**Association for Humanist Sociology, Inc.**

**Mid-year Board meeting and Leadership Development Retreat**

**June 10-12, 2011**

**Minutes**

Voting Members Present: Dennis Kalob (President), Emma Bailey (Past-President), Deborah Burris-Kitchen (President-Elect), Alan Spector (VP for Publications), Chuck Koeber (Treasurer), Stephen Adair (Secretary); Additional Members: Katie Seabury (Co-Chair Nominating Committee), Shawn Bingham (Co-editor *Humanity and Society)*, Kathy Gaianguest (Chair Constitutional Committee), Chris Dale (Program Chair)

Minutes taken by Adair. The minutes are divided into four sections: Board Decisions; Board Review and Recommendations of the Report from the Constitution Review Committee; Discussion items; Leadership Development Retreat

**Board Decisions**

1. Approved membership fee (roughly $60) for Koeber to join a Kansas organization to receive legal information regarding non-profit organizations, especially as it concerns the creation of a 501(c)(3) AHS Foundation (Bailey moved, Adair second; passed) (See Discussion item 3) .

2. Approved up to $1000 for air travel and lodging to support a graduate student organizer and a grad student reception at the annual meeting (Kalob moved, Bailey second; passed) (See discussion item 4).

3. The Board conducted a formal vote on three recommendations to the Constitution Review Committee in regards to voting members on the Board and the terms of office (see item 4 below)

**i. All voting members on the Board will be elected** (Bailey moved, Adair second; passed (4 approved and 2 abstentions)).

**Rationale and discussion:** Democratic practice requires all voting members to be responsive to the membership. Some board members expressed concern that we did not have any knowledge or institutional memory as to why the Secretary and Treasurer were originally created as appointed positions, rather than elected positions. It was observed that appointing people has not guaranteed competence and commitment in the past. Some concern was expressed regarding the possibility that people who lose elections may feel hurt or disrespected and that the Nominating Committee would have to find additional candidates. The Board concurred that elections need not be contested.

**ii. With the exception of the Presidency, no one may serve more two full terms in any one office as a voting member of the Board** (Bailey moved, Adair second; passed (6 approved)).

**Rationale and discussion:** The Board was uncertain why someone could serve six years in an appointed position, but only three years in an elected position. If someone is able and willing in a VP position, then members ought to be able to elect the person to a second term. The Board recognized that someone could be appointed temporarily into a voting position on the Board without that service counting toward the “two full term” limitation.

**iii. No one may serve more than three full terms as a voting member of the Board** (Bailey moved, Adair second; failed (2 approved, 3 did not approve)).

**Rationale and discussion**: The Board was divided on this measure. Some expressed a concern about the need to continue to develop new leadership and wanting to prevent an insular board that relies too heavily on only a few. Others suggested that members ought not be constrained by an arbitrary rule that would prevent them from returning someone to an office who was able and willing to serve the organization. Although the Board did not recommend that the CRC adopt this measure, it encouraged the CRC to consider it.

4. Recommend that a guest meeting registration fee of no more than 50 percent of the member registration fee be established by the President in consultation with the Program Chair (Bailey moved, Koeber second; passed).

**Rationale and discussion**: Members often bring spouses or partners with them to meetings and there are inconsistencies and inequities regarding how this is managed. Some guests pay the full registration fee, some guests pay nothing but attend one or more of the receptions, some guests do not pay and do not feel invited to the receptions and so members do not attend as well. When guests attend receptions, but do not pay a fee, AHS is subsidizing their attendance. The Board spent some time discussing the proper amount of the fee. The Board indicated that the fee should be greater than the registration fee for graduate students, but gave the President some discretion in determining the exact amount.

5. Create an ad hoc committee to administer the Frank Lindenfeld award (Bailey moved, Koeber second; passed)

**Rationale and discussion**: In memory of Frank Lindenfeld – a longtime member of AHS who did work on work collectives and cooperatives – a fund was established to support a graduate student paper award for work in his spirit. AHS has not yet established procedures to administer this award. Emma agreed to chair the ad hoc committee and Chuck volunteered to be a member. The Board suggested that the Chair of the committee consider including a graduate student. The Board also indicated that the creation of a 501(c)(3) AHS Foundation might prove useful as a means to continue to solicit donations to promote and sustain this award.

