

**MSERA Spring Board Meeting
February 21-23, 2024
University of Tennessee Chattanooga | Chattanooga, TN**

Officers Present: George Noflin, Stefanie Sorbet, Tina Allen, Sherry Shaw, Randy Parker (non-voting), Nancy Hamilton, Raglena Salmons, Ashley Wicker, Sarah Salisbury, Mary Giles, Tony Latiker, Jane Nell Luster, Mindy Waldrop, Rochelle Felix, & Kasey Warren

Officers Absent: Charles Notar, Mark Haley, Donald Snead

Committee Chairs Present: Stephanie Cheramie, Larry Daniel, Rod Uzat, Dustin Whitlock, Kelly Byrd, Rebecca Robichaux-Davis, Kecia Hawkins, Eric Oslund, & Earlisha Whitfield*

*Friday only

Thursday, February 22, 2024

George Noflin, President, called meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. sharp.

Welcome & Overview (George Noflin)

- George welcomed everyone and went over the agenda.

Board Member Orientation (Rebecca Robichaux-Davis)

- Rebecca provided orientation and ethics training, as well as an overview of the history of the organization and the roles and responsibilities of the board members.
- The following items were discussed related to state and at-large director responsibilities.
 - Stefanie Sorbet mentioned a Google Drive folder created by Franz Reneau and Rachelle Miller with guidelines and timelines for state directors to obtain institutional memberships. She reached out to Franz who shared the folder with George Noflin (president), Keshia Hawkins (membership chair), and Tina Allen (secretary).
 - The deans/dept chair list needs to be updated each year. The question of who has the master list was discussed.
 - The role/responsibility of at-large directors was discussed with the result that the President is to determine their specific charge.

Welcome from UT Chattanooga (Dr. Allen Pratt, Stacy Lightfoot)

- Dr. Pratt, Interim Co-Director of the School of Education at UT Chattanooga & Executive Director of the National Rural Education Association, and Ms. Stacy Lightfoot, Vice Chancellor for Access and Engagement, welcomed the board to UT Chattanooga.
- Dr. Pratt gave an overview of his work with the National Rural Education Association (NREA) and stated his willingness to disseminate conference info through his network.

Ethics and Grievance Form (George Noflin)

- George discussed the development of a process for reporting inappropriate activity.

- He provided a QR code in board member folders that goes to a form that can be used to submit a report (grievance) if someone has acted inappropriately.
- An ad hoc committee was appointed to review and adjust questions and come up with specific procedures for reporting (for example, who does the form go to?), and to determine what will be the outcome if it is determined that something has taken place.
- The following people are asked to serve on the committee – Sherry Shaw, Stefanie Sorbet, Tony Latiker, Keicia Hawkins, and Larry Daniels.
- George also provided everyone copies of Legal Updates – three copies in folder (Nov, Dec, Jan) – and asked anyone interested in continuing to receive this each month to let him know.

Executive Director's Report (Randy Parker)

- Randy presented the Executive Director's report. This report is attached to and made a part of these minutes.

Following a short break for lunch, the meeting reconvened at 12:37.

Committee Reports

MSERF Foundation (Larry Daniel)

- Larry presented the MSERF Foundation report.
- Fall meeting was his first official meeting as president; acknowledged Rebecca as the other officer for the foundation.
- He stated the Foundation is working to completely redo bylaws as well as develop a strategic plan. One focus is bringing more money into the foundation. Currently get money from donations by members and others.
- Larry stated that the Foundation needs an address in TN and asked if anyone could help with that. Registered as a non-profit in TN and must have TN address on file. Eric Oslund indicated he might be able to help with that.
- Larry also asked if anyone has any ideas that would help the foundation bring in more money to let him know.

Budget Committee (Rebecca Robichaux-Davis)

- Rebecca shared the expected expenses and income for 2024. The total expected expenses are \$44,800 and the total expected income is \$44,800.
- Kelly asked how it went last year with the extra fee for the luncheon.
 - Randy reported that the ticketed event collected about \$1000 of about \$5,500 of the actual cost, but that the main advantage was providing a definite number of those who would be attending so we were not paying for meals for people who were not there. He explained that this is one of the biggest expenses of the conference. Recouped some of the cost, but also gave us a specific number of meals that would need to be provided.
 - There was some discussion on whether or not to continue this additional fee.
 - There was a suggestion to raise conference registration for professional members to \$200 and not charge an additional fee for the keynote luncheon, but no action was taken.
- Rebecca emphasized that Institutional memberships should be the focus to increase income.
 - State directors should have a goal of \$1000 from their state as a minimum to meet the projected income.

