

CAPS AGM: 30 May, 2023

Attendees:

- Jesse Arsenault
- Michael Minor
- Susan Rajendran
- Sue Speary
- Prabjhot Parmar
- Dana Mount
- Jill Planche
- Anindo Hazra
- Jennifer Hardwick
- Stephanie Oliver
- Shadman Chowdury-
- Anna Guttman
- Arshad Said Khan
- Lara Eel Mekkawi
- Veronica Austen
- Pushpa Acharya
- Ramisha Rafique

**CAPS AGM Agenda**

**ATK 109, York University, Toronto, Ontario May 30, 2023**

1. Call to order
2. Approval of the agenda
  - Sue, second Asma
3. Approval of the 2022 minutes
  - Anindo, second Susan
4. President's report
  - Jesse -Thank you to all attendees
    - i. First year building ourselves as CAPS -- name change

- ii. Thank you to Stephanie Oliver for the revival of CHIMO. First time the publication has appeared on our website in a decade. Winter + Spring, 2023, are on the website. Information is available on executive officers, recent publications, etc.
- iii. Tomorrow is ILSA/CAPS Indigenous roundtable -- please wear masks. Followed by Robyn Maynard keynote.
- iv. This is a return to in-person/hybrid conferencing, but this year has had some challenges. Without a reliable access to technology, a hybrid conference is difficult.
- v. Limited executive: we have 3 positions open. This resulted in a curtailed conference, including the absence of a dinner, and no brunch following the AGM.
- vi. Expect motions to come your way over the course of the year as we address/modify our executive roles as CAPS. Revising the constitution takes a lot of effort, we will be writing modifications into the constitution this year.
- vii. 26 graduate student proposals, 30 non-graduate proposals. We had 14 people withdraw before the conference begin. This is a year with a smaller turnout. 2019 was our best conference, last year was a successful online conference, this year was larger, but not as large as pre-pandemic levels. Hopefully Montreal might increase our size
- viii. We have 91 members, 13 full-time contract members, 40 tenured faculty, and many graduate student members.
- ix. We need an EDID member on the executive. Asma has volunteered, but we have a nomination this year. This embraces the policy of the "igniting change" document.
- x. Graduate Student prize panel -- blind vetting does not mean that we have EDID reflected in our prize panel. Thinking about ways that we can accept new knowledges is important and the EDID position in the CAPS executive will help us to be more proactive.
- xi. New executives and the changing roles of faculty make our executive difficult to maintain. We need to discuss the significance of labour-intensive positions and will do so later in the meeting.
- xii. We also must discuss the challenges of a hybrid conference. This is a major increase in the cost of our running expenses. Congress in Montreal may be in-person. Financially, technologically, this has not been beneficial to us this year. Some emails have arrived expressing interest in a hybrid/online option for our conference.

- xiii. Our relationship between FHSS needs to be reconsidered. Our cohosting with ILSA is a prime reason why we attend Congress. This has resulted in our conference extending 4 days because FHSS would not book us on the 31st of May. This resulted in us having to extend our dates. There are many empty rooms on campus. A four-day conference is expensive, and costs under-funded members. Shorter conferences tend to be better and well-attended. We will open this up for discussion -- ILSA has decided to alternate in-person, online on alternating years. In-person conferences are becoming more expensive.
- xiv. Our relationship with Congress is changing CFHSS has changed their cancellation policy. Asma, Jesse, and Coplen met with members of CFHSS to discuss this policy, noting that this policy can be detrimental to smaller academic organizations. We also highlighted our concerns about the policy with regards to EDID. Much of the labour that goes into Congress is supported by unpaid members. We delayed scheduling due to this issue, and eventually we reached a compromise this year with Congress. CFHSS promised to liaise with us to address this and implement a new policy. They did devise a new policy, but did not liaise with us. This new policy was introduced in bad faith, but it does address some of our concerns. Our concern is that the policy can constrain political protest by preventing organizations from withdrawing.

Asma

- Clarify last year's graduate student panel. We had three white men, but the executive did intervene to allow all five top-ranked graduate students to move forward. This helped to build more EDID into the panel, reflecting our awareness of this dynamic.
- We would have written an open letter, but Gabe asked us to withhold the letter and, now that we didn't, we were not consulted. We could publish that letter. Our position was not addressed. If withdrawing would bankrupt us, we can withdraw. Our only withdrawal was in solidarity with BCSA.
- Can we reach out to ACCUTE to see if consultations happened with them?

