

Minutes MPSA Virtual Council Meeting | Tuesday, 9-22-2020, 10 am-11:30 am Eastern
Autumn Council Meeting. Discussion of Virtual, Hybrid, In-Person Conference.

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS** (Diana Mutz) **10:00-10:05 am**
The meeting was called to order at 10:03 am. Council members were asked to introduce themselves.

2. **BUSINESS OF THE BOARD**
 - A. **Approve Minutes from the June Council meetings** (Diana Mutz) * **10:05-10:10 am**
A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the 6/23/2020 Council Meeting and the motion passed.

3. **REPORTS - Questions and Discussion**
 - A. **Report on Programs and Activities** (William Morgan) * **10:10-10:15 am**
Though six webinars were held during the summer, Morgan noted that there were not significant changes in the activities since the previous meetings. The format of the Appendices in the two recent reports is identical and shows details on activities by program area.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the report, which passed.

 - B. **AJPS Mid-Year Editorial Report 2020-08-24** (Kathy Dolan, Jenn Lawless) * **10:15-10:25 am**
The Co-Editors in Chief of the AJPS noted that the number manuscripts submitted in the field of American Politics had declined.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the report, and the motion passed.

 - C. **Report on Finances & 2021 Budget** (William Morgan) * **10:25-10:35 am**
Given the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, it is hard to know exactly how it will impact the conference and membership. The budget assumes that conference income and membership income will decline. The conference estimates are based on other associations, but this may change as virtual conferences become the norm. Membership income is assumed to decline because of the reduced conference attendance. Because of the uncertain impact of COVID-19 on renewals, the publisher of the AJPS is unable to provide estimates until later in the year. Because the AJPS is the top-rated journal in the discipline, the budget assumes that AJPS income will only decline by 16%.

The budget also assumes that the 2021 conference will be entirely Virtual (a hybrid conference would have additional expenses of \$170,000 and additional income of \$24,000); the budget also assumes that the conference registration fees are not discounted. Both of these points will be addressed in the next agenda item, 4-1, New Business-MPSA 2021 Conference.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the financial report and the 2021 budget, and the motion passed.

4. NEW BUSINESS - Questions and Discussion

A. Discussion & Report – MPSA 2021 Conference (William Morgan) *

10:35-11:10 am

Morgan reviewed some of the key information in the report. i.) the “Restore Illinois Plan” which describes the criteria for fully re-opening the state has Chicago in Phase 4, where gatherings (including conferences) of more than 50 people are not allowed. Re-opening can only take place when a vaccine, effective and widely available treatment, or herd immunity has taken place. ii.) Both the Palmer House and Hilton Chicago are closed; the estimate is that they will re-open in December. iii) The Palmer House is in foreclosure and looking for buyers, with an unknown timeline.

The key features of conferences were discussed: Presentations, Exhibit Hall, and Networking. Several virtual conference platforms provide all three and can accommodate a conference as large as the MPSA. The importance of minimizing technical complexity and insuring customer support was discussed. It was noted that attending virtual conferences can be emotionally draining. There was discussion that a virtual conference should not just be an on-line version of the meeting, that that the goals may be different compared to an in-person conference. It was noted the MPSA should prioritize insuring that graduate students and associate professors can present.

In March, the MPSA found that only a minority of attendees would be allowed by their university to travel to attend a conference. Public Health experts do not project that a COVID-19 vaccine would be available in sufficient amounts until the second half of 2021 at the earliest, making it unlikely that the MPSA could legally hold the conference in Chicago. A motion was made for the 2021 conference to be entirely virtual. The motion was seconded and passed.

The discussion then focused on how the virtual conference could best address the needs of the attendees. With the challenge of participating in a professional meeting when one is participating virtually from home, the MPSA should be welcoming and remind attendees to relax the typical professional norms. With attendees from different time zones, the sessions would need to take place across a broader range of times. For attendees with other family and professional obligations, having the conference during weekdays and over two weeks might help. The MPSA could survey attendees about these issues, and though flexibility is important, it is likely that not all needs could be met.

The Council then discussed the need for the MPSA to address the financial pressures that universities and members are experiencing and reduce the 2021 conference registration fees for members. MPSA had reduce the registration fees by about 50% (\$120 for Faculty and \$60 for Students). Deeper discounts were discussed averaging \$50 for faculty and \$25 for students, while allowing members to contribute more if they are able. If a person only had a role of discussant, then they should be able to register at no cost.

Mutz proposed appointing a committee on the 2021 conference to discuss the conference registration fees as well as features of the virtual conference.

B. Preview of Bylaw Revision Discussion at 10/6/20 Council Meeting (Diana Mutz) *

11:10-11:20 am

At the beginning of the year, the MPSA hired a consultant to conduct a Governance Review to update the MPSA Bylaws. The current bylaws, the proposed bylaws, and a document that highlights the key changes are included in the meeting packet. Council members who have proposed changes are encouraged to submit the new wording by 10-02-2020 so this can be incorporated into the discussion and votes at the next meeting.

5. EXECUTIVE SESSION (Diana Mutz) *

11:20-11:30 am

A motion was made to move into executive session at about 11:25 am. A motion was made and seconded to end Executive Session, and the motion passed.

6. ADJOURN (Diana Mutz) *

11:30 am

A motion was made, seconded and passed to adjourn the meeting at 11:39 am.