Western Society of Crop Science
2018 Annual Conference Business Meeting Minutes
Laramie WY, 6-20-2018. Minutes prepared by Rajan Ghimire and Mark Marsalis

Attendees:
Mark Marsalis, Earl Creech, Carrie Eberle, David Claypool, Leonard Lauriault, Anowar Islam, Rajan Ghimire, Gordon Jones, Murali Darapuneni

Call to order the meeting at 5:00 pm MT: Mark Marsalis

2017 meeting minutes distributed to the group, Leonard moved to approve the minutes, Murali seconded. Approved, unanimous.

Old business

- Financial Report:

Rajan distributed the last years’ financial reports received from the CSSA Headquarters. It was a simple balance sheet of $7391 (ending balance on May 31st, 2018), but it does not indicate previous meeting expenses, just income resulting from meeting registrations. Mark has asked headquarters for more detail in their future spreadsheets of WSCS budgets. Headquarters has been very helpful in clarifying our budget and with meeting logistics. Mark and Rajan will request an updated spreadsheet showing 2018 meeting income and expenses prior to the 2019 meeting. Gordon and Murali asked about who controls the financial record, WSCS account, balance. Mark and Leonard clarified expenses and headquarters help in managing accounting and deciding registration fees. Leonard asked to the floor about the possibility of using membership fees, because WSCS membership has increased quite a bit with corresponding increase in membership fee collection. Who gets that money? Possibly we can use that for awards and other WSCS activities. Keeping registration fees low will help keep WSCS in business. Anowar mentioned that the goal should be maximizing student participation so keeping fees low would help. It was agreed that we should keep the registration fees the same.

Earl moved for approval of the financials, Leonard seconded. Approved, unanimously.

Early Career Scientist Award:

This year we did not get any nominations for the early career award. Group discussed the possibility of self-nomination and, after a vote, decided self-nomination is allowed. David Claypool moved to vote for the self-nomination and Leonard seconded. Four votes in favor, three against, and one abstained to vote (not a member of WSCS). Group discussed ways to make the nomination process easy. It was proposed that we ask about having a nomination option on the website when people register for the conference. A link to the nomination criteria/form should be on the website as well. As discussed in previous meetings, the requirement is to solicit 1 letter from the nominator and 2 reference letters in support of the nominee.

The group also discussed the distinguished researcher/scientist award. Criteria has not been set for this award yet. It was agreed by all that we should focus on the Early Career Award now and work on the
Distinguished Scientist Award after we have consistency with the Early Career Award. It was proposed that the Executive Committee work with the local host in future years to nominate for the Distinguished Scientist/Agriculturalist Award, and/or seek a substantial contributor to WSCS/Agriculture at large. This award doesn’t have to be every year.

Annual Meeting Timelines

Mark indicated that we did a much better job this year getting information out sooner for the annual meeting. This included announcements, and abstracts/registration deadlines. We had over 3 months from the initial announcement (abstract submission and registration) to the meeting dates.

Abstracts are now posted in a more timely manner on the WSCS website.

New business:

Program Planning:

- Meeting program/agenda always comes out really late and is a function of having the abstract deadline close to the meeting dates. We had very short time for program planning. However, extending the abstract deadline was good to have more participation for late registrations. July meeting dates would allow for more time to process abstracts and program organization.
- Anowar asked to the floor about monetary poster awards. Group discussed possibility of including poster competition at next year’s meeting. There were nine student posters this year. The poster presentations could be made more interactive, and attracting more students on poster competition could benefit students as well as the society. It was proposed to keep the current format of poster “presentations”, where the student presents their poster to the entire group, but make it known that this is the expectation when they register for a poster. Most are surprised that they have to present to the group when they arrive at the meeting. Students should also man their posters during breaks.
- Leonard made a motion that all the student presentations go on the oral or poster presentation. Award for posters will be equal in amount as the oral session, but the travel award (national meeting) goes with the oral presentation winner. David Claypool seconded. All in favor, no oppose. Motion passed.
- The scoring sheets for the student competitions is less than ideal. It was proposed to have fewer categories with a simpler totaling system and more room for comments to the students. Will have a new score sheet format for the 2019 meeting.

Website Registration Issues

- There were several complaints that the website registration format is not user-friendly and is confusing. Student and professional presentation fee and registration fees are not clear on the website and several presenters had to call for clarification or correction. What about registrations for non-members? Also, is there a way that professionals can register their students? There needs to be a better distinction between registration and abstract fees. There
were complaints about not receiving a notice of abstract ‘acceptance’ and an inability to ‘edit’ abstracts. Mark will check with headquarters on these issues.

- President should be able to announce to all the members of the western society the important dates and deadlines for the annual meetings. Ask CSSA section chairs how they send emails to a listserv and maybe we can do the same thing, in addition to the official announcements from headquarters.

Board Positions:

Mark is current President and Olga Walsh (Univ. of Idaho) is President Elect: Olga will assume the role of President for two years as the 2019 Meeting adjourns (term: 2019-2021). A new President-Elect will be announced at the 2019 meeting. Mark asked to the floor for early nominations for President-Elect (assume role in 2019-2021). No nominations were given. We need to make a call for nominations to the WSCS membership prior to next year’s meeting. Headquarters can help with an electronic ballot in fall/winter 2018/2019. Bios for nominees will need to accompany the nomination. The call will also go to the list serve later this year if one can be obtained.

Secretary/treasurer: term ends after 2019 meeting; new President will select new secretary/treasurer.

Meeting adjourned at 6:12.

Other items:

Student award winners:

Elizabeth Mosqueda, UWYO First place
Mikayla Allan, NMSU Second place
Paramveer Singh, NMSU Third place