- The vote on the budget will take place tomorrow.

Presentation from Chattanooga Tourism (Lori Dodd, Business Development Director)

- Lori Dodd from Chattanooga Tourism made a presentation to the board.
 - She shared that they have available videos, images, etc that can be used in our publications and website.
 - She stated that they will provide “goody bag” items for all attendees.

Constitution and Bylaws (Rodney Uzat)

- Rod presented the Constitution & By-Laws committee report. This report is attached to and made a part of these minutes.
- Rod mentioned that 2023 changes that were voted on in the board meeting last fall did not get voted on by the membership. He will make sure it gets sent for a vote in Fall 2024. These were:
 - State affiliation piece
 - Two other sections dealing with membership - Article 1 Section 1; Section 1b
 - Rod will send to Tina to get into the Sept edition of The Researcher
- Rod will get the most current version to Ashley to update on the website
- Once we have the outline of the financial review from CPA, that will be updated in the C&BL.
- He also mentioned that the current informal practice of MSERA not allowing ex-officio non-voting members to make motions is contrary to Robert’s Rules of Order, which according to Article X Section 1 of the MSERA Constitution is the guide to be followed in conducting all regular and special meetings of the Association. President Noflin will be bringing a motion forward tomorrow to reconcile this inconsistency.

Institutional Sponsorship (Donald Snead, absent)

- The Institutional Sponsorship Committee report was sent by Donald to President Noflin who read the report to the board.
 - It stated that the purpose of the Institutional Membership and Sponsorship Committee is to obtain financial contributions from institutions of higher learning, educational agencies, and corporate sponsoring organizations to support the efforts of the Association.
 - During the 2022-2023 academic year, the Committee was able to secure sponsorships from most of the institutions represented in the Association. There has not been any sponsorship since the 2023 Annual Meeting.
 - The committee has updated a list of institutional contacts that are presently represented by the board and association membership. However, it is the goal to seek membership from HBCUs and other higher education institutions in the Association's geographical region.
- Randy emphasized that he and the president need to be in the loop for all institutional memberships so that things don’t fall through the cracks.

Membership (Keicia Hawkins)

- Keicia discussed plans for a Membership drive in June and a pushout in May to increase the number of proposal submissions. She mentioned that there are things on the website that we

say do/offer but are not doing or offering and recommended that before the membership drive, the board needs to “clean up” and clarify what we do/offer.

- Rebecca suggested that if we go back to doing the webinars, would need someone to handle all the technical end of that.

Mentors (Larry Daniel)

- Larry described that there were a couple of years where the committee did formal mentoring pairing but that has been disbanded. At last meeting, there is a link on website where a person could request a mentor or ask to be a mentor. That link is still active.
- He also mentioned that there are two mentor sessions at the annual meeting for interaction between mentors and mentees.
- He announced that he and Kasha are looking to give up their position as committee co-chairs and need a replacement. He asked for volunteers to get involved with the committee and maybe move into a leadership position in the future.
- Larry will be updating mentor list in the next few months. He indicated that there is an informal process to become a mentor.
 - If you are or have been in an elected office in MSERA,
 - Or someone who is well established scholar who moved into midsouth area and started attending conference,
 - and have been a MSERA member for 10 years or more.

Technology (James Barbee, absent)

- The technology committee report was given by Ashley Wicker for James Barbee.
- She mentioned that things have shifted to Google Drive for storage, and the committee wants to know if the board wants to continue that.
 - It was pointed out that the intent of using Google Drive was to have a common workspace, not storage, and Courtney had suggested Google Drive as an option.
 - Ashley will ask James to follow up with more specifics in his formal report.
- Technology needs for the annual meeting were discussed.
 - Will email the committee in the summer to determine technology needs at that point.
 - Randy reported that 3 rooms have HDMI connections to flat screens, and four rooms will need projectors.
- Social media accounts were discussed.
 - MSERA has four official accounts. Instagram and Facebook are primarily used, but no one knows who has Facebook password.

Webmaster (Ashley Wicker)

- Ashley reported that leadership information on the website has been updated.
 - She asked that everyone double check their info and let her know if there is anything that is incorrect.
- She has also updated the institutional members list on the sponsors page.
 - Right now it is only those who have institutional membership. It was agreed to also include sponsorship on the site as well.
 - Randy will send the current sponsors list, and Ashley will update.
- Plans have been made to do a website audit to be sure everything is in order and up to date as well as make any recommendations for changes.

