

**46th Annual Byzantine Studies Conference
The Virtual BSC**

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

Thursday, October 22, 2020

7-9 PM (EST)

Held via Zoom

Minutes (approved 12/9/2021)

Present: Ben Anderson, Hannah Ewing (minutes), Dar Brooks Hedstrom, Cecily Hilsdale, Brad Hostetler, Lynn Jones, Young Richard Kim, Tia Kolbaba, Fotini Kondyli, Byron MacDougall, Leonora Neville, Steve Rapp, Alex Riehle, Alice Isabella Sullivan, and Galina Tirnanic.

Not present: Meredith Riedel

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Approval of Agenda**
Motion to approve: Cecily Hilsdale; seconded, Dar Brooks Hedstrom. Motion passes.
3. **Approval of Minutes of Governing Board Meetings held at the 45th BSC, Madison, Wisconsin**
Motion to approve: Alice Sullivan; seconded, Tia Kolbaba. Motion passes.
4. **Election of New Executive**

Thanks expressed to the slate of candidates for election at Saturday's board meeting:

Candidates: Lynn Jones – President
Byron MacDougall – Vice President
Alice Isabella Sullivan – Secretary

Motion to approve slate: Young Kim; seconded, Alex Riehle. Motion passes.

Officers' Reports

5. **President's Report** (Ben Anderson)

Necrology: John W. Barker
Marilyn Heldman

Yıldız Ötüken
Olga Popova
Marko Popović
Emilian Popescu
Philip Rousseau

Advocacy: BSANA-DO Liaison
The liaison committee continues, with addition of Alicia Walker. Committee discussed transitions at DO; current program director appointment ending this year; search for a 5-year Byzantine Studies appointment will be advertised. Currently an interim DO Director; will be an international search for director with foundation experience. Report on pandemic-era [remote] activities at DO.

Hagia Sophia & Chora
This year BSANA did not protest national governments; ceded that responsibility to international level. Discussion followed on creation of an advocacy committee or otherwise bringing advocacy discussions to the members, so that president is not the only one tasked to address BSANA advocacy. Suggestion that the BSANA board could meet virtually 2-3 times per year to discuss advocacy issues.

Future BSCs: Cleveland 2021, dates October 7-10 now set.
Los Angeles 2022
Whither 2023?
Suggestion that the 2023 conference could be hosted in Detroit, with support from various Michigan faculty.

Discussion on how we must ascertain that the designated host institutions can still supply money for these conferences, as we get closer to each one.

Discussion of whether we might incorporate virtual elements into future BSCs (e.g., hybrid conferences), to boost equity in conference access, in light of funding limitations and increasing technological comfort. General approval for hybrid elements, albeit with the caveat that this would depend on the logistics of local arrangements committees. Suggestion that we collect and parse data of this year's virtual BSC (via adding questions to the annual survey) to lend weight to any hybrid decision.

6. **Secretary's Report** (Hannah Ewing)

Review of the Secretary's current role, to inform Communications Officer discussion:

- Per bylaws, maintained minutes and archives (which we do in BSANA board Dropbox and more publicly on BSANA website); maintained a membership roster, which included answering membership queries. In future, worth considering if membership roster better belongs to Treasurer.

- Beyond bylaws, operated listserv and Facebook page. Also compiled the annual necrology list, as a side-effect of running the listserv.

Closure of Yahoo Groups on December 15, 2020 spells final demise for the BSANA listserv hosted there. Email addresses have been harvested; need to move to a new platform.

Board discussion of potential new platforms for the listserv; decision to transfer it over to Google Groups. Transition will happen in the period between BSC and December 15, overseen by outgoing Secretary and the incoming officer in charge of listserv.

7. **Treasurer's Report** (Tia Kolbaba)

Report attached as Appendix C.

Discussion of restricted vs. unrestricted funds in account. Suggestion that we move the bulk of funds into CDs to improve return via higher interest rate. General approval.

Suggestion that BSANA could be more proactive at fundraising; the BoC fund appeal went well.

Committee Reports

8. **Nominating Committee Report** (Galina Tirnanic)

Nominees for election to the board for 2020-24 (election to be held at Business Lunch):

Roland Betancourt, Professor, University of California, Irvine (Art History)
 Christina Christoforatos, Associate Professor, Baruch College, CUNY (Literature)
 George Demacopoulos, Professor, Fordham University (Theology/Ecclesiastical History)
 Thomas Lecaque, Assistant Professor, Grand View University (History)
 Ruma N. Salhi, Professor, Northern Virginia Community College (History)
 Shannon Steiner, Visiting Assistant Professor, Binghamton University (Art History)
 Nicole Paxton Sullo, Lecturer & Graduate Alumni Postdoctoral Fellow, Yale University (Art History)
 Felege-Selam Yirga, Assistant Professor, University of Tennessee, Knoxville (History)

Mix of institutions, career stages, and fields applauded. Continued success of self-nomination option.

