

## Annual ANHS Executive Council Conference Call Meeting April 20, 2017

Meeting began at 1pm Eastern Time.

**Present:** Teri Allendorf, Steven Folmar, Jana Fortier, Heather Hindman, Sya Kedzior, Galen Murton, Mark Turin, Jessica Vantine Birkenholtz

**Notetaker:** Anne Naparstek

Heather Hindman (HH) called the meeting to order, briefly mentioning announcements and moving on to the agenda

### 1. Travel Grants

HH reported on the status of the Travel Grants, noting that the amounts offered have been up and down in recent years. She indicated that the current budget for 2017 is \$1,500 and, with 12 applicants, decided to close the application until a decision could be made on what to do. HH asked for input from the EC on how to move forward. Teri Allendorf (TA) noted the history of the travel grants: first for EC only because of moving locations of meetings, then special speakers included, now on the website but not all applicants are eligible. HH asked the EC for thoughts on whether to allocate more funds for the award or to reduce the number of people who are eligible. Sya Kedzior (SK) suggested that if ANHS keeps eligibility open beyond Board members, to prioritize students from universities with no or low funding. TA indicated that first the decision of just for the Board or keep as is with eligibility beyond the Board should be discussed, perhaps at the September meeting. SK noted that she will not be attending the September meeting but will be Skyping in, which changes the pressure for her to attend. HH put forth two considerations about the Madison meeting: 1) ANHS losing its presence at the South Asia Conference, but maybe still having a get-together at the conference even if no EC meeting and 2) Madison continuing to be South Asia only, and so will continue to be a challenge for non-South Asianists to attend.

HH suggested that the EC mull these options over until September. With no response, she accepted silence as assent.

### 2. EC Vacancies

HH reminded the EC that ANHS is allowed to have a range in number of EC members, from 9-15 including the ex officio members. The EC is currently at 11 plus 2 ex officio members. HH wondered how the EC would like to address these vacancies, either filling the spots or leaving them vacant. TA suggested that anyone that is invited this year to attend the meeting at HSC could then start their term next year. Steve Folmar (SF) preferred keeping the number above nine, favoring the high end. TA preferred keeping the EC smaller and having other non-EC members help with the work. TA stressed the need to make sure that those who join have the time and energy to take on the tasks and attend the meetings. HH asked all to think about their preferences and to send suggestions for numbers or potential EC members, which she could then circulate to all.

### 3. Boulder Update

HH congratulated Galen Murton (GM) on his successful dissertation defense, which all echoed. She then indicated that HSC has received many applications and that registration was going smoothly. TA raised one issue with a panel that she submitted and was then completely reorganized by the conference, which caused confusion and issues. HH noted that this same issue was faced by many participants. TA requested that the conference coordinator let the panel know before reorganizing and give people a choice whether to stay as the submitted panel. HH agreed that this was an issue to consider, and that the growth of HSC is wonderful but the conference is becoming unwieldy. Mark Turin (MT) suggested that ANHS should have the discussion on whether the submission process should be more competitive or remain inclusive. HH noted that the Boulder conference rejected more papers than other HSCs in the past, but still not many. TA wondered who would be the next host and how much capacity they could handle, suggesting that the conference be as inclusive as the given capacity. MT posed the idea of setting up a conference secretariat as the HSC becomes more regular, to help with tasks and institutional knowledge. HH reminded the EC that ANHS loses some institutional knowledge when moving the conference from one place to another, and perhaps there could be some more formal communication about best practices, concerns, etc.

#### 4. Membership

HH indicated that ANHS is getting close to the limit of members in Wild Apricot, noting that some past due members had been archived and the membership was increasing due to the HSC. SF noted an uptick in membership recently and wondered if it was possible to contact the 120+ members that were not current. HH assented and both she and SF noted that Wild Apricot and membership as a whole was working more smoothly.

#### 5. How to utilize Anne and John

HH called on the EC to find ways to make the most of the support of Anne and John in the administrative office, mentioning current work of the newsletter, membership troubleshooting, website assistance, and journal mailing lists. Jessica Vantine Birkenholtz (JVB) echoed her thanks for the newsletter and assistance with finding reviewers. All present expressed thanks to the administrative office.

#### 6. CAORC

HH updated the EC that Chris Tuttle had resigned as Director of CAORC and that Rick Spees was currently handling the director duties while they searched for a new director. She indicated that CAORC would be important in the coming years, as they are active in advocating for Title VI and Fulbright-Hays funding. She noted that CAORC could use any support ANHS members could offer in contacting congressional representatives. Finally, HH announced that CAORC has extended one more year of funding for administrative offices in Wisconsin.

#### 7. KRC information to members to increase traffic

HH reported that the KRC ad hoc committee had come up with a list of services that KRC can offer to members, with plans for publicizing in the newsletter. Jana Fortier (JF) suggested that the list be put online and that KRC have a cleaner presence online. JF wondered if updating the KRC website could be initiated. HH indicated that she has asked and that there is an issue that funds from the US Embassy to start the KRC website, but with no time or skill locally to update it, the project has stalled. TA noted that the information was not yet on the US site and that ANHS could get better information on its US site to

help bring people to KRC. JF expressed the need to make sure that the directions and information on both sites was consistent, to which HH agreed.

