

Beta Phi Mu Executive Board
April Online Board Meeting
Minutes - FINAL
Wednesday, April 22, 2020
10:00am-11:00am EDT

Present: Gordon Baker (late arrival), Cecelia Brown (President), Michelle Demeter (late arrival), Emily Knox (Vice President/President Elect), Alison Lewis (Executive Director), Camille McCutcheon, and Elaine Yontz (Past President).

Regrets: Laura Saunders and Michelle Demeter.

Guest: Andrea Falcone (Scholars Series Editor).

The meeting was called to order slightly after 10:00am and introductions were made. Because we did not have a quorum present, it was decided to shift some of the agenda around, in the hope of more people showing up later. The 2020 ALA Midwinter board meeting minutes were previously approved and were provided for information purposes.

Committee Updates

Nominating Committee: Elaine Yontz is serving as the Chair of this committee. She reported that four people have already agreed to run for office or the board; two others have expressed interest. A final slate and biographical statements are expected to be in place in time for a May election. Because of the cancellation of ALA Annual this year, all board slots (including those normally voted on in-person at Annual) will appear on the ballot this year.

Scholarship Committee: Camille McCutcheon is serving as the chair of this committee. She reported that she has 18 volunteer judges for a total of 97 completed applications. Each judge will be assigned 10-11 applications to review, with a May 18th deadline.

Undergrad Expansion Update: Emily Knox is chairing this committee. She reported that, based on further consideration of the Beta Phi Mu by-laws, some changes will need to be made. Lacking a quorum, this can be voted on through email at a later date. It is hoped that these changes will be approved in time to put on the May election ballot for voting on by the membership. Some additional factors involved with this change are: making it clear that this expansion to undergraduate programs is optional for current chapters and creating an FAQ to address common questions and concerns. The Beta Phi Mu Handbook can also be updated to reflect the change and document new procedures.

Trademark Update: Knox reported that her brother's law firm, which is based in Philadelphia, has agreed to do the legal consultation for Beta Phi Mu's trademarks on a pro bono basis. A contract with the law firm has been signed by BPM Headquarters. Knox will follow up regarding what the next steps should be.

BPM Future/Restructuring: Brown had earlier requested that the draft re-structuring document provided at ALA Midwinter be re-sent to all board members. Given the current state of finances and the ever more uncertain future of the organization, it was decided that an Ad Hoc Committee be formed to further investigate the possibility of implementing a "working board" style of management for the organization. Gordon Baker, Emily Knox, Cecy Brown, and Camille McCutcheon all volunteered to serve on this committee. Brown stated that she did not wish to chair the committee, but that she would take the initiative to get things started.

Future Meetings/ALA Annual Cancellation: In light of the cancellation of ALA Annual this year, it was decided that we should go ahead with our regular June board meeting, shifting it to an online meeting. ALA Midwinter 2021 in Indianapolis is still “on” for present; we can make a decision later in the year regarding whether or not we wish to attend that event in person, if it is not cancelled before then. Moving forward, ALA Midwinter will no longer be an issue. The possibility of an on-line event for our members in June, in lieu of our usual in-person membership meeting, was also discussed. Knox said that she could host such an event, up to 300 attendees. Tentative plans include: holding it on the same date as our planned in-person meeting, sticking to about 30 minutes, using the opportunity to announce scholarship winners and convey other information to the membership.

Finances: Executive Director Alison Lewis presented the updated 2020 Budget, along with year-to-date figures. It was noted that both the checking account and the money market account are running low; it may be necessary to cash in the certificate of deposit to continue covering expenses. It is also of concern that a number of chapters have contacted Headquarters recently about delays/problems in nominating new members due to not being on campus. This may adversely affect new memberships for this year. Some other aspects of the budget that were pointed out include: 1) Although the amount taken in for new regular memberships so far this year is low (\$1,900), it is only about \$200 off the figure from this same time period last year. New professional memberships may be leveling off. 2) The cancellation of ALA Annual is financially a “wash” as the fundraising done in conjunction with this (to LIS programs) normally covers all, or most, of this expense. 3) Lewis reported being charged meeting room fees for our board meeting at ALA Midwinter, which is the first time this has happened. This most likely reflects a change in policy for ALA regarding affiliate organizations and may further impact our bottom line going forward. 4) There has been good participation so far regarding chapter assessment fees. We are one shy of making the budgeted amount at this point.

Some brainstorming regarding financial matters followed. Yontz suggested sending out reminder invitations for joining as professional members in May or June. Knox suggested not giving out scholarships next year, as a strong message to membership regarding the organization’s precarious financial situation. Some other ideas relevant to scholarships included possibly rolling back some of the amounts given, continuing to seek outside/corporate funding, or giving only one scholarship per year and rotating which ones are given. Lewis cautioned against breaking the connections for the Garfield and Sessa scholarships; as these already have outside funding (through the Garfield Foundation and Library Juice Academy), we should continue to maintain these relationships and present these scholarships. We may want to further consider additional “austerity measures” to put in place.

BPM Scholars Series: Scholars Series Editor Andrea Falcone announced that Melissa Mallon’s Partners in Teaching and Learning is forthcoming from Rowman & Littlefield and that this information could also be added to the BPM website. One additional manuscript is “in process.” Board members were reminded to seek out potential authors for the series; they do not need to have a formal proposal in mind but can reach out to Andrea to further explore the possibility of becoming a Scholars Series author.

The meeting concluded close to 11am, with the intention to conduct any necessary further business and voting via email, and to meet again online in June.