Discussion of how to democratize elections so as not to depend as heavily on academic networks. Suggestion that in the future we collect information from the candidates (why they want to serve), so that people don't just vote based on name-recognition. Suggestion that voting move away from the Business Lunch, though this will require a bylaw edit; would need to make a motion and pass it as the next Business Lunch in order to change elections.

9. **Future Program Committees**

Galina Tirnanic will chair for Cleveland 2021; Young Kim will chair for Los Angeles 2022.

10. **Website Committee Report** (Emmanuel Bourboulakis, via proxy)

Report sent via email by Galina Tirnanic. Sample website viewed by board.

Discussion of who will maintain the website. General sentiment that what company is offering for \$25/month may not be adequate. Suggestion that the new Communications Officer would be a good candidate for updates; likely also Secretary would have role (updating archives). Discussion of graduate student assistance tabled until we have officer responsibilities clear. Galina Tirnanic will continue to liaise on website.

11. **Professional Development Committee / Jaharis Liaison Report** (Dar Brooks Hedstrom)

117 “early career” scholars registered for virtual conference, around 80 attending Jaharis events—many more than equivalent in-person events.

Survey after events will include questions on what early-career scholars need now, in time of increased uncertainty.

Suggestion that we do 1-2 further events each year, virtually between conferences. And/or the mentoring idea mentioned at the emergency meeting in the spring.

New Business

12. **Byzantinists of Color Fund**

Fundraising goal met.

Discussion of forming a Diversity and Inclusion (name TBD) committee to tackle questions of eligibility (should undergraduates be included? High school teachers?), mechanisms for application and disbursement, whether it meets a need (we must talk to the target audience to determine this), can we make it work, can we do more.

Motion to approve formation of this committee: Cecily Hilsdale; seconded: Fotini Kondyli. Motion passes.

Committee formed: Ben Anderson, Byron MacDougall, and Fotini Kondyli; with the ongoing assistance of Lynn Jones and Young Kim. Committee will meet online in coming weeks and produce a report for early 2021.

Suggestion that the Mary Jaharis Center be looped into this committee's work.

13. **Proposal for Expansion of "Graduate Student" Status & Benefits**

See Appendix A.

Discussion on how this would impact finances. Use of the new other-funding form (developed in 2019) for all applicants. Noted that this change only changes the board's definition of "graduate student," not the Program Committee's; will not affect conference paper quota caps. Approval of need to help now, since we can—and if this re-definition is not financially viable, we can revisit or rescind in a couple years.

Motion to approve proposal: Alex Riehle; seconded, Fotini Kondyli. Motion passes.

14. **Proposal for Establishment of the Position of Communications Officer**

See Appendix B.

Overdue, given growth of communications role and the addition of the new website, etc.

Motion to approve proposal: Leonora Neville; seconded, Galina Tirnanic. Motion passes.

Distribution of tasks between Secretary and Communications Officer to be revised in a year or two, when these officers have a better sense of what makes sense.

15. **Proposal to extend current USNCBS appointments by one year**

Necessitated by the postponement of the Congress. Elizabeth Bolman, Derek Krueger, and Alicia Walker have agreed to serve as USNCBS officers for an additional year.

Motion to approve proposal: Lynn Jones; seconded, Leonora Neville. Motion passes.

16. **Adjournment 9:10 PM**

Motion to adjourn: Leonora Neville; seconded, Galina Tirnanic. Motion passes.

Appendix A

Proposal: Expansion of “Graduate Student” Status & Benefits

Alice Sullivan, Byron MacDougall, Brad Hostetler, Cecily Hilsdale

Our subcommittee was tasked with identifying additional ways in which BSANA can support its members, especially in light of the immediate and long-term budgetary constraints resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

With job losses, hiring freezes, and myriad increasing budgetary restrictions, it is clear that many BSANA members are facing an unprecedented degree of professional and financial uncertainty. To that end, we propose amending our membership structure to allow for early career scholars without permanent positions to enjoy the same benefits as graduate students with the exception of the paper prize, which would still be reserved for students enrolled in a graduate program.

In concrete terms, we propose changing the name of the “Student” membership category to “Graduate Students and Early Career Contingent Scholars.”

“Early Career Contingent Scholars” designate scholars who have earned their PhD within the past 8 years and who do not hold permanent or tenure-track appointments. This includes scholars serving as adjuncts, post-doctoral fellows, contingent faculty, and those holding other non-tenured academic and non-academic positions.

By broadening the graduate student membership category to include such early career contingent scholars, we would allow them to qualify for the same travel funding currently available only to graduate students (and they would be bound by the same eligibility requirements) and also to free membership. However, again, they would not be eligible for the graduate student prize.