Coplen

- That letter was written.

Michael Minor

- I agree. This seems like a means of curtailing expression

Sue

- What are the advantages of being with Congress? We pay for tech support that does not exist. Other organizations hold conferences alongside Congress, when we pay a lot and don't benefit. Do people attend Congress events?

Susie

- CACE - Withdrew from Congress for economic reasons. We thought this would work, but York had an embargo on rooms prior to Congress. ACCUTE booked our room. We did not had to use York's food services. We paid for tech services, but no tech services provided. Congress takes care of a lot of the organization. We used eventbrite to register. The conference, ultimately, worked reasonably well. If in Montreal next year, perhaps we can host this event at Concordia? There are also options to host joint events with organizations at Congress, such as ACCUTE.

Anna

- How might withdrawing from Congress impact our ability to host keynote speakers? We often apply for funding based on our ties and links to host keynotes, so I would want to know more about this process and think this through carefully.

Jesse

- The conversational keynotes on a big academic name can be quite costly. How might withdrawing impact our attendee numbers? If we weren't at Congress, we might have fewer attendees.

Anna

- Dionne Brand was well attended. Good value.

Asma

- Going with Congress is beneficial, particularly meeting international colleagues here. We might want to have a 3-5 year plan. We push back against the Federation and make a decision at a later point. Collaborating with other organizations can help to make a change. I'm in favour of pushing back.

Sue

- Could we make a survey about who cares about the keynotes? I am interested in seeing the new scholars. Could we figure out people's priorities. If people aren't coming for the keynote, why do this?

Jesse

- There is an interest in new scholarship and supporting new scholars. If you receive a survey, please respond.

Anindo

- I agree with Asma. A logistical question: do we want reduced cancellation fees, or no cancellation fees?

Jesse

- When we met with CFHSS, they stated they didn't want people to leave for flippant reasons.

Cara

- What were the reasons for canceling your last participation in Congress?

Jesse

- BCSA stood in protest with a student who was racially-profiled at Congress. The BCSA called for a withdrawal from Congress in protest and the BCSA withdrew. We did so in solidarity with the BCSA

Asma

- The federation had no cancellation policy. This policy followed this event, suggesting that it prevents us from being able to act independently. We put thousands of hours into our congress, so withdrawing was never a flippant action. It is heartbreaking to cancel because we lose labour.

Anindo

- Congress has been going on for decades, but has not been transparent to what has happened in the past. What are these costs? Has there been mass-walkouts in the past? I don't know what they can do with private figures.

Jennifer

- They should be able to tell us how many have withdrawn.

Michael

- They should be able to account for this?

Anna

- What costs have they incurred if you withdraw 4 months in advance? No food, no tech support? I don't know how transparent CFHSS is with financial statements. I was at a conference where last-minute cancellations were a problem, but four months is a big difference. They need to be transparent here.

Jesse

- They have not shared that information.

## 5. Treasurer's report

Jesse:

- These are estimates, we have not paid the bill yet. We paid for tech services that did not exist.
- Operational surplus \$1580.56
- Current balance: \$22,009.42
- We need at least \$10,000 to host a conference
  - \$1600 registration fees
  - Debit costs are reasonable.
  - \$390 sent to ACLALS -- we donate 10% of our registration fees.
  - Our total debits: \$4375.42
  - We contributed \$500.00 to Dionne Brand keynote
  - A/V costs were high for a hybrid conference. \$325.00 for our daily costs for an A/V service.
  - Catering is expensive for a conference. Half of the attendees here than in Vancouver, but our catering ended up being the same as Vancouver: \$2000.00 for food.
  - Printing costs: \$143.00
  - Bringing our own web camera for a second zoom room saved expenses.
  - Membership revenues are up by a couple hundred dollars.
  - We modeled our expenses based on our 2019 conference, which was well-managed and frugal.
  - We increased conference costs, keeping graduate fees low. \$5 for grad students, \$15 for faculty. We may adopt this strategy in the future -- to keep running costs in-line.
  - We may want to consider alternating in-person/online as an alternate hybrid option. Hybrid has not been worth the cost here.
  - Partnering with other organizations for keynotes is important. Leanne Simpson and Robyn Maynard are receiving \$2000.00 each. The keynotes are quite expensive. We should think about how we select keynotes. Whose knowledge we privilege with keynotes. Paining up gives us less choice over who the keynote is.
- Registration was reasonable this year, but not well-attended. Many last-minute cancellations.
- We need a regular treasurer. They can apply for external funding, "Think Big" lecture grants, etc.

