

2021 Spring Sigma Tau Delta Convention Committee meeting Thursday, April 8, 2-3pm MDT/ 3-4pm CDT/ 4-5pm EDT via Zoom

Members

Glen Brewster & Lexey Bartlett, Co-chairs

Board Members: AmiJo Comeford, Felicia Steele, Leigh Dillard, Amanda Ayers

Affiliates: Kimberly Kuhn, Machen Olson, Jacey Sherman, Bethany Erb, SKD Representative

Staff: Elfi Gabriel

Non-Board: Linda Miller, Douglas Dowland, Gloria Hochstein, Kevin Stemmler, Sid Watson, Chyina Powell, Rebecca Ferlotti

2021 Spring Convention Committee Meeting Minutes

1. 2021 Virtual Convention reflection—overview, what worked well, what did not work so well, what lessons did we learn for future conventions? Should virtual elements be included in future conventions—or in other events?

What worked well: The Student Leadership interview with writers worked well to promote the Convention in advance—we should do these again, if possible. Also, the opening night events by Student Leadership were praised as having good variety and a fun way to get to know fellow participants. These events are usually later in the Convention, on Friday rather than Thursday as they were this time. Amanda thought this change might be continued for the 2022 Convention, with some modifications.

The roundtables also seemed to work better, and were often better attended, than for the in-person Convention, which is more focused on individual papers. We discussed some ideas about encouraging future roundtables with students from more than one chapter, a perennial issue.

Joan as SKD representative noted how smoothly the Central Office staff coordinated their events, including prepping for events. She also noted the value of the series of pre-convention instructions sent regularly so that participants would know how to prepare, create a schedule, log in, etc.

Moving some elements from the Convention to virtual events earlier in the year should be considered for future, such as the SL, SR, and ASR elections. The webinars on important topics should also be continued. **Elfi made a suggestion to include the webinar planning in a future committee charge, perhaps for the Convention Committee, if that is deemed appropriate.**

What did not work so well: Elfi noted that the regional caucuses could be better organized to make their purposes and use of time clearer. Several faculty missed the in-person networking, such as the workshops or the Presidents Reception. Perhaps having a faculty Zoom discussion—on the effects of COVID on teaching and advising, for example—would help. Leigh noted that regional meet-up webinars could supplement the recent successful webinar series on different topics, in early fall, for example.

2. Featured speakers, Karen Auvinen, 2021 Common Reader author, and Michael Branch. Glen noted that both featured speakers were a delight to work with and agreed to several additional elements, including the several planning meetings, the pre-convention interviews and prep for the Q&A sessions at the Convention.

3. 24 Roundtable presentations (About 100 people): thanks to evaluators and organizers. 47 were submitted, and 24 were selected. Considerable time was put into preparing instructions for preparing and submitting proposals, holding virtual planning sessions, and helping with the recording and uploading of the roundtables.

4. 485 registrants; 75% logged in=363 participants. Recordings will be available for 90 days.

Elfi will send a follow up email about the availability of all recorded presentations to registrants for 90 days from their recording. Several committee members noted that they were looking forward to viewing presentations that they had missed.

5. Convention survey: 159 respondents (about 40% of those who logged in). Review of some results. Elfi reported on some of the responses, including the comments about selected aspects of the individual comments.

6. Creation of new convention award, the Beth DeMeo Award for Best Convention Paper for best student critical paper on poetry or on a poet, will be awarded next year.

7. Update on planning for 2022 Convention in Atlanta, March 30 -April 2, 2022. Leigh gave an update about the speakers planned for the Convention, including Nic Stone and Richard Banco, who are contracted for talks and book signings. Both are well-known authors with multiple projects ongoing that will be of interest to our audience. She is working with the CO about building enthusiasm through fall events, including webinars and/or book talks.

2020-2021 Convention Committee Charges & Foci

Charges

- 1.To plan, coordinate, and publicize the annual international convention.
- 2.To make recommendations about site selection, budget, speakers, registration fees, common reader, academic and anniversary awards, convention awards, and any other matters related to the convention.
- 3.To nominate convention speakers for honor membership in the Society.
- 4.In light of the Global Crisis, re- evaluate committee tasks and responsibilities so as to use Society resources, reducing costs where possible.

Foci

Summer 2020 into Fall 2020

- Explore the possibility of allowing students to write about either the 2020 or the 2021 Common Reader for the 2021 convention.
- Explore increasing the scope and/or visibility of the Career Workshops component of the annual convention in response to changing economic conditions.
- Using the usual award/scholarship timeline, accept submissions, evaluate, and select papers and roundtables and workshops for the convention, and select winners of convention awards.