

**Minutes of the 70<sup>th</sup> Eastern Colleges Science Conference (ECSC) Board of Trustees  
Annual Meeting, April 2, 2016, Western New England University, Springfield,  
Massachusetts**

**Officers**

Chairman of the Board: Donald Stearns (Wagner College)  
President: Jay Pike (Providence College)  
Treasurer and Secretary: Lance Evans (Manhattan College)

**Other Board Members and Guests in Attendance**

Brandy Bessette-Symons (Ithaca College)  
Jack Breen (Providence College)  
Suzanne Deschenes (Sacred Heart University)  
Zofia Gagnon (Marist College)  
Connie Greene (Niagara University)  
Robert Greene (Niagara University)  
Sylvia Halkin (Central Connecticut State University, guest)  
Barry Hoopengardner (Central Connecticut State University)  
Anthony Kapolka (Wilkes University)\*  
Martin Kapper (Central Connecticut State University)  
Michael Kotarski (Niagara University)  
Ghislaine Mayer (Manhattan College) (elected board member)  
Helen Murphy (John Carroll University)  
Brian Palestis (Wagner College)\*  
Ronny Priefer (Western New England University)\*  
Nicole Roy (Sacred Heart University, guest)  
Cyndy Scheibe (Ithaca College)  
Stephen Slauson (University of Saint Joseph)  
Walter Steiner (Niagara University)  
Cyrilla Wideman (John Carroll University)  
Janet Williams (Elms College)

\*Member, ECSC Travel Grant Program Committee

**Action Items and Discussion**

The meeting was called to order by Don Stearns at 12:35 p.m. with a statement that any board member could introduce any agenda item for consideration.

**1. Nominations to the board:** The following individual was nominated and unanimously elected to the board:

Ghislaine Mayer, Assistant Professor of Biology, Manhattan College (nominated by Lance Evans)

**2. Treasurer's report:** Lance Evans reported that, as of March 31, 2016, ECSC had a balance of \$16,953.

**3. Registration and banquet discounts considered for spring, 2017 conference:** Before the meeting, Ron Priefer (chair of the host committee for ECSC 2016) stated that the combined subsidy (paid using ECSC funds) of \$5 per individual registration and \$7 per banquet dinner for ECSC 2016, when finally tallied, would not be expected to exceed \$1,000. Based on this information, Lance Evans thought that ECSC could afford to extend the \$5 registration and \$7 banquet subsidies for the spring, 2017 conference. The board unanimously approved the proposal to extend the subsidy for ECSC 2017, when it will be revisited.

**4. Report from the Travel Grant Program:** Ron Priefer reported that two institutions (John Carroll University and University of Saint Joseph) applied for and received travel grants for ECSC 2016. Ron proposed that the total annual amount allotted to the Travel Grant Program for disbursement be increased from \$2,000 to \$3,500, with no rollover of funds from year to year. The board unanimously approved the proposal.

**5. Proposed ECSC logo considered for board approval:** Don Stearns presented for board approval a proposed ECSC logo from Nicanor Austriaco as the chair of the ECSC Logo Revision Committee (**Appendix A**). During the ensuing discussion, there was confusion regarding the identification and interpretation of some of the symbols (e.g. the unclear image of half a trilobite, the unclear meaning of an Aladdin lamp with DNA emerging from its spout, the unclear necessity or meaning of the many small dots). There was general board consensus to simplify and clarify the logo image under discussion. Some board members thought other science disciplines such as math and engineering should be represented. The board did not approve the proposed logo as is and requested a clearer, less busy revision to consider.

**6. Recommended annual "coin" for future ECSC meetings:** Robert Greene suggested that, each year, a "coin" be included with each registration package, with the ECSC logo on one side and the host institution's logo on the other. Robert will look into this possibility and will send a link to Don Stearns for further research.

**7. Giving presenters the option of being considered for a presentation award:** After some discussion, the board approved (23 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention) that the following statement be included with future ECSC abstract submissions: "All students will receive evaluation feedback. Do you want your presentation to be considered for an award? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_" While all presentations will be evaluated, this statement allows the presenter to determine if s/he wishes to be considered for a presentation award. This option removes award consideration as a possible negative factor in a student's decision to present at the conference. It may, for example, encourage students to present research that is a work in progress and not yet ready to be considered for an award, but who could benefit from the presentation experience and the feedback from evaluators.

Cyndy Scheibe distributed a draft survey instrument addressing student views regarding ECSC presentations, evaluations, and awards (**Appendix B**), in response to the board's approval last year to

prepare such a survey to assess the perspectives of student presenters regarding ECSC awards, as part of an ongoing discussion regarding the value of awards in encouraging students to present their research at ECSC. With today's board approval of the student option to be considered for an award, the survey instrument was not considered necessary and was presented for general information purposes.

**8. How to award excellent manuscripts when there is more than one undergraduate author**

**involved:** Present ECSC policy states that any excellence award for a manuscript submission goes to the first author. Don Stearns asked the board how to address the occasional situation when a submitted manuscript is evaluated as deserving of an excellence award and has more than one undergraduate author. After some discussion, the board approved handling the manuscript evaluations in the same manner as the evaluations of platform and poster presentations (allowing no more than three undergraduate authors per manuscript, with a single excellence award going to the group). Regardless of who the first author is, all authors can cite the award on their resumes.

**9. Future ECSC Meetings:** Wilkes University (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania) will be hosting the next (71<sup>st</sup>) annual meeting of the ECSC Saturday, April 1, 2017. No institutions have yet formally committed to hosting the conference after 2017. Please contact Don Stearns ([DStearns@Wagner.edu](mailto:DStearns@Wagner.edu)) if you would like your institution considered. Having willing hosts is crucial for sustaining ECSC.

The meeting was adjourned 1:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lance S. Evans  
Treasurer and Secretary of ECSC Board of Trustees  
Original completed April 3, 2016

**APPENDIX A: ECSC Proposed Logo Considered During April 2, 2016 ECSC Board Meeting**



**APPENDIX B: Draft Survey Instrument Addressing Student Views Regarding ECSC Presentations, Evaluations, and Awards**

### **Proposed Survey for ECSC Attendees**

The proposal is to send an email to all ECSC attendees a few weeks after the conference is over (and hopefully after they have received their feedback sheets from the judges). The email will contain a link to an anonymous qualtrics survey. We would need to get IRB approval before conducting this survey. We might want to add an incentive for completing it (e.g., a raffle for \$100). We could also have a separate survey for faculty.

*Here are some suggestions for questions:*

#### **Background Information**

Format of Presentation: poster, platform

Discipline: biology, chemistry, physics, psychology, other

Did you win an award for your paper and/or presentation? Yes No

#### **Feedback about the Conference**

*5 point Likert Scales, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree; could also have a "not applicable" option.*

I felt well prepared for my presentation or poster.

After my poster or presentation was over, I felt proud of the job I did.

I like the idea of having awards for outstanding posters, presentations and papers.

Without the possibility of winning an award, I don't think I would have worked as hard on my poster, presentation or paper.

Not winning an award didn't bother me.

I would rather just have judge's comments and not have competitive awards.

Not winning an award made me feel badly about the job I did on my presentation or poster.

I think students should have the option of whether they would like to be considered for an award or not.

I found the judge's written feedback and comments helpful.

Presenting at ECSC was a great experience overall.

Presenting at ECSC will help me in my future career.

[We could also ask questions about the meals, speakers, etc.]