

MinneTESOL Executive Board Winter Meeting

Saturday, December 11, 2021, 9:00 am-12:00 p.m., Zoom <https://umn.zoom.us/j/96212118641>

1. Welcome/greeting (9:00-9:15)

Introductions were made. In attendance; Kate C., Valorie, Leah K., Holly KT, Leah S., Suzanne M., Allison S., Michael B., Kristina R., Krista C., Emily K., Darren L. Jenna H., Amy Y.

2. Approval of [September minutes](#) (9:15)

Motion to Accept: Amy S.

Second: Krista C.

Motion carried: Yes (unanimous)

3. Updates (Kate) (9:15-9:20)

a. Banking update -- Checking: \$63,644 Savings: \$45,111

b. Membership 859/**972**

i. Adult: 85/**117** College: 98/**132** Elementary: 434/**463** Middle: 191/**208**

Retired: 8/**9** Secondary: 211/**225** Teacher Ed: 99/**116**

Elementary is largest Interest Section

c. Standing Committees

i. Advocacy: 155/**156** SLIFE: 145/**177** Early Learning: 54/**50**

Early Learning is a new Standing Committee – gaining members

4. Debrief of conference (Ghaida, Amy, Kate, others) (9:20-11:00)

Numbers were strong – especially in light of the pandemic. Exceeded what is happening nationwide.

Numbers were likely affected by having difficulty finding substitute teachers and related logistics.

Higher Ed – needed to pay out-of-pocket or volunteer to get registration fee waived, as there was no professional development budget.

Idea: Is there a way to do a virtual winter conference as follow-up from fall conference (recycle information to help those who couldn't make it to the fall conference). Could be asynchronous.

Kristina is willing to lead this conversation.

MN SLIFE – haven't heard about the status of their spring conference. Was cancelled last year.

Could be a boost with refugee numbers. Amy and Kristina offered to lead the work of looking into this. Will connect off-line. Michael shared that MN SLIFE is looking to run an event – not necessarily a full event/conference. Might be in-person, just scaled down. Jenna is willing to help as well.

a. *Kate will do expenses/income for conference.*

b. *Overall summary, it was a successful conference.*

i. *In general, feedback was very positive.*

ii. *From exhibitor survey: well-organized, liked Thursday evening setup, loved location of exhibitors, reasonably priced tables compared to other conferences*

Next Year: When anticipating full capacity, will be four places to eat for lunch – as opposed to two spots (which led to bottlenecks). Previous years included buffet, might speed up lunch process. Question – was this change because of the pandemic? Answer: Yes. Box lunches would have been fast but \$30/lunch box. Opted for ala carte (\$20 price point). Maybe next year go back to a buffet. Give lunch options for folks – one sheet with local restaurants. Keeping the choice of having a lunch or not is critical.

Concern – food items didn't always add up to \$20 – “just donated money to the RiverCenter” feeling. \$20 is too much for the price of a lunch voucher.

Concern – Jeanette was missed. Didn't feel as though the people filling in for her didn't match the spirit of the conference – ex., treatment of people at registration table. Thinking about customer-facing communication and treatment. Could they be more of a background role? Important piece of feedback for the company. Would it be worth writing some of this feedback up? Summary – North Stars folks didn't always give off the best first impression. Wasn't representative of how we are. Not every single person but worth mentioning. Jeanette is kind and patient – feedback will be valuable to her. Historically – have had some issues when registration staffed by volunteers (related to not being able to answer questions). One reason we partnered with North Star. Needs to be balance of having answers plus customer service. Feedback: North Star was very efficient, but someone of color may not receive that efficiency positively.

Feedback: Amy Y. – tweaking customer service would be great. On everything else, it was great and very effective.

Historically – Used to have an Event Coordinator – then transitioned to North Star.

Feedback: Helpful to have printed schedule by rooms. Thinking that might have been part of the Jackie's responsibility. Thank you to Amy Y. for doing the printed signs!

Kate will follow-up with Jeanette.

Feedback: Reconsider including paper materials at some level. Response: Did that in 2019 (print off schedule itself). Didn't happen this year. Will do this 2022.

c. Feedback!

- i. From co-chairs (Ghaida, Amy)
- ii. From attendees (conference survey) (Ghaida, Amy)

1. 104 responses total.

About 15% return rate. Don't usually get a lot of folks responding. Results tend to be polarizing.

SCHED had feedback form – most were positive.

Survey – mixed feedback.

2. Things went well:

a. Attendance:

- i. 80.8% ESL/ELL Teachers
- ii. 14.4% ESL/ELL Coordinators
- iii. 6.7% Teacher Educators
- iv. 5.8% Graduate Students

Do we want to rethink Secondary / Post-Secondary Format?

b. Most attendees agree/strongly agree that the conference venue (RiverCentre) and conference platform (Sched) met their expectations.

c. Many positive comments about tech crew.

Need more dongles for Mac users.

Budget Line Item – “Stage Hand Labor” - \$7k, included Tech Crew

Feedback: Glad there was a women involved in Tech Crew

- d. 72% agree or strongly agree that the cost of attending was reasonable.

