

# **CACLALS Annual General Meeting**

Friday, June 11, 2021

Meeting Convened at 1:00pm MDT Online via Zoom

Chaired by: Asma Sayed, CACLALS President (2019-2022)

**Members Present:** Jesse Arseneault, Asma Sayed, Jennifer Andrews, Jay Dolmage, Alessandra Capperdoni, Alexandra Sweny, Anna Guttman, Anindo Hazra, Brandi Estey-Burt, Chandrima Chakraborty, J. Coplen Rose, Emmarie Brown, Feisal Kirumira, Geoffrey Macdonald, Hengameh Saroukhani, Jason Sandhar, Kaitlin Blanchard, Mariam Pirbhai, Michael Bodkin, Pamela McCallum, Prabhjot Parmar, Ranjini Mendis, Ruta Slapkauskaite, Sanchari Sur, Sara Rozenberg, Shalika Sivathasan, Stephanie Oliver, Susan Spearey, Susie O'Brien, Tavleen Purewal, Terri Tomsy, Tyler Ball, Veronica Austen

## **1. Call to Order**

## **2. Approval of the Agenda**

- MOTION PASSED (J. Coplen Rose/Alessandra Capperdoni)

## **3. Approval of minutes**

- MOTION PASSED with no corrections requested (Terri Tomsy/Sanchari Sur)

## **4. “Igniting Change”: Congress/Federation EDID Report Update (Guest: Jay Dolmage)**

- Asma began by introducing Jay Dolmage and Jennifer Andrews as representatives from FHSS discussing the “Igniting Change” final report.
- Jennifer Andrews emphasized FHSS’s longstanding relationship with CACLALS through the previous executive. She also introduced Jay Dolmage, a member of the FHSS EDID committee, and co-author of the “Igniting Change” EDID report. She explained the origins of this report and some of the key roles the Federation plays for scholars and associations across Canada, detailing the following:
  - Igniting change was inspired partially by the racial profiling of Shelby McPhee and the questions of how CFHSS should respond to such incidents and to anti-Black racism in general.
  - FHSS ranges from associations consisting of 40 members to those up to 1000 members.
  - The report is 200 pages, and emphasizes the importance of implementing EDID policies into Congress events and of acknowledging appropriate terminology.
  - The report has an extensive bibliography and resource list. It outlines practices for creating inclusive conferences. It also provides key references and resources that might be useful to scholarship. It offers a

historical snapshot of EDID at the federation. It also how CHFSS was built on EDID concerns but also how it strayed from them over the years.

- CHFSS cannot do this work alone and needs associations to participate as well. Jennifer Andrews requested CACLALS' participation in the criteria set out by the report.
- The report came out in April and the federation is looking to turn the report into actionable items that can be sustained over time.
- For those who don't know what the federation is: FHSS is a not-for-profit/charitable organization begun in 1948. It is centred in Ottawa. It has only 18 staff members. Its mandate is to work for and with scholarly associations, as well as research institutions to promote the interests of those in the social sciences and the humanities. They also engage actively on various platforms to liaise between scholars and the media. They also produce publications and run the Awards to Scholarly Publications Program (ASPP) grants. They do policy work for things that affect Canadian scholars. They also intervene with legal support.
- Jennifer Andrews noted that when the EDID report came out, despite initial hesitancy, she is impressed by the report and the array of difficult topics tackled by the committee. Andrews stressed that if we don't have member support, we aren't going to mobilize change.
- Jay Dolmage outlined that the report is a narrative and emphasizes ways that the Federation can do better. He noted that there were clear problems with the way that the Federation presented this year's conference, especially the way that they left key EDID decisions to individual associations; this raised the question of whether associations could trust the Federation. With regard to accessibility, Dolmage suggested, the report had an opportunity to attend to things that FHSS didn't do (e.g., captioning, interpretation, and accessible programming, as well as other things outlined in the report).
- Jay Dolmage also stressed the high likelihood of hybrid/virtual congress in the future, which has implications for accessibility, but this means that we have to keep the federation accountable. He also suggested that there are resources being put into the possibilities of future congresses.
- Jay Dolmage made himself available to answer members' questions and talk through considerations for the future of CACLALS' relationship with Congress.
- Question Period:
  - Asma Sayed added that she and Jesse Arseneault had meetings with the CEO of FHSS and did not feel that the issues were being addressed adequately. Sayed explained that this informed the decision to host an independent conference, despite seeing the value of multiple organizations working together at Congress. Sayed stressed that she and Arseneault were

looking forward to seeing the commitments of this report put into action. Because our association mandate is based in principles of EDID, because of our partnership is with ILSA, and affiliation with the BCSA, Sayed noted that it is important for us to see these principles in action. Sayed also stressed that we would be happy to be part of a committee to see this put forward.

