

ISSM Executive Board Meeting 1 March 2023

Present: Alexandra Sterling-Hellenbrand, Leah Haught, Kyle Gaydo, Angela Weisl, Christina De Clerck-Szilagy, Rebecca Brackmann

I. Conference updates:

- Carol sent a pdf of updates and questions, which were discussed.
- The board liked her ideas about having a sliding fee scale for the conference.
Angela thinks it makes sense. Zoom is very expensive.
- Also liked the idea of having swag be optional.
- Alexandra points out that we need to be flexible, so may not have swag every year.
- Angela suggested we could have dues and conference fees together. Board also mentioned having a dues only option for those unable to attend the conference.
- Of the options given, the Board preferred the “sharp nasty teeth” reference on the swag.
- The Board expressed concern that the swag seems a little high. Maybe laptop stickers or something less expensive could be sold in addition to the options already listed.
- We will need to clarify what “contributing membership” means—does that mean they don’t pay again in the future?
- While the Board wishes we could commit to covering the cost of an adjunct to get a course release for Carol, there was concern that it might not work. We don’t have any funds. Angela mentions possibly paying after the conference, but what if we don’t raise enough? There are too many unknowns to commit to it.

- Christy expressed doubts about the possible precedent. However, Angela points out that this conference is separate from any institution, so this might not be a big concern.
- Alexandra mentioned possible grant funding that Carole could apply for, as ISSM should not really be part of this. It might help with some costs. Perhaps Carol could investigate some local grant-awarding agencies, like a state agency?

Finance:

- Bank account / 503c status should happen by the end of April.
- All the goals outlined in Carole's report sound great, but the board agreed that we probably can't do them all at first.
- Grants may be key going forward. Kyle posted a link to an NEH (although its disbursement wouldn't start in time for this conference).
- Digital Humanities etc. may offer some avenues, Alexandra observed.

Language support:

- How much should non-English support should try to have for this OL conference?
Is this necessary if we want to be international?
- Leah suggested that we state our willingness to consider non-Eng or multi-lingual panels or pre-organized sessions, but clarify that we may not be able to supply multi-language support. We would not accept individual papers in languages other than English.
- We have some basic capabilities. Carol will do ASL and Zoom has subtitles.

- Alexandra asked how much of a barrier is language, actually? Most international organizations state what their limits are. For instance, Courtly Literature Society states it only takes papers in French, German, or English. Most people (she thinks) interested in ISSM would be able to run the CFP through Google translate. Non-English panels will have limited attendance, and be insular within the conference. Is this really “international”? Trying to accommodate speakers and papers of multiple languages seems like a lot of work, would introduce confusion, and might not actually gain us much.
- Chrissy suggested we follow the lead of ICMS, Leeds, etc. They don’t translate the CFP. We need to be practical.
- Rebecca proposed that we state on the CFP that primary language is English; we will consider non-English submissions only if the entire panel is organized. “Session with complete panel” might be the best wording?
- We are all OK with nixing translating the CFP. Instead, we will add to the CFP this statement: “The primary language of the conference is English. If you have questions, please contact the organizers.” Maybe have statement about panels also.
- Chrissy wondered if there would even be proposals.
- Alexandra suggested we not overthink this and not ask for things we actually don’t want.

Report from Subcommittee for Communication:

- We should gather information from members in two steps, and in two surveys. First, we would ask for very basic demographics: rank, institution, interests,

language preferences or spoken (?). Perhaps we could use this information to create a page on the ISSM site grouping people by specialty so members could find others with similar interests.

- 2nd survey would be later and would be anonymous. It would ask things like have they presented recently? Why or why not? Where are they most engaged on social media? How useful is the list serve? The website? How meaningfully do we engage with our mission statement?
- The Board approved this approach and the use of Google forms as a platform.
- Leah will start drafting questions for the first survey.

Website proposed changes

- Leah suggests that we change the landing page to About and have it give our mission statement
- We should put only affiliated publications in top menu, not SiM or Medievalism series.
- There was some discussion on how we could structure information like CFPs and member news and publications. The consensus ultimately was that Call for Submissions (conference or publications) be one page, and Announcements be another. Chrissy notes things could be in both places, even.
- Social media: Insta seems like a good way to go. Twitter still has a lot of professional orgs, so we will have a presence there also. We can also create an account on Mastodon. The purpose of these is primarily to repost CFPs etc.

- Casual conversational space: Discord or Slack. Leah suggests we wait for feedback from membership before we jump on this. Perhaps we could grow out of the Unicorn Castle conference. There will already be a Discord server for it.
- Leah will set up Twitter and Insta, Rebecca will set up Mastodon.

Next meeting in May.