

## **SIGMA TAU DELTA, FALL 2020 BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Meeting convened at 9:06 a.m. CDT, 25 September 2020

**Present:** Lexey Bartlett, Natasha McPartlin, Katie Mudd, Kim Kuhn, Kayla Ashbrooks, Shannin Schroeder, Glen Brewster, Felicia Steele, Dave Wendelin, Diane Steinberg, Tim Helwig, Kaine Ezell, Amanda Ayers, Julianne Ford, Myranda Morse, William Johnson, Terry Phelps, Elfrida Gabriel, Brett Iarrobino, Kassia Waggoner, Haley Powell, Leigh Dillard, Dana Eckstein Berkowitz, AmiJo Comeford

### **Robert's Rules of Order & Special Rules**

Please review the "Online Board Meeting Guidelines" file posted to the Board website. Officer-at-large Terry Phelps will serve as Parliamentarian.

Discussion: Explanation of procedures and clarification of voting and modifications of Roberts Rules for our meetings.

### **BOARD MEETING AGENDA**

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Discussion: Reference to Miller on first page that was a mistake to be clarified; that reference will be eliminated from the minutes.

Moved: Leigh Dillard, as amended

Seconded: Glen Brewster

Motion passes unanimously.

#### **Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items** (also a chance to propose emendations to the agenda)

Discussion: Steinberg reads "Wild Geese" by Mary Oliver in honor of Beth DeMeo. Individual introductions.

**New Business** – All reports were submitted in writing and were to have been read by all members before the meeting. Board members will respond to any questions or comments about their reports. Questions are welcomed from voting and non-voting board members.

#### **Central Office Reports & Updates**

Executive Director's Report: Johnson commends the Board on performance this year, given the pandemic and our adjustments to procedures. We were able to avoid significant financial losses from the cancelled Las Vegas Convention. Johnson has a pending contract for St. Louis for our centennial in 2024, after the rescheduled Denver Convention (2023) and Atlanta (2022). The virtual chapter at SNHU has enrolled 500+ members already this fall. We did not deactivate chapters this year. The Central Office staff has done a remarkable job this year, including stepping in after Karen Larsen's retirement this spring. A new hire for the business manager is pending.

National English Honor Society (NEHS) Director's Report: Wendelin: NEHS is also launching a webinar series, including a joint webinar to introduce NEHS graduates to Sigma Tau Delta. New

chapter numbers look good for the fall. Wendelin recommends *Pandemic Spring*, a collection of student and advisor writing from eighteen countries.

Director of Society Operations Report: McPartlin: Since the report, there have been a couple of reactivations and inquiries for new chapters. Also commends Dawn's work in the CO.

Director of Marketing & Technology Report: Gabriel: Nothing to add to her report. Mudd notes re: marketing that part of her role is to work with partners, and NCTE has made a lot of changes, and they will continue to work on our partnership, including our new intern program. Steinberg commends the CO's help, especially Gabriel's, with the webinars. Steele mentions that she is excited about the possibility of a product in association with Imagination Library.

[Steele takes over the record while Bartlett is absent.]

Director of Social Media Report: Mudd: Mudd adds to her report that, as Board members come across resources that would be of interest to our members, please tag or send to her. Steinberg thanks Mudd for her help with our statement of support for Black Lives Matter.

Steinberg calls for a ten-minute break at 10:27 and reconvenes at 10:40 a.m.

### **Other Board Member Reports**

Officer Reports:

President: Steinberg has nothing to add to her report but invites questions. Steele asks about the fund for the award in Beth DeMeo's name and asks whether it will be open for donations. Yes, Steinberg confirms, there will be a way to donate to that award. These awards in Beth's name will be given at future conventions. The motion will be coming out of committee.

Vice President: Schroeder has nothing to add to her report.

Secretary/Treasurer: Bartlett is absent but will be able to answer any Sec/Treasurer report questions when she reports on finances later.

Immediate Past President: Brewster says he has nothing to add. But he has a question about the break, which we take in just a few minutes.

Officer at Large: Phelps has nothing to add to the Officer-at-Large report he submitted.

### **Regents & Student Representative Reports**

Regents

Eastern: Steele has nothing to add to her report. She reminds other Board members of the Virtual Coffee Hour links. She'll be taking advantage of them and hopes to see others of us.