- e. Generally positive feedback about both keynote speakers.

Please spread word on Keynotes via YouTube.

Thank you to Michael for his work on securing the keynote presenters!

Amy S. might have a connection to Noguera.

Suggested Keynote: Andrea Honigsfeld

- f. Very positive responses from presenters about knowing what they need to know, getting answers to questions, tech support (no issues with tech).

- g. *The Killing Fields: Simulation of Real Refugees Experiences:* Considered for the 2023 TESOL Convention.

- h. The food was delicious.

Please see notes, above on lunch.

- i. The most beneficial aspects of the MinneTESOL Journal: open access, accessible to practitioners, jobs, local teacher scholars, timely content, great collaborations, and latest research and updates (what's happening in the field).

Didn't seem to be a lot of interaction with the MinneTESOL Journal. Question: Members? Or people in general?

Seems to be a bit awkward of a question inserted into the conference survey. Darren: Was placed there in 2017 and has become a part of the survey.

Do we do any targeting with the Journal and certain sections/groups/people? Suggestions: Direct interest highlight; could there be a one-page overview sent to folks, who can then click on the link to access the article in detail? Use "Influencers" approach (example, Teacher to Teacher). Response: We could ask Interest Section leaders to relay pertinent articles/topics to group. Could we have a more simplified email and/or more of a visual aspect to the articles/topics? Include Journal article in Newsletter?

Social Media – Facebook, Instagram, etc.?

General Suggestion: Have a Board Member dedicated to Social Media.

Good job – Krista and Social Media! Ally will be taking over the Social Media piece.

- j. 15 people expressed their willingness to help in the 2022 MELED conference. Please contact them next year.

See previous notes on volunteers and reimbursement.

- 3. Things to change/plan better for next year:

- a. Some comments about rooms: too small, no enough seats. Is there a way to better gauge which sessions people would like to attend in advance to plan for proper seating?
Is there a better way? Really difficult to gauge room size. Rooms were fairly large and some were combined. Feedback: Super hard to do. We have a great venue, with some very spacious rooms. Don't see an easy way around this. SCHED offers data on who is planning on attending sessions. Not sure if this would help and don't want to switch sessions day of.
Michael: Is OK to have this as a problem. Has seen conferences doing different things (ex. pre-registration) but don't think it is worth the trade-off.
- b. Ideas: What about having a table for the the keynote speakers in the vendors in the morning? Or making their books available for sale at the conference somewhere?
Feedback: Aberration due to COVID. Normally, keynotes would be more involved in other aspects of conference.
Surprised publishers weren't more active with books, etc.
Question – Should there be a bookstore? Example, keynote books and recommended books. Could there be a book swap/sale/exchange – mini-fundraiser? In lieu of silent auction?
Logistical questions – i.e., who will lead this?
Suggestion table – point of discussion on extending conference topics/engagement/etc. Have point people lead some of this work.
- c. Could the interest sections and standing committees sessions be offered both Friday and Saturday?
SC Friday, IS Saturday?
Suggestion: Elementary Intersection – two opportunities to go?
Feedback: Elementary section huge on Friday, not on Saturday. Could there be networking/social opportunities?
- d. Some attendees asked for:
 - i. Variety of sessions: advanced classroom strategies/scenarios, secondary SLIFE support and instruction, co-teaching, and secondary Newcomer instruction.
 - ii. Getting more participation from ABE faculty, middle school/high school, higher ed (teaching, not research).
 - iii. a printed schedule at a glance.*Biggest complaint was lack of pertinent options for certain groups (i.e. Secondary) for Saturday.*
Should it be PK-16 both days with clearly marked strands?
Thought: Switching from “age context” to “skill context”. For example, instead of “Elementary” go with “Reading” or “Writing”. This would be a big change for the conference framing.

Something that worked historically, was to ask a friend or colleague to present at the elementary level. Response: We had very few unsolicited presenter applications. The make-up of the Board can sometimes skew the presenter representation – example, more ABE on Board, more ABE presentations. Need to keep at using personal and professional connections to urge speaker presentations.

Tweak the form and proposal evaluation process to honor the applicability of the content to multiple Interest Sections. Somehow show that a presenter topic can cover multiple Interest Sections/Categories.

e. Some presenters asked for:

- i. Offering the Elementary interest section both days? The Elementary teachers had so many ideas to share with each other.
- ii. Having discussion tables for workshop presentations and topics?
- iii. Encourage retirees to attend the conference?
- iv. Having timekeepers?

Lots of issues with sessions going over time. Any ideas?

Could we assign a participant to be a timekeeper? Have time cards in door.

Also, could consider having someone nudge attendees out of room?

Have some incentive to get folks out into the hallways?

- f. For vendors going to do presentations, it should be clearly marked on the schedule that they are going to talk about a specific curriculum or tool rather than just EL strategies in general.
- g. The line for lunch was so long that attendees didn't get to eat until lunch was over and presentations were starting.