## 6. General business - items for discussion

- Conferences at congress going forward
  - i. Jesse - alternating hybrid option?

- ii. Anna - the zoom meeting seemed under-utilized. Few sessions had hybrid attendees.
- iii. Asma - where are the people? Registrations are high, but there are not as many people in the sessions. For the keynote, we paid \$2000 each, but we put \$2300.00 in?
- iv. Jesse - The total cost of the event - A/V, catering, honorarium - the event cost \$6000.00.
- v. Asma - There are 15 in this room, it looks like we will pay \$2300.00 for 10 of us to attend a keynote. People have gone home, etc. I appreciate the need to show solidarity and support keynotes.
- vi. Sue - When trying to get speakers to classrooms, but I am reticent to pay a tenured faculty to request a large honorarium. Would there be an interest in making a decision on how/when to pay a keynote -- independent/under-funded scholars vs. tenured.
- vii. Jennifer - I try to do this in my personal practice. Sometimes individuals will charge a premium to then be able to fund community institutions.
- viii. Susie - What does ILSA do? I believe ILSA meets in Indigenous communities. Would ILSA be interested in hosting conferences with us at their conference venue? It might lower attendance. CAPS meeting virtually does not seem like the same collegial feeling as we have here.
- ix. Jill - I agree with Susie.
- x. Anna - In the past, we did not hold a conference when ACLALS presents at a triennial. 2025 is the Kenya ACLALS. Maybe we run a CAPS conference in 2024, but 2025 we try to attend ACLALS in Kenya.
- xi. Jennifer - I value the personal. The online aspect increases accessibility and helps to reduce barriers. It also reduces our environmental impact. Keeping online available is beneficial.
- xii. Stephanie - the people here discussing this are not the people facing barriers. If we run a hybrid meeting, we need to do it properly. We have to do the technical aspects well. We need to be honest about how we manage the tech support. Congress needs to be held accountable for tech support as this can impact accessibility and alienate attendees if it is don incorrectly.
- xiii. Jesse - Online options are not going away. We need a google drive to pass on knowledge. We need a set of protocols to pass along to future executives.

- xiv. Susie - What about a virtual workshop online and we could host a 2-day in-person conference. This could produce more work for the executive, but it has been highly successful for CACE. Would a 2-day conference cost us more?
- xv. Jesse - yes, that is likely cheaper. It does depend on attendance and rooms booked. We know how to run roundtable events now. We could do this.
- xvi. Michael - Mimicking a conference online would be painful. But the online conference sessions save time for attendees -- no travel. The technology is changing quickly and we can run alternate sessions easily.
- xvii. Stephanie - ACCUTE has held some sessions in the past which were successful. For instance: supporting racialized faculty. Could we collaborate with ACCUTE on things like this?
- xviii. Susie - We could also join with ACLALS to gain international collaboration.
- xix. Anna - India ACLALS does this effectively. Cheryl Lousely noted we have taken literature out of our title. Might we use this to collaborate with other faculty members.
- xx. Lara - There is a lack of presence of CAPS in an online setting. Why is this?
- Personnel shortages and student involvement in association
    - i. Jesse - Executive is a hot potato. We have a communications officer position, a shift away from the regional representatives model. We need 3 positions: EDID, Communications, VP, Treasurer. We're debating the kinds of roles that graduate students can hold - protect from labour abuse and liability. However, we don't have many people volunteering for positions. Can we open up upper-level positions to graduate students? What role do we see graduate students playing? Keep in mind the liability -- open letters to Congress, for example.
    - ii. Susie - Would we be able to pay them a stipend?
    - iii. Jesse - possibly, yes. It would be a limited stipend.
    - iv. Shadman - would graphic design be involved in this role?
    - v. Anna - we're all over 35. No one this old should be in the role of social media. I would be in favour of allowing this to grow student experience.
    - vi. Jill - would you have a mentor tenured advisor to guide 1 or 2 graduate students? Students will have a high turnover, so this might aid in the consistency of the role.