- Veronica Austen asked how CFHSS is reaching out to organizations, stressing that another organization she belonged to did not feel they had a voice in Congress.
- Jennifer Andrews responded that many organizations feel sidelined this year and that the Federation is initiating a member forum to address this issue. Andrews stressed that the Federation needs to do more to actively reach out to associations and needs a sense of shared experience, as well as what works and what does not. Andrews also suggested that there needs to be more member forum engagement, with conversations and town halls as venues where members could share their concerns. Andrews elaborated that part of the challenge to building these conversations is that CFHSS has a small number of staff. Andrews committed to taking this conversation back to the federation team. Andrews also noted that an additional challenge in these conversations is that few of the board are academics. Doing EDID hiring will also make a difference
- Jay Dolmage added that the more folks at the Federation are accountable, the more will be helped.
- Stephanie Oliver reaffirmed that many people working in the Federation are not academics, and asked if there are plans in place to change the Federation structurally to make sure these issues aren't buried.
- Jennifer Andrews responded that part of the problem is education, and there has been some reorientation of staff to better understand the issues, but that CFHSS must be prepared and able to learn from their mistakes. Andrews also noted that this is work that CFHSS needs to do on a continuing basis. Issues change and the Federation needs to keep with the times.
- Jay Dolmage added that the structure of CFHSS and the issues they tackle are an open question and that members and associations have to keep asking it. He added that academic leaders have a different job now than they had before. He also stressed the need for CFHSS to think about the people who aren't currently at Congress, so that future Congresses will look different, but also the need to be cognizant of who is not included right now.

- Asma Sayed suggested that CACLALS should have a separate meeting to talk about this report and committed to planning a session where CACLALS could think about these issues in the coming months.

## **5. President's Report (Asma Sayed)**

- Asma Sayed opened the report by noting that, during the year, she and Jesse Arseneault had multiple meetings with the Federation in the context of the BCSA backing out of Congress. She and Arseneault also attended meetings with other associations and had been in continuous communication. Additionally, Sayed noted that CACLALS had sent an open letter to the Federation, calling upon them to look at the demands of the BCSA and sharing the association's concerns about how CFHSS handled the issue of racial profiling and the Congress theme. In response, CFHSS promised to work on these issues. Sayed noted that our decision to hold an independent, virtual conference this year was the result of significant consultation with other associations, the Federation, and the CACLALS executive.
- Asma Sayed organized the name change panel in April. She noted that based on a poll to decide upon a new name following the panel, CACLALS is moving forward with a name change referendum. She noted that the results of the poll and the new name would be discussed later in the meeting, as per the agenda item detailing the name change.
- Asma Sayed noted the process for creating this year's conference, which involved carrying forward papers from last year and receiving and evaluating new abstracts. Sayed noted that hosting an independent conference over two years of abstracts was a challenge for our executive, particularly the program chair. She noted that CACLALS had 71 presenters and 90 registrations, emphasizing that this year involved a very healthy conference.
- Asma Sayed announced that the next ACLALS conference will take place in Toronto in July 2022 and that she would forward the updated information and the CFP when it is available.
- Asma Sayed noted that the next congress will likely be in Montreal, but this partnership is still not formally announced. She added that we will know more after the FHSS AGM on June 23 and that CACLALS will update members.
- Asma Sayed noted that CACLALS member numbers are very healthy and that we continue to be in a strong position. She additionally thanked all the members, noting that our only source of revenues is membership fees. She encouraged everyone to invite members, whether colleagues, students, or other members. She stressed that leftover PDA funds also mean a lot to our association, often as potential donations for graduate student funds. Asma noted that we have had many new registrations in recent years.

- Asma Sayed took a moment to thank the Executive Committee who vetted abstracts and provided comments, noting that not all associations provide comments, and voiced appreciation for this labour. Specifically, Sayed thanked Anindo Hazra, Alia Somani, J. Coplen Rose, and Terri Tomskey, as well as thanks Susan Spearey for joining the judges' panel for the Graduate Student Prize.
- Asma Sayed noted that all of our panels saw all 15-30 people and the keynotes were well attended as well.
- Asma Sayed thanked all of the speakers at the keynote address, as well as Graduate Student Representatives, Sara Rozenberg and Shalika Sivathanan, for organizing the "Solidarity Through Scholarship" panel. Sayed also offered thanks to all of the speakers at the Indigenous Roundtable and especially to ILSA and ILSA president Keavy Martin. She also thanked *ARIEL* and *CRCL* for their generous support in the form of \$500 contributions. She thanked KPU for fully sponsoring the cost of zoom rooms, adding that this very meaningful financial support saved the association \$3000-\$5000.
- Asma Sayed added that, because of these sponsorships, we will be better able to support our conference next year.
- Asma Sayed also expressed thanks to our tech supporter, Ajaypal Cheema and to Secretary-Treasurer Jesse Arseneault.