Far West: Comeford's report came in a bit late but is in the most updated information on the website; she is happy to answer questions. Steele wanted to know if there are efforts to help

schools recover from fires—and to please share that information with other Regents. Comeford speaks to the bad conditions in her area. Some schools are “gone” as a result of the recent wildfires. She’ll continue to share information as it comes in.

High Plains: Waggoner notes that SR Machen Olsen hosted an open mic night for the High Plains Region and a virtual Regional conference, with Claire Vandermeer as speaker, is set for October. She notes that Bartlett was very helpful in providing information on how to make a Regional conference function well.

Steinberg speaks to the nature of the reports for the fall and her enthusiasm about the Regional events coming up.

Johnson has a question about the October virtual meeting Waggoner mentioned. Will it be recorded, and could others in other Regions apply? Waggoner says it will be through Zoom and could be stored and shared. She welcomes participation from outside her Region. Johnson comments on the opportunities available to our members beyond the Regions because of virtual conferences. Steinberg adds that such events are especially helpful to Regions that cannot host a Regional event this time.

Midwestern: Helwig says the Regional Convention will be back in the Fall of 2021. He has not yet heard about other Midwestern schools having Regional events but will be sharing information with his chapters. In response to Johnson, Helwig says he has written to Central Michigan University, whose chapter hasn’t responded, and is less than hopeful about their annual fall conference.

Waggoner adds that she’ll be extending the deadline for her Regional event.

Steinberg asks whether anyone has questions or concerns about Regional events. She suggests adding information to the chat to help others.

Steinberg calls for the two-hour break. The Board will reconvene after lunch at 1 p.m. CST.

[Bartlett returns to meeting and resumes the record. Thanks to Steele for stepping in to record the minutes during Bartlett’s absence.]

Meeting resumed at 1:00 p.m.

Southern: Dillard: Virtual Regional Conference Oct. 17 over Zoom; 40 entries, including creative writing, and participants from Guam and TCNJ. It will include chapter displays and a professionalization session including talking about roundtable proposals.

Southwestern: Ezell: Theme for their symposium is “Expand Your Narrative,” and they are still accepting submissions. Will use the symposium to get interest for Regional journal also.

Student Advisors: Ayers and Ashbrook: Nothing to add to written report.

## Student Representatives:

Eastern: Jarrobino: Nothing to add.

Far Western: Kuhn: Nothing to add. Steinberg gives Kuhn kudos for helping a student who was trying to organize an event (which ended up not happening). Steele asks if there is a link to the 90-second video about service opportunities. Mudd notes that it will go out with information on the Imagination Library.

High Plains: Olsen: Her chapter's journal has gone to the printer. Discussed an event between Newman, Friends, and Wichita State (all in Wichita) related to writing.

Midwestern: Morse's chapter is thinking of hosting a Regional conference in early spring. Johnson suggests talking to the Regions that will have already done them for advice.

Southern: Powell: Nothing to add.

Southwestern: Ford: Regional conference theme is emphasizing diversity through expanding narratives.

Alumni Representative Report: Berkowitz: Noted that one paragraph of her report should be omitted. AE Strategic Planning Committee has completed a constitution for the chapter. It will be posted online.

## **Committee Reports:**

### Communications Committee

Report: Phelps: The committee has been working on the by-laws and have several recommendations, but the primary one is to revise pronouns to be gender neutral.

**Motion: The Communications Committee recommends that in By-Laws, gender-neutral pronouns with singular antecedents be *their, them, and they*.**

**Discussion:** No discussion.

**Vote:** The motion passes.

Phelps reports that the committee also discussed the use of *international* as a modifier and some issues related to the publications and awards. Comeford notes additions clarifying and adding journal awards for online journals and changing language to encourage such submissions as well as possibly opening competition to scholarly journals.

### Convention Committee

Report: For the 2021 Virtual Convention, Brewster states that the speakers are set, that we have moved to an all roundtable format, and that we will be recruiting evaluators soon. We have also reviewed the schedule, especially with considerations of having participants from multiple time zones. We will have large rooms allowing 500 participants and smaller rooms allowing 200. We

will have rehearsals ahead of the convention for all the roundtables. We have also added some events outside of the convention, such as the webinars that happened recently. Convention website pages are up. Steele is doing a guest blog on preparing roundtable proposals. We have proposed registration fees of \$25 for the early bird and presenters and \$30 for regular registration—low enough for easy participation, but high enough to mostly cover our costs. It is also the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SKD, so per Sheila Byrd, we are using that as an advertising perk. Motion to honor Beth DeMeo’s legacy through a convention award, to be given for the first time in 2022. We also will not be giving Convention Paper Awards this year, which will reduce our budget request.