#### 8. Ideas on social media

HH listed the current social media employed by ANHS: Newsletter, two Facebook pages, Yahoo group, and two websites. She indicated the need to harmonize all these options, and asked the EC for input on where to concentrate attention. JF wondered how others use ANHS social media, noting that she finds Facebook and the website useful. JVB indicated that she is not on Facebook and social media, and so the newsletter is best for her. MT echoed his enthusiasm for the newsletter, and noted that the journal uses Twitter and Facebook complementarily. HH suggested that the EC continue to think about this topic. JF suggested posting more photos on Facebook to catch people's attention.

#### 9. Use of and membership in subcommittees

HH opened the discussion on membership and subcommittees by mentioning the work of John Metz on the KRC subcommittee. GM expressed enthusiasm for John's work, and wondered what the vetting process for including non-EC members on other committees would look like. HH repeated that she sees an advantage in bringing key people in when they contribute special knowledge, either because they know the history and now have more time, or in order to vet people as future EC members. HH requested that the EC think about if and how they might want to utilize subcommittees. JVB indicated that the subcommittee worked well for the Dor Bahadur Bista prize, where one EC member oversees the process with two non-EC readers. HH noted that Keshav Bhattarai was using the model for the Senior Fellowship and Bill Fisher would be using it for the book prize. JF asked for clarification on who would be allowed to be on the sub-committee, and HH explained that people must be ANHS members, but not on the EC. JF thought that this model could give members good experience and would be more inclusive. HH noted that feedback seemed all positive and suggested that the EC talk in smaller groups about how to implement this model.

#### 10. Open discussion of KRC and other overseas opportunities

HH expressed the desire to be inclusive of non-Nepal-based members and offer services to them while still making KRC be the best it can be. JF indicated that she would email HH with ideas of places that KRC could like with as affiliates in India. HH expressed enthusiasm at this idea, noting that it would be helpful even for members to have a first point of contact. She indicated that ANHS should want to keep emphasizing that it is not just Nepal-based, but the entire Himalayan region. JVB raised the issue that India-based Himalayan scholars on Hinduism have no ANHS affiliation because they are served through the American Institute of Indian Studies for funding and community. She noted that ANHS could possibly tap into more people's interest if it had something tangible to offer them, and HH agreed. HH asked for thoughts on KRC or ANHS' overseas presence. MT expressed a desire to talk more about this as one of the new editors of HIMALAYA is a scholar in the Himalayas and is interested in exploring connections outside Nepal. He indicated that the editor wanted to know if Nepal was the most important part of the organization. MT noted the need to commit to Nepal but not exclude others. SK echoed the importance of expanding and indicated that she would be willing to help with this drive. HH expressed shared enthusiasm and that the EC should put together resources and people to contact. TA wondered if this would be an opportunity for a new ad hoc committee.

## 11. Open discussion of changes to constitution or governance

HH raised the issue of the ANHS constitution, in that it does not offer enough guidance while at the same time hampering growth by being too specific. She outlined her concerns, including: limits on revision to the constitution because of the postcard in the journal requirement; not enough information, such as the job descriptions of the EC; not being sure that the governance structure is working, if there is a need for change and, if so, how to make the change; the potential need to consolidate with the president in one place, the registration in Oregon, etc. GM added the need to clarify the roles of sitting and past presidents and reviewing any needed constitutional amendments after previous conversations. SF noted that he had not participated in any of these discussions yet, but expressed a need to revisit the general issues of these roles and the constitution. JF suggested that current and past presidents could have a conversation that they then brought to the EC. She asked if there were any amendments to the constitution on the table at this time. SF indicated that he would start a conversation with the communications committee and, if any urgent amendments arise, address them at the Boulder meeting. SF reminded the EC that the communications committee also encompasses policy. TA wondered if SF needed more help with all his duties, suggesting that membership and policy be separated, and making sure that SF has support. SF indicated being open to the discussion of separating the two. HH reminded the EC that doing so would require changing the constitution.

HH asked the EC for any other new business.

JF asked about suggestions for potential new EC members. HH indicated that people could email herself, Anne, or both, suggesting that incoming EC members come to the Boulder meeting as guests if possible. HH reiterated the need to decide on the number of EC members that ANHS wants to have. JVB wondered whether, now that GM will no longer be a grad student, should a different grad student be considered for the EC, noting that it was good to have a grad student involved. GM indicated that he has enjoyed his experience and that having a grad student on the EC reflects well on inclusivity. SF expressed gratitude to GM for his work. SF wondered if having a grad student be a full EC member was really serving the grad student, noting that if any legal issues arrive, it may not be good for the grad student to be a part of it. HH summarized others' thoughts that people like having a grad student on the EC, but not making the position a burden to the student. JF congratulated GM on his accomplishments and GM explained his upcoming role at James Madison University. JF suggested putting this info up as news. SF offered advice on study abroad programs if GM wanted it. SK returned the conversation to the grad student matter noting a discussion from 2014 that a student member whose time or status was different from others on the EC would require a constitutional amendment and that the language that had been crafted noted that one and only one seat could be for a student member, but that it was not required to have a student. SK reiterated that a special category for student members would require a change to the constitution.

HH called for any other new business. With nothing else, she thanked all for their time and adjourned the meeting at 1:05pm Central Time.

All EC members offered thanks to HH for her hard work.