- vii. Jesse - the executive changes every two years. That builds a big shift into the structure of our organization. We would pair any grad students with the president to protect them from liability and labour issues. We have even had debates around sessional faculty and protecting them from overwork.
  - viii. Anindo - When thinking about social media we must consider that most social media are compromised spaces. These are not safe spaces. We need to consider this and how we use/integrate into social media.
  - ix. Jesse - In the past, our policy has been to use social media for information, not for political statements. We need a document clarifying this.
  - x. Clara - Whatever CAPS role is online, you would need to adjust the twitter feed, etc. The last comment is the withdrawal from Congress statement in 2021.
  - xi. Anna - The executive needs to decide which platform do we want to use? Probably not facebook. Select one primary social media outlet, and prioritize that medium. They can't update each social media platform constantly -- choose a medium that accomplishes our purpose.
- Peer review/GSP criteria and EDID
    - i. Jesse - We need to revise the description on our website and the language around our graduate prize. We also need to rethink our peer-review process. Is blind peer-review the best approach? It has proven to be inadequate two years in a row. How might our feedback be constructive and useful. We shouldn't be gatekeepers. Do we ask students to self-identify?
    - ii. Asma - we did discuss a BIPOC award. I feel conflicted about this. There would likely be BIPOC students on one panel, but there would also be BIPOC students on the graduate student panel. How do we address this? Are people excluded from one panel? What is blind peer review? One person rejected 3 papers, all were from black scholars.
    - iii. Sue - Our goal should not be gatekeepers, it should be to support the growth of scholars. Perhaps we accept all papers and offer encouragement to grow the paper?
    - iv. Jesse - yes, we could. It would grow our membership.
    - v. Michael - There is growing concern that EDID processes don't work. So-called blind review and a ranking of prizes might not be an

effective way to do good things. We may be screening for something problematic, so thinking of new ways to proceed.

- vi. Jesse - the graduate students when this panel was created felt it put them into competition. Graduate students were against this when it was first implemented.
  - vii. Jennifer - Hybrid Pedagogy has an open process. It has an open public peer-review process. It is collaborative and they provide in-text comments. It allows participants to ask questions around feedback and work. This process has built relationships with reviewers, which would be good going to a conference as you connect with attendees ahead of time.
  - viii. Michael - the collaborative part of the process is a delight.
  - ix. Asma - we are one of the few organizations that offers comments. We get good feedback from other organizations on this.
  - x. Dana - Consider a positive feedback at the end of a conference panel. This would give material for a cover letter in the future.
  - xi. Prabjhot - I am in favour of the graduate student prize. I feel that collaboration is something that we are working towards, but competition is also important. It happens outside of the departments we work in. This can prepare students for a competitive job market -- they will encounter difficult competition in their future.
  - xii. Jesse - There's a medium with a collaboration on a plenary panel and provide positive feedback, but also have a special panel.
- Creative work at CAPS
    - i. Sue - We have artists in our collective. We have an essay prize in our department, but we expanded this to include creative writing submissions. This was successful -- the winner of that year was a creative writing piece. I am in favour of a creative work being brought to CAPS.
    - ii. Anna - We have had creative works in the past. I am in favour.
    - iii. Jesse - change the wording on our CFP?
    - iv. Asma - ACCUTE has a section for creative writing. We should reach out to ACCUTE for ideas around this. Shazia at ACCUTE.
    - v. Jennifer - ILSA does this as well.
    - vi. Stephanie - Performances may be another aspect to draw in - theatre performances as a keynote presentation.

7. Executive Vacancies

- Azza Harass is elected as Vice President.
- Prabjhot is elected treasurer.
- Aruna Srivastava is elected as EDID Representative.
- Arshad is elected as Communications Officer.

8. Graduate student presentation prize announcement

- Anindo: Arshad is the winner. The committee wants to thank all presenters. All three papers were insightful and contributed to the work of our conferences. Each made important timely assessments of historical contexts. The presentations were thought-provoking and participants responded to questions in an effective manner.

Jesse - Congratulations to all three graduate prize panelists. Thank you.

9. Other business

10. Motion to adjourn

- Anindo, second Anna.