

**MATC 2019**  
**Cleveland, OH • March 7-10, 2019**  
**Executive Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, March 7, 5:15-6:30**  
Prepared by Jennifer Goff, Secretary

Present: Beth, Chris, LaDonna, Shawna, Brian, Peter, Travis, Jen

Beth convened the meeting at 5:50pm

- I. Approval of 2018 Minutes – moved and seconded by Brian and Shawna. Motion passed unanimously. The past president approved heartily of the minutes.
- II. Business Meeting Prep
  - Jen read off the draft of the business meeting agenda. Members at large are not being elected this year.
  - Christ brought up that we have only one secretary nominee, so do we need to ask for nominations from the floor? The consensus seems to be that we need to do a ballot with Angie's name and space for a write-in
  - We reflected on the quietness of this year's meeting
  - Beth wonders if we should solicit different locations for future conferences, but Peter points out that the acclimation method gets a little out of hand.
- III. Job Descriptions/Elections/Nominations
  - a. Members-at-large
    - There have been challenges this year with the members at large. One has refused to participate in looking over co-chair applicants, and then finally just ranked without providing feedback for that ranking. The other did the same thing, and then prodded her to give more comments on a close race. There was a suggestion of taking nominations from the floor again for members at large. The two who were elected last year were not even at the conference. Neither has been deeply involved in MATC, and they don't seem to have a sense of how this works. We did ask for a call from the floor, but no one responded. It is a two year term and they are not staggered. It was hard to get people to even run for this position. Neither knew what the position was. One seems fairly earnest, but the other not so much. Seemed to bring more active people when we called for nominations from the floor. It's the last election – so if you didn't get elected, that would be a way that you could get elected. Peter suggests that it should only be in the business meeting on the floor. But we would probably have to change the by-laws, which is something we can do next year.
    - At 7:20 – Peter revisited the By-Laws – nominations will come from the floor! And we don't always have to nominate people to change committees.
  - b. Secretary

- Have toyed with the idea of making this a four year position, or something that is staggered with the treasurer. This would mean that we are having elections every year. This will help with institutional memory.
- Bylaw changes can be discussed over email, but they have to be voted on at the business meeting – we are looking into how that process can work.

#### IV. *Theatre History Studies*

- Sara just emailed a report. Lisa is taking over with the next issue. Sara's last issue is currently in copy editing.
- 11 total submissions for the general session with 4 being published. Special section has 4 articles and an intro – 6 others were under consideration.
- 9 total submissions for the general for the next one. 8 submissions for the special section. This is a little low, but it's also a very specific call, which makes sense.
- This submission rate is pretty standard across the journal industry. People tend to submit more to special calls, thinking they have a better chance.
- Shawna asks if there have been any trends, but Peter notes that the submission rate has held pretty constant.

#### V. *Theatre Practice*

- Dan Smith is taking over as editor. It was a long process without many applications, but finally Jen and Peter just went in search, and Dan jumped in and it seems great. He's at a big 10 school, which means he has some resources. This year the 8<sup>th</sup> is about to come out. Dan will give the 9<sup>th</sup> one.
- Transition is taking place as we speak. Jen is finishing the current issue, and Dan will be associate on that one. Travis is going to double check with Jen before updating the website.

#### VI. Theatre Leadership Summit Update

- Beth went to this in Orlando in February. Convened through ATHE. Organizations from all over the world were there – very international.
- We had ATHE, ASTR, CATR, LAMDA, PSI, Black Theatre Network, USITT, Association for Nordic Theatre Scholars, Dance Research, etc., etc., etc. Some conferenced in and others who just wanted to be updated.
- What are organizations facing? A lot of the challenges are similar.
  - Sexual harassment – how we might pool our resources and create a centralized communication system so we can work through this all together.
- Precarity in the field
  - Adjuncts, school closures – how can we better promote STEM → STEAM (some ideological issues here)
  - Alt-Ac support – Peter wonders if the rate of theatre PhDs pursuing Alt-Ac is any higher than other fields
- Looking at how we can communicate with other departments and outside the university to show how we can be resources
- Branding the idea of research impact