**Motion: In consultation with the Past Presidents Council, we move to create a new convention award, the Beth DeMeo Award for Best Convention Paper for the best student critical paper on poetry or on a poet. This award will honor recently deceased former President and Delta Award recipient Beth DeMeo’s long and stellar leadership of and participation in Sigma Tau Delta. We will also issue an invitation to past and present Society members (current and former Board members, chapter Advisors, alumni, Delta recipients, etc.) to honor Beth with contributions specifically for the Beth DeMeo Award.**

**Discussion:** Johnson notes that this would be the second endowed paper award. The first is the award initiated by Stemmler and Dennis. Comeford asks about whether we have a setup for endowment accounts for this kind of award. Gabriel says these are folded into the total account. Schroeder and Comeford suggest setting up accounts more like regular university endowments so that we fund awards out of the interest, rather than the principal. Dillard suggests adding a Donate button to the website to facilitate contributions. Gabriel notes that the CO is revamping accounting (with the help of the pending business manager hire), which will make these elements more feasible. Schroeder notes that we have strayed from discussing the motion.

**Vote:** Motion carries.

### **Executive Committee**

**Report:** Steinberg explains that long-term planning has been a focus, including a succession plan for the ED. A new ED will not have the same experience, so in the future, the Executive Committee will have to revamp the working relationship with the CO to implement motions. So regular meetings with the CO will include coordination with member(s) of the Executive Committee.

**Motion: The Executive Committee moves that the Secretary/Treasurer create a mini-minute document that lists all approved motions and shares it with the entire Board about two weeks after the Board meeting ends.**

**Discussion:** No discussion.

**Vote:** Motion passes.

**Motion: The Executive Committee moves that we amend ByLaw VII Executive Director / Section IV Powers and Duties. Currently reads: “Section IV. Powers and Duties. The Executive Director’s powers and duties will be fully set forth in the contract.” Add a sentence “The Executive Director shall serve on the Executive Committee as a voting member of that committee.”**

**Discussion:** Steinberg remarks that this amendment will reflect current practice.

**Vote:** Motion passes.

**Motion:** The Executive Committee moves that we amend ByLaw VI Alumni Representative / Section III: Term of Office. Currently reads: “Section III. Term of Office. The Alumni Representative shall be selected for a term of two years. The Alumni Representative shall assume their duties upon appointment.” Add a sentence “The Alumni Representative may serve up to two terms.”

**Discussion:** Steinberg remarks that this amendment will reflect the policy in practice and alignment with other positions.

**Vote:** Motion passes.

Break from 2:00-2:13 p.m.

### **Regents Committee**

Report: Steele reports that the Regents have discussed continuing the practice of appointing the Student Leaders through an application process for 2021 because of the mechanics of trying to vote at the virtual convention., which the ByLaws allow. When we return to an in-person convention, the plan is to pilot the selection by appointment process again, which may require a future amendment to the ByLaws. Steele notes that this process seems to have encouraged applicants from schools that have not previously participated in student leadership. Johnson notes that the current election model has sometimes not produced reliable participants. Ayers adds that the Student Leaders support this change. In November, the Regents Handbook revisions will be finalized, along with adjustments to the Outstanding Chapter Award.

### **Scholarships and Academic Awards Committee**

Report: Dillard reports that Classroom Library Grants and Summer Program Scholarships will be retained for the fall round, but Study Abroad Scholarships will be suspended due to travel uncertainties. Students will also be asked to submit a budget for Summer Program and Study Abroad awards going forward. We will also continue to clarify that the Summer Program is not part of students’ regular program of study. We will also not be offering the Scholarly Paper Awards in spring 2021, but in spring 2022 students will be able to apply with work presented going back to March 2020. The committee is working on scholarship essay prompts related to the Convention theme. Dillard also notes the committee will consider the process for evaluation for the WCJ scholarship and also consider separating study abroad awards for short and long-term study abroad. Steinberg notes that our financial situation has rebounded to some degree, so adjusting study abroad might allow other scholarship awards. Dillard explains that the motivation is also to discourage students from planning for travel, putting down deposits, etc., in an uncertain time for travel. Schroeder adds support for splitting awards for short and long-term study abroad.