- Ashley also reported that she is exploring what is available behind the login page and will update as she knows more.

Evaluation (Amanda Mayeaux, absent)

- It was reported that the evaluations from the previous annual meeting were overwhelmingly positive – 1/3 of the participants completed the survey.
- George will share what he used with the current evaluation committee.

Research in the Schools (Eric Oslund)

- Eric reported that he is in the process of setting up the hosting through free online services.
 - Last week he had a conversation with Randy about hosting at MTSU, but he needs copyright clearance document and ISSN documentation.
 - Randy will send copyright clearance documentation that he can find by Monday.
 - Eric will contact ISSN today to find out where to go on it.
- George asked for timeframe to put out next issue.
 - Eric indicated they can aim for fall.
 - Once questions are cleared up, MTSU will host and the submission/review process can begin.
- Eric indicated that he is the person to refer people to if they are wanting information on submitting, and that his contact info is on the Research in the Schools page of the website.

Program & Proceedings (Dustin Whitlock)

- Dustin reported that he is getting into Oxford Abstracts and wrapping his head around things.
- The target date for proposal submissions to open is March 13 and will close on June 30.
- With the Call for Proposals he will request for presidors and reviewers. He will also be reaching out to others to volunteer to be reviewers.
- The goal is to notify primary authors of acceptance by Aug 1. Initial program draft completed by Aug 15 with final program draft to executive committee, webmaster, and The Researcher editor by Sep 15.
- He asked for input on how the program can be improved.

University Student (Christy Hornsby)

- Board members were asked last year to review RIP proposals and only those proposals.
 - Kelly sent an email with very clear instructions and the new rubric.
 - Need to be sure to clarify to RIP reviewers that the rubric is a little bit different.
- University Student committee will work with membership committee in planning reception and social.
- Christy asked that no students be assigned as presidors of RIP sessions.
- It was suggested that a firm committee be established at the end of business meeting so they can begin working for the following year.
- It was suggested to change the time of student member social to a later time.
- It was also suggested that there be a student member corner in every issue of The Researcher.

Future Sites (Kelly Byrd)

- Kelly reported that, based on the operations manual, we are a couple of years behind on confirming sites.
- The next task will be to secure a site for New Orleans in 2025

- Currently waiting on responses from Sheraton, Hyatt Regency, Lowes, Embassy Suites, and Doubletree.
- Once proposals are back will share them with the committee, president, and Exec Dir. Then will need a virtual board meeting to vote on location.
- Sherry asked about using the convention center.
 - Randy explained that the convention center is beyond our financial ability because it would require paying for facilities, food, etc.
- Will secure the location for 2026 sooner rather than later.
 - Ideas for 2026 – Huntsville, issue is that only two venues are available that could accommodate us; Birmingham; Memphis;
- Have tentative (penciled in) for Hilton Pensacola Beach for 2027. Will not send out proposal any earlier than 18 months prior to the meeting.

The Researcher (Tina Allen)

- Tina reported that Lisette Manual has expressed interest in taking over as editor of The Researcher.
- This year Lisette will be working with Tina as co-editor to learn the requirements of the position.

Local Arrangements (Kasey Warren/Mary Giles)

- Mary and Kasey reported that they will use items from the convention and visitors bureau for the goody bags.
- The need to start collecting door prizes, etc. was emphasized.

George ended today's part of the meeting with an overview of what to expect tomorrow. He asked the committee to review items in the folder that will be voted on and be ready to vote.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10.

Friday, February 23

George called the meeting to order at 9:18 a.m.

Old Business

- Minutes from previous meetings were provided.
- There was a discussion about the operating budget presented yesterday.
 - Jane Nell pointed out that we need to push Institutional memberships in order to meet the financial commitments of the organization.
 - Randy clarified that institutional membership is good for 1 year from when payment is received. The conference participant benefit is good for the annual meeting following the start of the membership.
 - There was a continuation of the discussion from yesterday related to charging for the keynote luncheon separately. The decision was made to leave things as they were and charge for lunch separately again this year.
 - On motion by Sherry Shaw and second by Nancy Hamilton, the board voted unanimously to accept the operating budget for coming year.

- Jane Nell pointed out that the site for future spring board meetings did not have to be at the meeting location just because that's the way it's always been done. There have been times when spring board meeting was held in the town where the executive director lived.
- George stated that a copy of the evaluation of the executive director had been placed in each board member's folder for review.