- Inclusiveness and diversity
- What kind of data should we be collecting to figure out what our memberships want. Who are our members? Why are we losing members? Do we have similar members? How do we gain members? Should we be looking to expand our membership? Should we be looking to better support the members that we have?
- How can we work with cognate fields to help change the conversation?
- Looking at how conferences function, and how we might overlap to ease financial burden.
- Sponsored sessions as a possibility
- Think outside the conference model
- Financial concerns for the membership right now – combining in specific cities around the same time to minimize travel
  - USITT and MATC are always on top of each other – wouldn't it be cool to work with that.
- We set up a communication system – BaseCamp
- ASTR San Diego Challenge - \$90K cancellation fee – get another opinion!
  - Having leadership from different organizations dealing with these challenges can help
  - Another organization that had a similar problem – crowd-sourced their funds from their membership
- Share appropriate documents regarding sexual harassment guidelines via BaseCamp
- Arts and Humanities Research council to get funding for research question: What is the needed shape for theatre/dance/performance organizations – UK has these grants – can we include international organizations on these grants.
- Spearhead joint board/membership survey – what might those questions be and how might that apply to our organization?
- Travis asked if there is a beginning step to bringing all the organizations under one umbrella. Beth assures us that is not the case. There is a dissatisfaction with EWALD. But there was a conversation about crowd funding a planning position who could be a resource for multiple organizations.
- Peter and Beth reflect that Clint actually approached them, and he has been amazing. People were excited about that resource.
- Peter notes that Henry gave that speech at ATHE about collecting all the data and making the argument. But it didn't really happen. At least this brought a lot of people together to have the conversation, so there's a start.
- We are the first organization to meet after this summit.
- Chris asks about how leadership transitions work within this larger organization. Will this just be the same conversation over and over with each leader? Beth notes that there will certainly need to be decisions about who

goes to these meetings, how often the meetings happen, etc. Beth suggests that we could add an incoming president into the communications and cycle them in as we go. Peter notes that our pipeline model helps with this kind of continuity.

- International people flew in for a one day meeting – there’s a sense of commitment there.
- There is agreement that we should continue to be involved.
- Shawna wonders about the possibility of cross-organization pollination – not necessarily taking our conference international, but perhaps like the ATDS panels, etc. to get some exposure between different conference populations. Building collaborations at a membership level in addition to this new leadership level.
- Josh is proposing an ASTR panel out of this summit
- Peter suggests that we could try to find a way to make MATC in Chicago a hub for a meeting for this group – it’s a great central hub. Maybe pre- or post-conference. Might get some cross-pollination there. Lots of agreement that this is a cool idea.
- Shawna said that our first registrant this year was from Finland.
- A question was raised about our name – we are national, but the name does not reflect that. There are reasons not to change (fellows in particular). Travis notes that there is potential to be MATC rather than Mid-America Theatre Conference (a la KFC). This is a good temporary solution at the least – just taking the full name off the website. General consensus likes getting rid of the verbiage in the short term.
- Peter suggests we follow up on trying to make Chicago a hub for a future meeting for this summit.

#### VII. Membership Survey

- Jen started talking us through the membership survey.
- Peter notes that Detroit is one that has been looked into, and there are some issues. Louisville is interesting, but there have been questions about Humana and March Madness. Clint can help us with this in terms of finding the right times for things to work in different settings. Probably not great to do right in the heartland again.
- Shawna is interested in looking at smaller places, or places we haven’t gone.
- Pittsburgh is still eastern.
- St. Louis – it’s been a long time. The last time it was a disaster with all the crazy basketball madness.
- Though there is some desire to go out of the mid-America region, but the suggestions are still largely in the region.
- Indianapolis is a possibility, but basketball is an issue.
- Travis asks if there are reasons that we keep to cities instead of college towns.

- Cities to look at – Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Louisville, Detroit, Kansas City, Minneapolis.
- Omaha? Iowa? – Far for a drive
- New Orleans might be more exciting than Houston was for some people.
  - Peter reflects on the splendor that was the rodeo
- LaDonna asks how we usually decide where we will hold future conferences.
  - Peter notes that the president works on confirming based on the estimates. We try to get them established 2 years in advance. We try to switch back and forth from east to west within the region. It's time to get things settled for 2021
- 2021 – Clint will price out Louisville, Kansas City, Minneapolis
- Comments are generally not very useful – Shawna notes that it would be nice if we could ask questions that get more directed responses. Jen notes that we could ask more specific questions, and get some ranking.
- Beth notes that there aren't many questions about AV – because her experience today has been a lot of complaining about AV. The Co-Chairs have been notifying people, but that doesn't guarantee that people read the emails.
- LaDonna mentions that networking is important – but there don't seem to be Full Professors. Maybe we need to try to appeal to more senior scholars to get them here. Shawna – what is the type of networking that they appreciate? Chris notes that our fellows structure is sort of a response to that. Peter notes that perhaps we should get back to adding people as fellows. This could be a project for the year to find a few fellows for next year. Keep working on diversifying that field as well.
  - Is Scott too young? Peter notes that he's probably been out long enough. He continues to come and be involved. Peter might write the letter for him.
  - Esther was another possibility – she was Theatre History respondent last year. She seeded the conference. Travis could potentially write that nomination letter.
  - Harvey – has been here many times, has been theatre history respondent. LaDonna would write this letter.
  - Good due date would be around June 1. Letters would speak about why they are good candidates, what their relationship is to the MATC, and some personal notes. The exec can vote on it and inform them with plenty of
  - Henry Bial – he seems to have stopped coming of late. Could have a nice symmetry with Scott. John could write this. Scott could write this. And Henry could write Scott's!

