

Minutes of the ASFS AGM held via Zoom
Friday 4 December 2020

Start time: 12:55

Attendees:

Executive committee: Natalie Edwards (President/Chair), Ben McCann (VP), Chris Hogarth (Treasurer), Leslie Barnes (Secretary), Gemma King (Communications), Clara Sitbon (Post-grad)

Members present: Alistair Rolls, Hughes Peters, Bertrand Bourgeois, Yuri Cerqueira dos Anjos, Sophie Patrick, Felicity Chapman, Gemma King, Greg Hainge, Kerry Mullan, Barbara Hanna, Sonia Wilson, Françoise Grauby, Beth Kearny, Loic Bourdeau, Joe Hardwick, Miffy Lau, Chris Andrews, Michelle Royer, Irwin Compiegne, Marie-Laure Vuaille-Bercan, Alex Kurmann, Amy Hubbell, Paul Gibbard

Apologies:

Véronique Duché

1. Chair's Welcome /2020 conference

Natalie welcomed delegates to the conference and thanked the executive committee for their conference-organizing efforts. She also thanked the society members for their enthusiastic response – 60 presentations on Zoom, kicked off by an excellent keynote event organized by Gemma King and Leslie Barnes. The committee decided against a registration fee this year given the low overhead for the virtual setting and noted that asking participants to become members had given the ASFS quite a boost.

2. Approval of 2020 minutes

Natalie asked for approval of 2019 minutes. Chris Hogarth approved and Clara Sitbon seconded.

3. Actions/business arising from minutes

None.

4. 2020 Conference

See above

5. Accounts

Chris gave a snapshot of our financial situation, which is very healthy: \$43,700 total

Expenses associated with the 2020 conference included:

- \$300 to keynotes
- \$250 to AJFS essay prize

Natalie noted an additional \$400 for the annual website fees, emphasised the low overhead of this year's conference and celebrated our 149 members.

6. Mentorship program

Leslie reported 35 applications, evenly split, with some asking to be both mentor and mentee and participants in the US; she noted that mentees were looking for advice re. publishing strategies, job, grant, and promotion applications, and navigating less traditional career paths.

We were able to make matches for almost everyone who expressed interest, and the feedback has been very positive so far, with colleagues noting the fruitful collaborations that are taking shape, the feeling of connection to ASFS and wider French Studies community, and praising mentors, who “go above and beyond” in their interactions with mentees.

Natalie suggested sending out a new call in early 2021 to open it up to our new members.

7. Member survey

Ben observed that the survey was an opportunity to hear from members about what we can keep going, what we might change going forward. The survey went out in Feb, and Ben noted that this too might be worth sending out again now that our membership is up.

Results by question/topic (snapshot)

-the ASFS conference:

-Positives: collegiality and interaction; generosity of spirit in Post-grad day

-Areas for improvement/suggestions: timing, cost, choice of plenary speakers, need for non-G08 visibility; more engagement with wider pacific, more variation in panel format, dominated by lit and film (how best to represent the variety of what we do), cost for contract positions

-industry concerns: post-Covid, future of language teaching, job market for grads, environmental justice, demonstrating national interest value of our work in FR studies in Australia, how we keep ourselves from becoming redundant in the age of google translate

-one change we'd like to see happen:

-collaboration with other language societies (bringing more visibility to language studies), more collaboration with international networks, greater diversity of representation and engagement in locally situated contexts (e.g., closer collaboration with the Alliance Française)

Member responses to survey:

Greg: shared a link to AAH, raising the need to defend multilingualism in Australia; raised concerns about uni strategic plans and their global intentions – how to we leverage that in support of language programs

Yuri: raised the possibility of offering joint society memberships (eg, with FS); proposed a measure of promoting visibility and reaching out to the wider public, eg, a press release or résumé that promotes what we do in the conference

Alexis: Rudé 2022 will include a public lecture to increase visibility

8. Communications:

Gemma confirmed that there are 149 members receiving email updates; the ASFS account has 541 Twitter followers, 157 FB followers, and 3326 visitors to the website so far (the business plan costs \$396/year, which is a very reasonable price given the Paypal possibility, etc.)

Via the listserv, FB, Twitter, etc., we are in regular contact with members and beyond.

Gemma invited members to be in touch if there were other avenues of communication they wish us to pursue.

9. Postgraduate activities

Clara sent out a survey to post-grads *and* ECRs (this space is evolving and includes ECRs) to identify the needs of the members. They were:

- strategies for publication
- strategies for career planning

She reported also having reached out to Heads of French to identify post-grads; there are 17, and 25 people attended the post-grad event this year. The participants are eager to form a community, and a lot of forward planning came out of the meeting.

Clara thanked Alexis Bergantz (publishing), Sophie Patrick, Alex Kurmann, Bonnie Thomas, Rob Boncardo and Alexis Bergantz (career planning) for their participation.

The essay prize received 6 high-quality submissions this year; Clara thanked Alistair Rolls, Yuri Cerqueira dos Anjos and Bonnie Thomas for judging the papers and including feedback

Future conference:

We are hoping to convene in Wellington in 2021, but failing that, we might co-opt a conference organizer; SFS has a designated conference organizer, and if we have to do this again online, this is a possibility to relieve the executive committee.

Natalie also noted that we are tentatively planning on holding the 2022 conference at UQ and the 2023 at Sydney; we're tabling these discussions for now given the uncertain circumstances.

11. Lifetime memberships

We've given these memberships to Colin Nettelbeck and Brian Nelson; Natalie suggested we award two more to John West-Sooby, who is retiring this year, and Jean Fornasiero – both have done many years of service for French Studies and for the ASFS. Both were approved by all via chat.

12. Colin Nettelbeck PG award

Gemma discussed plans for how ASFS might honour Colin, who is very ill. LCNAU has plans for a recurring lecture, given by a senior colleague, at LCNAU meetings to honour his contributions to that network; Gemma noted that we would like to focus on his mentorship, and thus, the other end of the professional cycle, so we'd like to propose a Colin Nettelbeck award providing travel or research funds to a PG or ECR; the inspiration was the Melbourne French trust fund.

Responses:

Greg: asked for clarification on what the award is (Gemma: international travel for conference or archival work; general research funds for books, RA, etc); Greg expressed full support but suggested that 1) ASFS membership be a requirement, and 2) we be sure to include second-language acquisition.

Bertrand: added details about the French trust fund

Natalie and Gemma clarified that we would invite applications each year, open to any kind of research-related expense, and that we want to be sure not to overlap with LCNAU and ISFAR.

13. Election of Office Bearers for 2021

Alistair served as Elections officer and declared all positions vacant, calling for nominations (to be seconded, confirmed, countered in chat).

Results of the elections:

President: Natalie Edwards (non contested)

Vice-President: Ben McCann (non contested)

Treasurer: Chris Hogarth (non contested)

Secretary: Leslie Barnes (non contested)

Editor of Publications: Gemma King (non contested)

Post-graduate officer: Clara Sitbon (non contested)

An Ad-hoc committee position was proposed: Membership secretary: Lauren Twine (non contested)

Any other business

No other business was raised

Meeting closed at 1:46