6. In an electronic view conducted shortly after the mid-year Board meeting: Contract with Sage to publish *Humanity and Society* on the terms described in the materials discussed at the mid-year meeting (Kalob moved, Burris-Kitchen second; passed).

**Board Review and Recommendations of the Report from the Constitution Review Committee (CRC)**

The report from the Constitution Review Committee contained eleven recommendations. The Board considered each recommendation, which is listed below. The Board also expressed its gratitude for the thorough and careful work of the Committee.

*1. Eliminate the positions of Director of National Liaison and Director of Media Relations.*

The Board concurred with minimal discussion. There was a short discussion regarding the use of social media, but this did not result in a specific recommendation.

*2. Nominations Committee: (Article VI. Committees. Sec. 2, pp. 5-6)*

In general, the Board concurred with the recommendations regarding Co-Chairs, but there was considerable discussion regarding the beginning and the end of terms for members of the Nominations Committee. The Board debated whether terms for outgoing members should end at the conclusion of the yearly meeting, which would result in the nominating committee having seven or eight members for the three days of the meeting. This would encourage veteran members to share their knowledge with incoming members. The Board elected not to make this recommendation, because this would oblige members to attend three meetings, which might be viewed as too large a commitment, but thought outgoing members might be informally invited to the first meeting of the Nominations Committee.

The Board did recommend that the CRC consider changing the start date for the Nominations Committee to the date when the election results become official. This change would give the President-Elect some time to name the new Co-Chair.

*3. Officers. Issue: premature succession of the President: (Article IV. Sec. 12, pp. 3-4)*

Board concurred without discussion.

*4. Officers. Issue: number of times (terms) a person may serve in an officer position (Article IV, Section 13, p. 4)*

This item generated significant discussion and formal votes on three items (see item 3 above). The central points of discussion were:

* Should anyone have a voting position on the Board without being elected?
* What is the rationale for the Secretary and the Treasurer to be appointed, while the VP positions are elected?
* Why are the term limits for the elected positions more restrictive than for the appointed positions? And why would we not permit a person in a VP position to serve a second term?
* The Board also acknowledged the importance of continuing to develop new leadership and to bring new people and newer members on to the Board.

*5. Members’ participation in Board meetings: (Article V. Board of Directors. Section 3, p.5)*

Board concurred without discussion.

*6. Election of members to the Nominations Committee: (ArticleVI.Committees. Sec. 3, p.6)*

Board concurred without discussion.

*7. New section: The Book Award Committee: (Article VI. Committees. Sec. 6, p. 6)*

The Board discussed the appropriate number of members for the Committee: three to four and three to five. Bailey agreed to discuss with the current and previous Chairs of the committee to determine the appropriate number (Also see item 5 under Discussion Items below).

*8. Board of Directors. Issue: two persons occupying one officer position, e.g., VP for Membership, and the logistics for voting on Board decisions (Article V. Sec.1 & 2, pp. 4-5)* ***No change to Constitution***

Board concurred without discussion.

*9. Meetings of the Board of Directors. Issue: maintaining the openness and availability of Board meetings to the membership, while at the same time needing to carry on the organization between annual meetings. Specifically at issue: (1) institutionalizing mid-year Board meetings; (2) what decisions made in the mid-year and email meetings warrant waiting on action until the annual meeting to assure members’ opportunity for input/response. (Article V, Sec. 2 & 3, p. 4-5)* ***No Change to Constitution***

Board concurred with minimal discussion. It was noted that the current language permits a mid-year board meeting, but does not require it. The Board recognized the value of the mid-year meeting, but did not offer a rationale for requiring it. There was also some discussion about including a leadership development retreat (if that is the appropriate word) as part of the mid-year meeting.

*10. Amendments to this Constitution. Issue: number of signatures needed to submit a proposed amendment to the membership. (Article XI. Amendments & Referenda. Sec. 3, p. 8)* ***No change to Constitution***

Board concurred without discussion.