### **Service and Partnerships Committee**

Report: Helwig reports that two Penguin interns were placed for this summer and one has been placed for this fall, in a virtual internship, a practice that may carry forward to the spring if it

works well. There were no applications for the internship stipends in the fall; the committee will be adding clarification that they can be used for virtual internships. NEHS Intellectual Freedom Essay entries are coming in, and they will be evaluating them soon. There is an NCTE intern in place, a partnership that Dave Wendelin was instrumental in initiating.

Three initiatives are in the works with the Imagination Library:

1. Because physical fundraising is a problem this year, some matching of chapters with entities to provide service to affiliates as volunteers is in the works (especially as many current volunteers are older people);
2. The Imagination Library are considering making a Dolly Parton fundraising item; and
3. The Imagination Library are considering developing an internship program with Sigma Tau Delta.

Steele asks about whether we had ever contacted the MLA about a program like their K-16 alliances. Steinberg comments that we may benefit from companies becoming accustomed to virtual internship programs. Johnson adds that it may be worth revisiting these opportunities with NCTE also. Comford offers to make contact with the National Humanities Alliance about partnerships and suggests that Regents do the same with some state humanities councils. Schroeder mentions that we could help students find those internships without having formal partnerships with them. Perhaps we can consider a running list. Bartlett requests a confirmation of budget changes from the committee.

### **Student Leadership Committee**

Report: Ayers reiterates Student Leadership's support for the continuation of an appointment system for the SLs. She gives the SLs kudos for their list of suggested activities for chapters.

### **Strategic Planning Committee**

Report: Schroeder reports that the committee discussed the results of the July survey for Strategic Planning. Responses were received from 107 students or alumni, 27 current board members, 12 past board members, 70 chapter advisors, and 13 other individuals. Schroeder has been processing the results of the survey to determine what we should focus on. Carrie Fitzpatrick has been working with the committee to plan the retreat for Saturday, Dec. 12. Schroeder will also be sending out a tentative timeline to everyone. The committee will be meeting twice before the retreat, and they hope to have a plan in January for a vote. Much of the work will now be done virtually in advance of the retreat day. Helwig asks about alternative dates, such as later in December or the first week of January, but Schroeder notes that most dates will be a problem for someone because of holiday or semester conflicts.

### **Budget Review and Approval**

Prior to the main budget discussion, the voting members of the Board remained to discuss the Executive Director Salary increase.

**Motion: The Executive Committee moves to increase the Executive Director salary 4% in line with the increase accorded to other CO staff.**

**Discussion:** No discussion.

**Vote:** The motion passes.

Break from 3:04-3:32 p.m.

Budget Review: Bartlett notes the following changes to the proposed budget based on actions in committees and in the Board meeting. Page numbers refer to the budget PDF page numbers.

Changes to Expenses

Page	Line	Item	Old	New
5	19	Executive Director	blank	95,412
5	30	Subtotal	316,874	412,286
7	69	Study Abroad Scholarships	12,000	6,000
7	71	Convention Awards	14,000	0
7	72	Alumni Convention Awards	500	0
7	73	Non-STD Conv. Scholarly Paper (to be doubled in 2022, with students able to submit work presented as early as March 2020)	500	0
7	87	Subtotal	132,500	111,500
9	125	Total	713,241	787,653

**Motion: Ezell moves to approve the budget; Schroeder seconds.**

**Discussion:** No discussion.

**Vote:** Motion passes.

Comments: Johnson thanks the Board for their work with the budgets considering the uncertainty of the markets and our income from enrollments, especially the Board's mindfulness to reducing expenses where possible.

**Other New Business**

No other new business.

**Announcements**

- Dillard mentions *Papers and Publications*, a journal at UNG, which accepts submissions of papers from students in any Region. They like presented papers, but presentation criteria may be reconsidered this year because of changes to presentation opportunities due to the pandemic.
- Steele mentions that the Eastern Region is working on putting together a Regional conference; information will be forthcoming.
- Steinberg encourages us to share other highlights through social media.
- Johnson encourages us to work on recruiting and activities.

**Formal Adjournment/Closing Thought/Reminders**



Committee minutes should be sent to the Central Office no later than one month after the Board meeting. Steinberg exhorts us, “Stay safe and stay healthy, talk to a health official and not a politician, and vote!” **Dillard moves to adjourn; Steele seconds. Motion carries.**

Meeting adjourned at 3:49 p.m.