#### **6. Treasurer's Report (Jesse Arseneault)**

- Jesse Arseneault emphasized that CACLALS funds are in a healthy place, with a current balance of \$20,331.75. He thanked members who opted to maintain their membership funds through the pandemic.
- Jesse Arseneault especially thanked Asma for her hard work to ensure that we could host the conference through KPU with no fees, which made for a low conference budget and saved the association a significant amount of money. He also thanked the previous executive, especially previous Secretary-Treasurer Hengameh Saroukhani and Outgoing President Mariam Pirbhai for putting so much effort into oversight of the budget, a major step in bringing the account to a healthy place.
- Jesse Arseneault nonetheless, cautioned that a single conference can cost many thousands of dollars, and the account can deplete over the space of one conference, as it has many times in the past. Echoing the previous treasurer, he stressed that we need to be careful about spending, and maintain an absolute minimum balance of \$10,000, with no exceptions.
- Jesse Arseneault noted that CACLALS revenues this year came from memberships, donations, and registrations, totaling \$8490.00. Association debits came from CFHSS Fees, web domain and hosting fees, bank fees, and credit card fees, as well as honoraria for the conference, totalling 1854.36. This is a low

number that we will not see again, especially if we go to an in-person model at the next conference. He noted that the net total funds were +\$6635.64.

- Jesse Arseneault went over debits that would come in the coming days from our current conference, which would total \$800, bring our account balance down to \$19531.75.

## **7. Name Change Ratification (Jesse Arseneault)**

- Jesse Arseneault went over the voting process selecting a new name, as well as the process for the name change motion that had occurred in the previous year. He referred to section 19 of the constitution, outlining the process, and detailed the process by which a motion for a name change was submitted by twenty-five members in 2020. He noted that the membership voted in April/May 2021 to change the name of our organization to the Canadian Association for Postcolonial Studies (CAPS), choosing the name out of a poll of several others derived from our April 2021 Name Change Panel.
- Jesse Arseneault noted that, because of the unforeseen pandemic, the language of the name change motion was amended to change the year from 2020 to 2021. The motion was submitted by the requisite 25 members and reads as follows:
  - Having read the above letter regarding changing the name of CACLALS to one reflecting the current aims and scope of our organization, I, the undersigned member, move that, in accordance with section 19 of our constitution:
    - our organization's name be changed in 2020 (amended to 2021)
    - we consider alternative names in a special session of the 2020 (amended to 2021) CACLALS conference in London, Ontario, to be voted upon during our upcoming AGM, and
    - our conference be followed by a referendum to ratify the name change between October 1 and December 31 of 2020 (amended to 2021).
- The membership voted on the motion, which was moved by 25 members in writing.
- MOTION PASSED

## **8. General Business – Items for Discussion**

- **Supporting ACLALS (Jesse Arseneault)**
  - Ranjini Mendis emphasized the shift in relationship from ACLALS funding us to us funding ACLALS
  - Hengameh Saroukhani stressed that we should support ACLALS because we have a long history of collaboration ACLALS and should maintain that relationship.
  - Pamela McCallum emphasized that the international ACLALS brings together people from many places. She noted that we have often given much more money than the \$200 that would be given from the

membership revenues to support scholars from areas with less wealthy associations, especially Africa, coming to the conference. She noted that many associations do not have the level of funding that we have, and stressed that we should support them.

- Asma Sayed mentioned that the current conversation was for clarifying how we are supporting ACLALS, not whether we will or not.
- Henghameh Saroukhani suggested that we should support ACLALS. She had a strong preference for whatever amount is more (donations or 10% of revenues).
- Asma Sayed stressed that these amounts are often the same.
- Jesse Arseneault seconded Asma's comment, emphasizing that 10% of revenues might offer more consistent support.
- MOTION: Alessandra Capperdoni moved that CACLALS shift from giving donations to ACLALS to giving 10% of its annual membership revenues, and that henceforth CACLALS donations will be reserved for precarious faculty and graduate student support. The motion was seconded by J. Coplen Rose. MOTION PASSED.
- **Current Executive Committee term extension (Asma Sayed)**
  - Asma Sayed said that it was difficult in even pre-pandemic times to recruit members for the executive in the middle of the pandemic, so the executive committee agreed to serve on the committee for one more year, because we need to recruit some members three months in advance. The current executive has agreed to serve for one more year. She requested a motion to approve this agreement to serve for one more year.
  - MOTION: Chandrima Chakraborty moved that the current CACLALS executive be approved to serve for one more year. The motion was seconded by Jason Sandhar. MOTION PASSED (Chandrima Chakraborty/Jason Sandhar)
  - MOTION: Asma Sayed tabled a motion to extend the meeting by 20 minutes. MOTION PASSED (Anindo Hazra/J. Coplen Rose)
- **Executive Committee restructuring for 2022 and onward (Jesse Arseneault)**
  - With reference to the revised executive structure, Sara Rozenberg asked for the difference between CHIMO editor and the proposed Communications Officer. Sara Rozenberg also suggested adding graduate student representatives, or perhaps a committee of graduate students to help plan the graduate student panel.
  - Asma suggested an organizing committee for future graduate student panels rather than making the executive too large.