#### VIII. Website

- Paypal – so many phone calls. It took a long time to get Mark to make changes to the account so that we could do anything with it. Brian has finally

gotten his name and phone number on the account. They spelled his name incorrectly, so they couldn't link the account. But now... the bank account is linked, but the transferring is not working, so another call is in the offing. Brian notes that there probably isn't really anything easier. We just have to suffer.

- a. Google accounts and handoffs
    - Now we have the google platform with our email addresses. Central repository for information. Google forms for surveys and symposium submissions. Right now, everything seems like it's all over the place. Abstracts are completely untraced because they go with co-chairs.
    - Shawna – using google for abstract submission would be great. Registration stuff somewhere other than paypal.
    - Team Drives?
    - What does the transition look like?
    - Chris and Shawna agree that the email accounts have been great. This creates an automatic archive.
    - Beth likes the idea of using google as part of the submission process. Brian notes that the co-chairs need to be sure to use these too to make sure that people are aware of where their emails are coming from. This would just create a spreadsheet. It helps with the only two symposia limit. You can upload documents. Helpful when respondents ask for abstracts. Travis asks if there are any concerns about keeping archives. We would limit access to the archive.
    - LaDonna asks if Brian can resend the steps to activate her account. It turns out that Chris has been emailing her there, but she wasn't getting them!
    - We will discuss making these changes as part of the co-chairs luncheon.
  - b. Google forms – submissions, etc.
  - c. Archives
    - Can we start moving all of the information into a team drive as archives
    - Travis would like to start getting a bit of history on the website – programs, past co-chairs, etc.
    - Travis – put a statement on the website about this being a national organization. On About or History. We could do some updates on the website.
    - Peter – reading from the bylaws – MATC is a national venue for innovative, scholarship, pedagogy, and production.
    - Beth – there were honorable mentions for the Schanke, but we don't know what they were. Trying to find that history would be a good idea. Contacting past theatre history co-chairs.
  - We have a twitter account! Tweet Tweet!
- IX. Sexual Harassment Protocols
- We do not have any kind of investigative structure. What can we really do if there is a problem? We can set up expectations for behavior and conduct,

but there really don't seem to be consequences. We don't even seem to have the right to bar them from future attendance. To enforce expectations, we have to have some sort of ability to investigate.

- Peter notes that we can draft a set of expectations and making them public. We can't enforce it, but we should just go ahead and do it.
- LaDonna – MLA has a statement (<https://www.mla.org/Convention/Appropriate-Conduct-at-the-MLA-Annual-Convention>)
- LaDonna is willing to draft our statement
- Peter – simplicity is key.

X. 2020 Conference

a. Hotel contracts/room blocks

b. Registration comps

- Keynote, response, AIP/PYB editors, emerging scholars presenters, fellows (5 this year), conference planner
- Beth asks if we should expand these offerings at all. Scott would swap out his comp for students in need in the past. Is it for the EC, think about allocating a number of comps with an eye to diversifying the conference?
- Peter – creating a president's fund. I think it's great, but we need to fund it. We can't just give out four more comps, because we're eating the money. If presidents/past presidents can commit to donating a total of \$800/year then we could offer 4 comps for a targeted call.
- Brian – we don't know the final cost for the hotel yet. But the last several years we have finished up with about \$10k left in our liquid accounts.
- Shawna is worried that there may end up being some issues with that final billing. Peter notes that we can get Clint involved if there is an issue.
- Beth – we are trying to make sure we can get a strong nest egg so that we can survive an awful contingency. Brian is looking into this.

c. Clear communication with attendees

- See above – website

XI. 2021 Conference

- Per above – we will look at quoting Minneapolis, Louisville, and Kansas City

XII. Fellows and Fundraising

- Brian – the presidential scholarship fund has \$400 in it. Two presidents submitted money last year. It wasn't well advertised.
- Fellows fund – will be sponsoring the keynote (they already get credit for the reception, even though they don't actually fund that). Currently only \$900, but more is promised.
- Awards fund – didn't follow up on this. But it's one of the options when you click donate. There's no money in this at the moment.
- Shawna – do we have a lifetime membership? We don't have the option of just membership, so that doesn't really work.

- Beth suggests establishing a fundraising and finance committee. Maybe do a call for interest. Immediate past president and treasurer would probably need to be part of this. Not more than five total on the committee. Volunteer by email (letter of interest) to Brian, and the EC will decide who will serve. Jen adds financial initiatives to business meeting.
- Shawna – do we want to try to get more people to the business meeting? Peter argues that maybe it's not that big a deal. Beth – for a committee, we want people who are really interested.
- Beth – this committee might also look into investing. Brian notes that this has been problematic, as there is resistance involving Schanke fund. There is \$12100 in the account. Brian is working on the interest. And he will take out the money and the interest should be fine. Even if it's not earning itself back, it's going to last a long time. We would still love to have additional funds.

Adjourning the meeting at 7:52 pm

Postscript – Shawna emailed to propose the conference theme for 2020 be “Character”