

RSC ANNUAL DIVISIONAL MEETING
ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 19, 2016

Present: Constance Backhouse (Chair and President of Social Sciences Academy), Alain-G Gagnon, Frances Henry, Jean Francois Gaudreault-Desbiens, Pascal Fournier, Jean Marie Toulouse, Simon Langois, M. Anne Katzenberg, Bonny Aarten Norton, Christian Leuprecht, Jane Gaskell, Linda Rouleau, Marie-Claire Belleau, Daniel Mercure, Guy Laforest, Jackie Dawson, Anne Gilbert, Eric Helleiner, Jennifer Clapp, Simon Langlois, David Smith, Alain Bideau, Saibal Ray, Michele Lamont, Carl James, David E. Smith

1. Introductions

Constance Backhouse introduced herself and President-elect for the Academy of Social Sciences, Alain-G. Gagnon. Everyone in the room introduced themselves to the group.

2. Approval of minutes

Constance Backhouse moved to adopt the minutes of last year's Academy of Social Sciences Business Meeting. Seconded by Frances Henry. Minutes were duly approved with no objections.

3. Slate of offices and committee members

Constance Backhouse explained the committee structure in the Academy of Social Sciences. It was noted that there is only one vacancy in the slate of officers and committee members. The slate of officers and committee members put forward by the President was duly approved.

4. Selection process for 2017

Constance Backhouse explained the selection process in the Academy of Social Sciences. Backhouse moved that the membership approve the slate of volunteers for the French and English committees. David Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed with no objections.

5. Efforts to increase the number and diversity of Fellows

There was general discussion of the need to increase the number of fellows taken into the Social Sciences Division. Constance Backhouse raised this issue at the RSC Council Meeting on November 18, and the Council approved three new spots for a one-year trial period. There was also discussion of the role that the College of New Scholars can play in broadening RSC membership.

6. Possibility of a new medal

RSC gives a number of medals and awards each year, and there was discussion of whether it would be advisable to expand the number of medals within the Social Sciences. Introducing a



new medal will require fundraising to cover the costs. The idea of a medal for excellence in the field of governance was introduced, as was the idea of raising funds for a medal for a limited time period (e.g. 25 years). Alain-G Gagnon moved that work begin on introducing a new medal in the social sciences in the field of governance. The motion was seconded by Simon Langlois and approved with no objections.

7. Committee reports

Frances Henry reported from the Selection Committee. She noted that the number of nominations for RSC Fellowships have increased in recent years, putting growing time pressures on the committee. There was discussion of the possible use of videoconferencing software to improve discussions for the selection committees who are currently using telephone conference calls. Adobe Connect and GoTo Meeting were both suggested as relatively easy and accessible video software that could be useful for the work of the Selection Committee.

Carl James reported from the Equity and Diversity Committee on efforts to improve diversity among nominees for RSC Fellows. He noted the idea of a voluntary diversity survey among Fellows and College Members so that the RSC can have a better idea of the current state of diversity and equity. It was noted that the Social Sciences Academy could play a leadership role in promoting equity and diversity in the RSC.

8. Scholarly activities

There was discussion of the role of expert panels within the RSC. Many of these panels address major issues that are facing the federal government on which an independent evaluation is useful. Many, but not all, of the panels address scientific issues, and there was discussion of the need for more expert panels on public policy issues. Establishing panels to conduct studies on key topics does require a significant amount of funding, however. One other way to weigh in on public policy issues could also be through Position Papers published by the RSC.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jennifer Clapp on November 21, 2016