New Business

- George appointed the following people to serve on the Ad hoc committee to adopt a Grievance Form: Sherry Shaw, Stefani Sorbet, Keichia Hawkins, Larry Daniel, and Tony Latiker. Larry was appointed as chairman.
 - The charge to the committee is to review and adjust questions on the form as needed and determine who the form will be submitted to.
 - George asked for a report from that committee by end of March.
- There was discussion about adjusting the operations manual – pg 36 and pg 24 related to the date that the executive committee will be bonded.
 - George recommended changing the date from Jan 15 to "prior to the spring board meeting." Sherry Shaw made this as a motion and it was seconded by Raglena Salmons.
 - Randy explained the process for bonding
 - After annual meeting when new officers are selected, he then contacts the State Farm agent and State Farm sends the form to be completed by each person who then sends it back to State Farm (this is all done electronically through email). Once that is done, then the executive committee members can go to the bank to change signatories on the checking accounting.
 - After discussion, the motion was amended to leave the date as is, but add a phrase that says "signatures on checking accounts are to be changed prior to the spring board meeting." Motion passed unanimously.
- Jane Nell proposed an Ad hoc committee composed of the university student director, a state director, an at-large director, the former editor of The Researcher, and someone who has served as a mentor.
 - This committee's charge will be to look at what is in the operations manual and the proposal that was sent out last time a new editor of The Researcher was selected, determine if timelines should remain the same, if requirements are the same, etc.
 - George appointed the following people to serve on this committee: Rochelle Felix, Tina Allen, Sarah Salisbury, Mary Giles, Kelly Byrd was appointed co-chair, Jane Nell was appointed as chair.
- Motioning rights of ex officio non-voting members was discussed.
 - A motion was made by ?? that ex officio, non-voting members can make motions, and second motions but will maintain non-voting rights. The motion was seconded by Nancy Hamilton. Motion passed with 1 abstention.
- Registration requirements for presenters at the annual meeting was discussed.
 - The current acceptance letter says that at least one presenter must register by the early registration deadline.
 - On motion by Sarah Salisbury and second by Rebecca Robichaux-Davis the board unanimously voted that the primary author must register and if there are multiple authors at least one other must register.

- The program chair and executive director will need to communicate with presenters who have not registered. Dustin and Randy will work out how to make sure this is being done.
- Jane Nell mentioned that in the operations manual under executive director responsibilities, it says the executive director will compile policies and procedures from motions at annual meetings.
 - Executive director and chair of the constitution and bylaws to look at making that a joint responsibility. Explore and bring back to the fall board meeting.
 - Sherry added that everyone has to submit changes to the operations manual to the vice president/president-elect so that they can be presented at the fall board meeting. She also reminded everyone that it is important to train behind and mentor the next person who will take your place.
- There was discussion about adding a level of institutional membership that would be a higher level, higher price, and more benefits.
 - Will review and discuss this further at the fall meeting.
- Venue planning for the fall meeting was discussed.
 - There was discussion about door prizes and who provides what.
 - There is a need for door prizes for the university student reception, the university student breakfast, and the business meeting
 - Local arrangements volunteered to assist with soliciting from local businesses to give out at Wednesday's reception
 - At-large directors will bring door prizes for the business meeting
 - State directors will bring door prizes for Thursday's reception
 - Everyone else should bring something for either a door prize or the silent auction
 - Silent Auction
 - Sherry Shaw volunteered to coordinate this year.
 - Committee chairs will be responsible for silent auction items.
 - Program
 - Discussed whether it is in our best interest to eliminate Friday programming.
 - Winner of outstanding paper and dissertation are announced on Thursday night and they present on Friday morning.
 - Also have past presidents' breakfast on Friday morning.
 - It was decided that if regular sessions are robust and board members will commit to be there, it can be worth staying for.
 - Key Note Speaker
 - George shared a video to introduce this year's key note speaker.
 - He will send Ashley the link to video so that she can link to annual meeting web page
 - Commemorative items
 - George will share with local arrangements committee
- There was discussion about replacing plaques with certificates
 - Currently we give plaque for 4 awards and also have plaques for president, other officers, and directors.
 - Motion by Rebecca Robicheaux-Davis that the only plaques given out are 4 awards + president (optional) and other officers and directors receive certificates. Sherry Shaw seconded, and the motion passed with one abstention (Mary).

There being no future business, on motion by Ashley Wicker and a second by Mary Giles, the spring board meeting adjourned at 11:23 a.m.