

Present: Andrew Bartlett (Board), Ian Dennis (Secretary-Treasurer), Eric Gans (Board), Roman Katsman (Member), Marina Ludwigs (Board), Stacey Meeker (Board), Matthew Schneider (Board), Richard van Oort (President), Magdalena Złocka-Dąbrowska (Member)

Meeting called to order via Zoom at 12:10 EDT and other time zones. Richard van Oort chaired.

1. President's Welcome

Richard welcomed members to the meeting.

2. Treasurer's Report & Update om GASC Website

Ian related that the corruption of a server at the University of Ottawa last year caused the loss of the GASC Website. While the University IT department promised for some months that the site could be recovered, by December they conceded this was not possible. A new university policy also prohibits any hosted websites from taking in money, so rebuilding our site in the same location is not possible.

Ian has therefore established a new site using Wordpress and is in the process of building it. He estimates that it will be ready in a basic form within a few weeks, so crucial functions like making conference announcements and taking in dues and conference fees can begin. Further enhancements will follow when possible. Stacey offered technical assistance, which Ian gratefully accepted. The link will be sent to all members and to the *Anthropoetics* site as soon as it is ready. At that time Ian will begin the annual membership renewal drive.

The current GASC balance remains just over \$CDN 3000 (\$USD 2200), but no membership dues have yet been collected for 2021, so this amount will rise.

3. GASC 2021 – Roman Katsman & Board

Roman noted that pandemic restrictions with no anticipated end date mean that there is no choice but to host the 2021 conference online.

There was then a general discussion of structure, timing and other issues related to the conference in an online format. Roman noted that in some respects the online conference was likely easier to host and organize and would require a smaller budget than the in-person version. Various experiences of online meetings were compared and the

possibility that the conference might be better attended than the in-person version was noted. Concerns were raised about problematic incursions in sessions if these were made open to all, and it was noted that the subject matter of religion might make the conference particularly susceptible to these.

After various reflections the following points were established:

- The conference will proceed via Zoom, and at the same planned dates: June 14-16, 2021;
- The plenary speakers will remain the same, assuming that Professor Fisch still wishes to participate (and Roman has not heard any contrary indication from him);
- The organizing committee (Roman, Ian, Adam and Richard) will entertain the possibility of different formats, including sessions with shorter talks (perhaps ten minutes instead of twenty), discussion panels without formal talks and informal conversations in breakout rooms. Traditionally formatted sessions may also be retained. It was agreed that these decisions will be taken when the interests and numbers of participants were better known. All GASC members are invited to make format suggestions to Roman and the organizing committee;
- Roman will contact the speakers who were accepted last year to ascertain their ongoing interest; GASC members are invited to write directly to Roman to indicate their titles and preferred formats;
- Members are all asked to contact other potential attendees directly, once the CFP has been revised;
- Session moderators will likely be asked to host their own session via Zoom;
- The plenary sessions will be opened to the general public, but with microphones muted, except for a properly moderated question and answer session at the end;
- Other sessions will be limited to conference attendees, who must register and will be asked to pay a (probably quite small) conference fee;
- The organizing committee will meet shortly (likely via Zoom) at Roman's invitation to discuss revision of the Call for Papers. The subject matter of the CFP will not change, but new language will be included to speak about the online format and to offer participants various options;

- While Roman and the committee will attempt to accommodate participants in other time zones, it was agreed that the timing of sessions and events should be based on what is practical in Israel, as the host of the conference;
- Honoraria will be offered to the plenary speakers, probably drawn from the proceeds of the conference fees;
- The Board itself will experiment with different kinds of online sessions in the coming months, to test which modes work best.

4. Future Conferences? -- Board

Prospects for future conferences were discussed. Ian noted that the potential sequence remains the same as was discussed last year at the June Business Meeting, namely:

2021 Israel, Roman Katsman
2022 Ottawa, Ian Dennis
2023 Tokyo, Matthew Taylor

Ian noted again that he does not envision a large, government-funded conference in Ottawa, but rather a smaller, self-supporting effort somewhat similar to that held in New York City in 2019. He noted that increased online participation was likely, but that this was technically easier in the era of Zoom than it was when we had to use Skype or earlier systems. He expected that the conference would take place in the normal June time slot. He invited members to make suggestions as to theme and format and said that he had not yet given much thought to such details.

5. Timing of Future Meetings – Board

Ian registered his concern that members in some time zones were either being excluded or inconvenienced disproportionately. He suggested we vary the timing of meetings so as to moderate this effect. When members are polled for the next meeting time, he will offer a wider range of hours and encouraged members not too quickly to rule out later or more awkward times, on the understanding that these would be different the next time round as we all take turns with off-hours.

6. Any Other Business

Marina asked for an update from Eric and Stacey on the current efforts to include *Anthropoetics* in various scholarly listings. Stacey noted the good cooperation on the part of our authors in providing abstracts and keywords for articles and described some of the criteria involved. She noted that the project was ongoing but that it generally picked up

momentum at the present time of year.

Board members noted the ease and usefulness of meeting via Zoom and it was agreed that more frequent meetings might be beneficial. The Board will plan to meet again in March, once some of the work on re-organizing the conference has been done.

7. Adjournment

Richard adjourned the meeting at about 1:30 EST.

Post-Meeting Action Items:

- ID will complete the GASC website and start the membership dues drive;
- RK will adjust the CFP and send it to ID, RvO and AK;
- RK will contact accepted participants from last year;
- All members will contact potential attendees for 2021 with the revised CFP;
- ID & MT will continue the planning process for GASC 2022 & 2023.