11. Meetings, elections, and referenda. (Affects several Articles) Issue: use of new electronic technologies (email and/or other web-based alternatives) for: 1. *electronic meetings. 2.communications to all the members regarding Board decisions made between annual meetings. 3. electronic voting via email or other web-based mechanisms (a) on referenda, (b) for elections.* ***No change to Constitution and continued discussion***

The Board recognized the value of being able to conduct future elections via a web-based voting system, while recognizing that some members may prefer paper ballots. The Board recommended that the CRC consider including web-based voting as an option so that a later Constitutional change would not be required. Specifically the Board recommended that the Constitution be revised to permit either paper ballots or web-based ballots.

**Discussion items**

1. Update on *Humanity and Society*(Bingham)

* August issue has been completed and sent to the publishers
* Next year (possibly May issue) there will be a special issue on the Sociology of Art. The deadline for submissions will likely be late in the fall.
* Managing the copy editing, finding reviewers, and managing the institutional subscriptions are among the most challenging aspects in the transition to the new co-editors
* Bingham initiated what proved to be a relatively lengthy discussion regarding the prospects of moving the publication of the journal to Sage. The Board reviewed a formal 32-page proposal from Sage.
* The primary advantages of moving to Sage include: broadening impact and readership, more global representation, established electronic infrastructure for reviews including on-line tracking of submissions and reviews, handling of all financial matters associated with subscriptions, the journal would be bundled with other journals, marketing support (which might include podcast author interviews), facilitation of electronic storage through EbscoHost, assume much of the unrewarding and time consuming aspects of the editors job.
* Finances: Sage would assume all financial risk. The only cost to AHS would be $5 for each individual subscription. Sage would keep all revenue from the institutional subscriptions. Currently, AHS makes a few thousand dollars a year through the journal, but much of that would now be used to pay for the recently hired copy editor, so overall, a shift to Sage would only have a small impact on the AHS budget.
* Key questions: Can Sage accommodate open reviews? What happens to any advertising revenues?
* The Board expressed general support for continuing the discussion with Sage, finding answers to the outstanding questions, and to consider moving this matter toward a formal vote.

2. Discussion of VP positions (Kalob)

* Kalob reported that for personal reasons, Abdallah Badahdah has stepped down as VP for membership. He began his three-year term in November 2010.
* Alan Spector will be President-Elect in November 2011 and will need to step down as VP for publications. He began his three-year term in November 2009.
* After a careful review of the Constitution and considerable discussion, the Board agreed to move as quickly as possible to find someone for the VP for membership. In addition, the Secretary was instructed to contact the Nominations Committee to seek candidates for both VP positions, so that a special election could be completed as soon as practical. Ballots, however, should not be mailed prior to the start of the Fall semester.

3. Discussion of the establishment of a 501(c)(3) as an AHS Foundation (Koeber, Gaianguest, Bailey)

* AHS became a 501(c)(6) last year. As such, it is not eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions.
* Koeber agreed to make further inquiries to see what it would take to establish an affiliated AHS Foundation as a 501(c)(3), so that we could receive tax-deductible donations. The Board also agreed to the importance of tying Foundation money with specific scholarships or other charitable programs.

4. Discussion of programs to promote greater graduate student participation (Kalob). Much of this discussion was prompted by an e-mail sent by Jason Smith to the Board.

* The Board considered and discussed establishing a graduate student paper award, hosting events for graduate students at regional conferences, organizing graduate student panels at the annual meeting, organizing a graduate student reception, making concerted efforts to encourage graduate students to come to the hospitality suite, creating a position on the board for a grad student.
* Kalob agreed to take responsibility to organize some of these activities at the Chicago meeting as a type of pilot. The Board approved up to a $1000 to support this effort.
* In regards to a graduate student Board member, the Board remained open to this possibility, but no specific steps were taken. Some expressed the need to avoid tokenism.