- Chandrima Chakraborty asked for clarification on the responsibilities of the Early Career Representative and whether this person would be expected to give talks or host panels.
- Mariam Pirbhai responded that members during her tenure as President suggested adding the Early Career Representative. She stressed that there are also people who are postdocs, early in their career, but who want to be part of the executive. She also stressed that members are asking for the kind of roundtable events we've had in recent years.
- Susan Spearey suggested that the Early Career Representative could be for early-career, precariously employed colleagues.
- Jason Sandhar suggested, in reference to the Early Career Representative and the Contract Representative, that distinctions between the two should not be elided. He followed up on Susan Spearey and Chandrima Chakraborty's comments and suggested that the contract position, or a position involving contract or precariously employed members should be compensated.
- Susan Spearey suggested making the Contract Representative position an optional one, without demanding any service obligations.
- Asma Sayed noted that the Contract Representative position was discussed at 2019 AGM. She added that, as an association that is stable but not very large, we had previously spoken about an honorarium, possibly of \$200-300. She noted that Alia Somani had also raised the point that there are contract academic representatives who may want to occupy this role as a way of showing their engagement with the association and working toward a long term position, but at the same time noted that we have to recognize the situation in academia right now: this work does not always translate into secure job. Asma Sayed stated that, in terms of compensation, we can consider honoraria.
- Susie O'Brien suggested that we add an accessibility officer position.
- **Graduate Student Prize Announcement (Susan Spearey)**
  - Susan Spearey announced that Tyler Ball was the winner of the graduate student presentation prize, with the following comments:
    - The Committee faced a challenging decision this year. The Graduate Student Prize for 2020-2021 goes to Tyler Ball, Doctoral candidate from York University, for his paper, "Insurgent Sea: Political Ecologies of the Indian Ocean." Tavleen Purewal, Doctoral candidate from the Department of English at University of Toronto and Alexandra Sweny, MA student at Concordia University, are this year's runners up, both of whose work was also highly commended by the Adjudication Committee. I am naming



the runners-up in alphabetical order, as the runners-up are not ranked. When we reviewed the criteria according to which the graduate paper prize is evaluated, we agreed that all three presentations were tightly argued, polished in their delivery, well-paced, clearly focused, and timely in the ways they respectively addressed current issues and emerging theoretical questions and fields of exploration. All three papers were well delivered within the allocated time frame, and all of them engaged the audience. Additionally, all three presenters responded thoughtfully and articulately to the questions that were put to them. And it was easy to imagine each of the three papers being developed for digital or print publication. As a mark of how rich the three projects were, I think it worth mentioning that, during our discussions of adjudication we also found ourselves considering the further intellectual ramifications of the arguments with which we had been presented. Ultimately, Tyler's paper, we agreed, was notable for its expansive, generative, and rich discussion of the interface between indigenous knowledges and hydro-colonial studies, for its nuanced treatment of three primary texts as well as its theoretical sophistication, for its originality, and for the way the "oceanic reading" he offered works to reposition the reader in terms of questions of authority, while also continuously and fluidly recalibrating the demands of reading practice. All three of us noted how fascinated we were by Tyler's application of indigenous Hawaiian wisdom traditions to the act of surfing, and how these practices departed so markedly from the vocabularies of mastery and domination by which more mainstream, and white-dominated, surfing narratives are characterized. We extend our congratulations to all three of our presenters, and to Tyler for his significant contribution to the conference.

## **9. Other Business**

- Prabhjot Parmar took the opportunity, on behalf of everyone at CACLALS, to thank the organizing committee. She additionally thanked everyone for attending the conference as well.
- Hengameh Saroukhani seconded Prabhjot's comment.
- Asma Sayed extended warm and heartfelt thanks to everyone, emphasizing the strong partnership of she and the Secretary-Treasurer, Jesse Arseneault. She noted that, despite online format, Asma emphasized that there's still a closeness at the conference.

- Jesse Arseneault also thanked Asma and expressed warm appreciation for their partnership.

**10. Motion to adjourn**

- MOTION PASSED (Anindo Hazra/Susan Spearey)