



Washington State Society for
Clinical Social Work
Identity • Integrity • Diversity

April 29, 2021 Board Meeting

Present (via Zoom): Nitara Dandapani, Salomé Valencia-Bohné, Noah Starer, Betsy Strewler, Chris Garrido-Philip, Brenda Bible, Ross Artwohl, Lara Okoloko (invited, non-Board member), Leslie G. (org. Member, invited non-Board member)

Absent: Aimee Roos (ex-officio), Julie Hemminger

Open Meeting (7:00-7:30 p.m.)

- Begin and welcome, set parameters of the open meeting
 - We are in a time of reflection and need your feedback.
 - We want to listen to your concerns and needs.
 - We'll then go into a private session as we've not yet had the opportunity to process recent events.
- Acknowledgements:
 - President Resignation - Nathaniel resigned abruptly. Also, of the last 5 presidents, 3 have not finished their terms and 4 have not stayed on to serve as Past President.
 - Member Disengagement - Only 68 of 350 members (19%) voted on the motion to change the mission of the organization when we put that out for a vote.
- 1 member attended open part of meeting

Discussion: Organizational History & Current Moment

- Lara: member for 10 years, member 6 years
 - appreciation of Lara, and her time!
- Some of this is normal - small group doing a big amount of the work
- Membership numbers are growing year upon year, used to be a small community (small, white, upper middle class, psychodynamically trained org), structure used to cater to that community and maintains organizational structures from that time, which current org. has outgrown
 - Robin Di Angelo offered to do work with the board 6 years ago, old guard were not receptive
 - Current org. hasn't 'met the moment' of contemporary social work and social justice, behind the times, we would like to see it meet the moment
- Generational divide identified: newer sw'ers have totally different concept of how social justice fits into their practice; older generation has clinical knowledge; newer membership - including more POC members;
 - Org. hasn't figured out how to address this to the membership, who are we willing to leave behind?



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- Historically, POC who felt pushed off the board and not served by organization
- Chris expressed hope for bridging of generations, would like to see student participation on Board
- Professional development events: challenge of how to gear teaching and training new social workers, not many trainers who have a cultural critique
- Presidency:
 - Recent feeling has been trying to carry a broken thing and hoping it wouldn't disintegrate
 - Being president is less work than some positions
 - President role is stressful, no clear Board culture or org culture, pressure for president to make public statements (need Board intake or no?)
- Lara's opinion: membership needs to make commitment to serving, or org. needs to become much more narrow in what it wants to do
- Salomé: at summits for Cswa, Salomé was told she had to 'pay your dues'
 - Possible future question: do we want to be part of CSWA, going forward?

Discussion: Going Forward

- Bylaws: in need of updated and additions
 - Change of bylaws require vote of changes and membership
 - Example: bylaws - no emergency stipulations
 - Bylaws state that ballot put out May 1st, ballot closes end of May
 - We can stick with the bylaws or take time to rebuild, create shared understandings, look deeply and try to heal some systemic issues and make systemic changes, from Board outward
 - **Group decision:** Hold off on presidential voting while we rethink, rebuild, attempt to address systemic shortcomings and issues
 - **Group decision:** Let's prioritize organizational restructuring over rewriting bylaws; bylaws are important but need to match a reimagined clinical society, they are not urgent given the org.'s current state
- Idea/motion: Hiring consultant to help us change org. culture and clarify org. Direction
 - Hope would for consultants to bring outside perspective, provide skillset needed to provide overarching recommendations toward a sustainable future that matches current membership and needs of current social work society
 - Fee for working with 501 Commons would be commensurate to our budget
 - In past, 501 Commons were hired to facilitate annual retreat, Lara reports they did a good job
 - Tagline: culture over strategy: without change, culture will eat strategy for breakfast
 - Other options for consultants:



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- Carrie heron - Org effectiveness, dei work
- Tanya Ranchigoda - Org effectiveness, DEI work
- **Motion:** Hire outside consultant to work with Board, complete org. assessment, make recommendations: 7 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions—
 - **Motion approved:** Board will hire external consultant to look at board culture, board, org. Structure
 - Brenda and Betsy will speak with 501 Commons, Tanya, and Carrie, to find out what they offer and their fees for services
 - Will share with Board at next Board meeting
 - Identified org. issues/problems needing addressing via consultancy:
 - Board retention, specifically, POC Board members
 - POC retention/white supremacy/anti racism in organization
 - Membership involvement
 - Changes of WSSCSW over past 10 years
 - What products are members most wanting? What's the bandwidth to provide programming (financial & time)?
 - Bylaws, clarifying & formalizing practical processes, defining roles and rebuilding them to be sustainable

Discussion of Current Board Process:

- Ross: proud of us as a group, good, hardworking, imperfect but working together
- **Group consensus:** Agreement by group to stay leaderless for the time being
- **Group consensus:** Supermajority to votes via email while there is no President
 - For items needing immediate attention between Board Meetings
 - Aimee can field emails from members, for time being
- **Group consensus:** Letter to Membership: letter will be sent within next week
 - Include Lara is not on Board anymore
 - Salomé will draft - thank you!
 - Thank Nathaniel for his leadership!
 - Msg. to membership: here's what we're planning to do, taking time to reevaluate, rebuild
- Idea to send survey to membership to find out what they'd like to see from the organization going forward
 - Will consultants do a similar survey?
- May Board Meeting:
 - Revisit possibility of meeting more often
 - Revisit idea of annual retreat



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- Brenda's request: come to next Board meeting ready to discuss FY '21-22 budget
- Add photos to upcoming newsletter introductions to Board members
- Betsy: overwhelmed by amount of e-mails this past week, request for mindfulness on amount of e-mails sent between meetings

Next full board meeting: Wednesday, May 19th, 2021

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy Strewler