as a portal). Colleagues in one discipline are often unaware of online resources in another.

The hope is that BSANA's site can help bind us together by offering a “place” where our common interests meet. One thing the board must decide: how will we maintain the site? If we pay a graduate student to make periodic updates, we must be sure to regularly identify someone who is at once proficient in Wordpress (not especially difficult, but also not obvious) and diligent (the site must be updated regularly, otherwise colleagues will quickly learn to ignore it and with it, BSANA). One option would be to pay for this service. Inforest had offered to do it for \$25/month. We would likely pay a graduate student more than this and get less reliable service, to say nothing of the rotation of people and the inevitable discontinuity. We can't have a decent website without some IT service, which would also allow us to make timely changes to the site's features in order to host video conferences, etc.

I think the two of us could probably wrap this up before Christmas. Again, the delays have been almost entirely from my end since March, when Inforest sent me the draft of the site.

All best to the board,  
Emmanuel

## **Appendix B:**

Proposal: Formation of a Graduate Student Committee  
Lynn Jones

I propose a formation of a Graduate Student Committee that would be tasked with outreach; targeting graduate student interest, investment in, and participation at BSCs. The Committee would be guaranteed a dedicated session every year. The Committee would work with the Communications Officer to increase awareness of events and opportunities.

An announcement and call for nominations and self-nominations would be sent after the conference, with a vote held in January.

Membership on such a committee would be a valuable asset to any graduate's CV, and the experience would also be valuable. We also have much to learn from them, and this gives them an agency they have not previously had.