5. Discussion of the Administration of the Book Award (Bailey, Gaianguest)

* The Board reviewed a letter written by the Kathleen Fitzgerald concerning the administration of the book award.
* The current guidelines are not specific so that it is unclear if, for example, textbooks, edited volumes, or new editions of older books ought to be eligible for the award.
* The Board emphasized the importance of having clear and published guidelines. Also, since the award is given by the organization, it is important that the guidelines be established by the organization rather than simply having the book award committee develop its own criteria.
* The Board expressed enthusiasm for three criteria that had been submitted by the book award committee.
* The Board established an ad hoc committee chaired by Bailey, with membership from Burris-Kitchen, Spector, and Fitzgerald to establish guidelines and procedures and a time-line for the Book Award committee.

6. Discussion of AHS website (Adair)

* The Board reviewed some of the shortcomings of the current AHS website, and urged changes.
* Adair agreed to continue to work with Woody to develop a new site that would incorporate an improved design and be able to facilitate a secure method for web voting and the collection of credit card payments. This would require moving the server to CCSU from the University of Hartford. Some concern was expressed about needing to professionalize the organization so that we are not dependent on the institution of a single member. An unpublished version of the website would be made available to the Board before going live.
* The cost to accept cards was estimated at approximately $900 per year. The fees through Bank of America are: $20 month, a .25 charge per transaction, 2.14% transaction fee, and an $18 quarterly fee.

7. Discussion of procedures for voting on referenda items (Adair)

* A contentious referendum last year regarding a cultural boycott of Israel led to some suggestions from members that as a professional organization, AHS should refrain from having referenda items on the ballot. The Board did not support this contention, but indicated that clear guidelines for referenda items need to be established. In particular, the Board suggested that if items are to be debated and decided at the annual meeting some advance notice ought to be necessary. In addition, a vote on referendum question may need to be facilitated as it may not be practical or helpful to wait for the Spring elections.
* Adair agreed to write up a set of procedures for referendum votes to be reviewed by the Board.

**Leadership Development Retreat** (Bailey, Gaianguest)

The leadership development retreat took place over roughly two and half hours on Saturday morning. The retreat was organized as a discursive, reflective, and collective assessment that covered five areas: 1. Members view of the qualities of successful leadership. 2. Self-reflections and evaluations of our relative effectiveness in our respective offices. 3. Review of the assigned responsibilities in the AHS Handbook. 4. Systematic review of whether there are organizational needs not being met or not included in the handbook. 5. Consideration of additional items or processes to strengthen the organization.

Things that need to happen and/or additions or changes to the handbook:

1. Past-president: More explicit guidance for Past President to mentor officers and to facilitate discussions between incoming and outgoing officers. Work with VP for membership on follow-up with new members.

2. VP for membership: Better adherence to timeline of membership renewals as outlined in the handbook.

3. Last Sunday Wrap-Up board meeting should focus on organizing for the next year.

4. All incoming officers should attend mid-year Board meeting.

5. Develop way to prepare people to move into Editor positions ahead of time when positions open.

6. Develop an AHS members only list for electronic communications.

7. Establish continuity regarding Book Award. Who receives book nominations? VP for Publication should clarify roles and communications with publishers and committee. Handbook update: Pres. Elect and VP Pub select and appoint Book Award Committee Chair.

8. Language in publications manual regarding different configurations of Editor(s).

9. Work out management of membership list

-- checks with membership registration forms need to be routed to Treasurer.

-- membership lists include history of membership, financial record keeping, mailing address for subscriptions, eligibility for offices.

10. Clarify the coordination between editors and treasurer especially concerning institutional subscriptions.

a. who coordinates the business of the journal financially

b. who solves issues/problems as they arise.

11. Secretary: needs to send minutes to archivist and submit call for nominations in Humanist Sociology

Maintain ongoing notebook of meeting minutes.

12. Nominating committee needs to establish more communication with board membership to prepare for developing ballot earlier.

13. More preparation and development of members for leadership positions.

14. Schedule for nominations committee; clarify the timeline.

15. Expand on the description of duties for the Nominating Committee

16. Board might take more active role in encouraging people to run or assisting Nominations Committee.