We believe that our organization currently has the resources to fund both graduate students as well as early career contingent scholars. And we believe that using our funds in this way will help maintain the long-term well-being of our organization.

Appendix B

Proposal: Establishment of the Position of Communications Officer

Brad Hostetler

This proposal seeks to add a standing officer position to the Governing Board. The Communications Officer would be responsible for disseminating official BSANA communications and circulating relevant announcements from its members and related organizations via e-mail and social media. These duties are presently administered by the Secretary, but are not explicitly defined in the original BSANA Constitution or in the By-Laws (Section IV.4): “The Secretary prepares the minutes of all Business Meetings and Governing Board meetings and is responsible for the maintenance of the membership files and updating an electronic membership roster.” Over time the Secretary assumed the responsibilities of communicating BSANA news and business, first via the e-mail listserv, then Facebook (since 2011), and then Twitter (since 2015). Maintaining these avenues of communication stretches the duties of the Secretary well beyond that which is articulated in the By-Laws.

To that end, I propose that we decouple communications from the duties of the Secretary and establish a new officer who can focus on these tasks. This change will allow BSANA to bring greater attention to its communication efforts, in addition to lightening the workload from the Secretary.

I propose the following item to be added to the By-Laws:

Section IV <http://bsana.net/documents/bylaws.html>

11. The Communications Officer is elected in the same manner as the President. The Communications Officer disseminates official BSANA communications and circulates relevant announcements from its members and related organizations via e-mail and social media.

Appendix C:

Byzantine Studies Association of North America 2020 Treasurer’s Report

Covering October 9, 2019 to September 30, 2020

Prepared by Tia Kolbaba (kolbaba@religion.rutgers.edu)

Accounts as of **September 30, 2020**

Bank of America “Business Advantage” Checking:	45,989.05
Bank of America “Business Advantage” Savings (earning 0.03% interest):	54,004.76
PayPal NonProfit Business Account:	3,116.54

Total Accounts: 103,110.35

2019-20 Income (Oct. 1, 2019-Sept. 30, 2020)

University of Wisconsin, return of seed money and profit, 2019 conference 7094.40

Donations (all) 9728.36

2019 1650.00

2018: 905.00

2017: 2,185.00

General donations 288.56

Donations to Byzantinists of Color Fund 8439.80

Membership dues from 116 members 4737.53

An additional 22 members paid dues after 9/30/20: 138

2019: 140 members

2018: 183 Members

2017: 173 members

Interest on Savings Account 28.07

Total Income 21,588.36

Income 2019: 10,074.97

Income 2018: 2,060.67

Income 2017: 12,980.66

2019-20 Expenses

10/17/2019 Board meeting dinner, Madison, Wisconsin
(462.00)

11/6/2019 MJC Funding: Reimbursement, speaker at Jaharis
(1546.00)

12/31/2019 Graduate Student Travel Reimbursements, 2019 Conference (5416.30)

16 students funded

2018: \$7,041.23, 21 students

2017: \$4,007.38, 14 students

2016: \$3,600, 12 students funded

1/18/2020 Inforest Communications, website design
(1040.00)

4/15/2020 Oertel, Fernandez, Bryant and Atkinson, annual report and tax preparation
(62.75)

9/29/2020 Zoom Video Communications (213.14)
Business License for 2020 Byzantine Studies Conference

Total Expenses	(8740.19)
Expenses 2019: (\$23,664.92)	
Expenses 2018: (\$9,856.92)	
Expenses 2017: (\$9,448.11)	

2020 Income less Expenses	12,848.17
Income less Expenses 2019 (\$13,589.95)	
Income less expenses 2018: \$2,203.75	
Income less expenses 2017: \$3,532.55	

NOTES

- The balances in accounts are up. This should be considered in light of two sub-funds: (1) 15,439.80 in the BOC fund; (2) 2,395 balance forward from the Jharis Center. In other words, our total balance of *unrestricted* funds is 85,275.55.
- Income is up, because of (1) donations to the Byzantinists of Color fund; (2) the return of seed money and profit from the Local Arrangements Committee in Wisconsin (2019).
- Memberships are stable: 138 as of 10/19/2020, 140 in 2019.
- Dues and donations have been recorded and calculated as net amounts after PayPal fees. The total of PayPal fees for the period Oct. 9, 2019 to Sept. 30, 2020 is 339.59 (2019: 246.32), at 2.9% plus .30 per transaction. I would argue that this cost is reasonable, given the convenience to our members and the reduced workload for the Treasurer. It seems likely, as well, that this convenience increases our income.
- Expenses are down, mostly because of the online conference this year. The deficit at the time of the 2019 conference reflected subsidies and seed money for Local Arrangements Committees in 2018 and 2019. Much of that money has now been refunded to BSANA.
- We paid the money for a new website design in January 2020. We have yet to see a return on this investment.