Please see notes, above regarding lunch.

4. There was one complaint about micro-aggressions in a couple of sessions. We might want to write a statement committing to anti-racism? *Seems like attendees were questioning the idea of "race doesn't matter". Feedback that folks were uncomfortable with the heckling and that the heckling didn't stop.*

Do we feel that we are doing everything we can do to talk about anti-racism?

We need to be looking at the effects of racism on students.

Do we have any equity/anti-racial statement?

Kristina: How could we put focus on this content/topic throughout the year? Is something that we should be promoting regularly. Really important to this field. Could foster rich conversation of intersectionality of equity and language? Would be interested in this as a platform.

Krista: Need to promote key values regularly. We can't not talk about this.

Amy S. suggested working with a group (Immigrants and Schools Organization) (?)

Offer an anti-racist lens in proposal review? And/or questions as part of the presenter application? Part of Rubric and Part of Proposal Review?

Amy S. This could be a "both/and"

Suggestion: Include Board training.

Agenda items at January Board Meeting

Utilize Interest Section in this work.

5. Could we have both days (Friday and Saturday) include all strands? The largest complaint was a lack of sessions specifically useful to the great variety of contexts (e.g.: ABE, secondary SLIFE, math EL, EL coordinators). There doesn't seem to be a clear understanding that Friday is K-12 and Saturday post-secondary. (Also, we didn't have a lot of post-secondary sessions for Saturday.) Only 56% of respondents felt the variety of sessions met their needs (4 or 5's out of 5).

Could we do a big promotion to communicate that both days are varied across multiple categories? Increase Saturday attendance. Change structure of days, then promote?

Feedback: Do think that something has to be said. Mix of veteran and new attendees. Does needed to be clearly stated. This has been a "ping-pong" topic historically on the Board.

Create a "Helpful Hints/Conference Guide/FAQ" communication. Be intentional about meeting the needs of new people.

iii. Vendors (Leah S)

1. Sched was used as a schedule platform and hosted links to 2 exhibitors who paid for that feature
 - a. Use a more interactive platform if possible.
2. From exhibitor survey: more "grab and go" lunch options, more space needed between some tables, more encouragement for attendees to visit vendors (like a BINGO card?), more clear direction about where to go for early setup, set up opportunity for community orgs to connect
3. Leah S. needs help (maybe from Jeannette) streamlining the exhibitor process for 2022.

Vendors were wonderful.

Would love to have more community organizations involved and having networking opportunities for those folks.

iv. Other ideas for 2022:

1. Free registration for Board members (?)

Volunteers receive free registration – how about Board Members? Could this be a perk for Board Members? A lot of duties were spread across the Board a couple of years ago, making many of the Board Members receive free registration – wouldn't be too much to extend this.

Motion: All elected Board Members will receive free Conference registration

Motion to Accept: Amy Y.

Second: LeAnne G.

Motion carried: Yes (unanimous)

2. More clarity regarding which volunteer positions get free registration

Question by Kristina: Volunteering and parameters of registration fee waived? Answers: Some positions require substantially more time, so those get reimbursed. This said, hard to get volunteers – might be worth talking about funding all volunteer positions if the funds are there.

Question – is there a way to combine volunteer “slots”? Hasn’t been done historically but open to changing it. Feedback – better to be consistent rather than fair (in terms of hours). Response: Information was clear.

Receiving end: Was confusing (being broken down by position).

Feedback: All volunteers should be reimbursed. Insight: Email was sent maybe giving the impression that all volunteer registrations would be reimbursed. Feedback: All volunteer positions should be reimbursed.

Kate: Was hard to receive emails asking for reimbursement and couldn’t reimburse some of those people. Could everyone get reimbursed in some way? Maybe we could find a way to be all spots reimbursable – if not the whole conference, at least some of it. A little bit easier with folks paying for a lunch voucher.

3. Sam Rodriguez watch

5. [Look at conference income/expense \(Kate, LeeAnne\) \(11:00-11:30\)](#)

Kate shared her pie charts – not final numbers but gives a rough idea. Total expense of the conference was around 100K. Most of the expense was from the RiverCenter (space and catering). RiverCenter is cost-effective while being a great site. Will talk SCHED at a later time.

- a. Caveat: these are mostly final #s. Bank fees for credit cards processing not included

i. Big picture: Profit of ~\$16K

- b. Anything to change for next time?

i. Is Sched worth it?

ii. Is Wild Apricot worth it?

- c. Kate, LeeAnne, Amy S, anyone who’s interested will meet later to discuss 2022 budget .
Need to hear from IS/SC leaders re:2022 needs, esp. SLIFE (Spring Fling)

6. Other news/announcements:

- a. New issue of Journal now available!

- b. Any changes to IS/SC leadership?

7. Farewell to departing Board members (Krista, Darren, Brian, Ghaida)

8. Next meeting: Jan. 29, 2022, (LIVE OR ZOOM?). EB: 9-12: IS/SC leaders: 11-2:00.

Feedback: Zoom