

THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY  
Board of Directors Meeting  
February 14, 2022

**1. Opening**

- 1.1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was held on Zoom and called to order at 1:01 pm by President Ken Cross. *In Attendance:* President Ken Cross, Past President David Abelson, Vice-President Deborah Seiler, Controller Norv Wellsfry, Secretary Bob Benedetti; *Members-at-Large* – Laurye Brownfield, Elizabeth Deuso, Michele Finerty, Lorraine Murphy, Pam O'Brien, Chuck Wiseley; *Committee Chairs* – Susan Brackenhoff, Darryl O. Freeman, Sarah Ryan-Roberts, Cindy Suchanek, Tom Suchanek, Barbara Davis-Lyman, Jennifer Kerr; *Absent:* Christie Braziel, Nancy Findeisen, Jeff Hendy, Dr. Dianne Hyson, Debbie Martinez. *Note Taker:* Lorene Sarne; *Guest:* Amber Korb
- 1.2. **Introductory Remarks:** Item 4.1, the announcement of the new Renaissance Society Office Manager is being withdrawn at this time.
- 1.3. **Announcements:** Joan Podesto, a Monday Big History Series speaker had a medical emergency and David Lewis stepped in to give his presentation and the program went as scheduled. Barbara Davis-Lyman, joined as a guest and new Committee Chair-elect.

**2. Agenda**

- 2.1. Additions, deletions, changes: None
- 2.2. Approval of the Agenda – *Motion/Second:* Seiler/Suchanek – unanimous approval.

**3. Reports/Updates from Officers, Staff, CSUS Liaison**

- 3.1. **Secretary's Report:** Benedetti
  - 3.1.1. Draft Minutes/Approval for January 10 2022 Meeting: *Motion/Second:* Benedetti/Seiler – unanimous approval.
  - 3.1.2. Condolences: Bob Benedetti reported sending six condolence letters for Charles Winterberger, Judy Mathews, Stephen Harley, Jack Kennedy, Patrick Crowley, and Gerald Bays, more details available in the report.
    - 3.1.2.1. Bob reported that people want to contribute something to the organization in the name of someone who passed and these contributions are, of course, appreciated.
- 3.2. **Controller's Report:** Wellsfry
  - 3.2.1. Norv Wellsfry will defer to later in the agenda.
- 3.3. **Office Manager's Report:** Sarne
  - 3.3.1. Lorene reported that overall on-campus started well, with some issues related to rooms and technology. (1) Three unexpected room changes – two by Space Management and one by a leader who went to a first-floor room; (2) IRT found a piece of equipment that was not working and replaced it; (3) A leader requested that the shades in their assigned room be drawn so that they could show slides and videos; and (4) one member decided to cancel their enrollment in an on-campus seminar because they were uncomfortable being in a closed room.
  - 3.3.2. *Question:* Did members show up and was there a different class going on? For the first one, the change was already made in the catalog/Program Registration System, for the second, the Leader advised participants and posted a notice on the previous room's door directing folks to the new room, and for the third the Leader did not advise all participants that she had moved to the first floor, so some members did not know.
- 3.4. **CSUS Liaison's Report:** None.

**4. Specific Agenda Items:**

- 4.1. Withdrawn
- 4.2. **RS Nominating Committee Slate:** Cross

- 4.2.1. Ken reported that the Bylaws require that the Nominating Committee consist of at least three members appointed by the President no later than March and approved by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. The report attached to the Agenda identifies that the date for nominating Board Officer and Members-at-Large positions closes on February 22<sup>nd</sup> as well as the other dates in the process.
- 4.2.2. Approval to appoint the identified Nominating Committee Members: Barbara Davis-Lyman, Committee Chair; Susan Brackenhoff, Member; Warren Bonta, Member – *Motion/Second*: Cross/Abelson: approved with one abstention (Brackenhoff). Ken welcomed and thanked Barbara for being the Nominating Committee Chair. Barbara will report later in the meeting.
- 4.3. **RS 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Centennial Committee:** Seiler
  - 4.3.1. Deborah reported that the 19<sup>th</sup> Centennial Committee was confirmed as an ad hoc committee in March 2019 for what was called a Signature Event. The committee worked with Sac State to prepare for the event slated for August 2020, which was to be a big conference on the issue of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment and suffrage in general, including wonderful fundraising and pictures of this work in the Annual Report. Despite the pandemic putting a big dent in this event, the committee did hold an event for the November elections. This past summer they decided to do an art mural project on campus or maybe a scholarship because they had roughly \$8,500 in remaining Special Project funds. However, once again the pandemic interfered and on December 9<sup>th</sup> Ginger Mack, Jennifer Cummings, and Muffy Francke, sent an email to everyone, without letting the Board know beforehand, advising that the committee was not going to do the art mural but would like to offer a scholarship program. This board in January then decided to put the funds on hold, set up a working group, and figure out what type of voting-rights-related project to do. The Committee requested the Board to disband the Committee.
    - 4.3.1.1. *Motion*: (1) To advise current 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Centennial Committee members of the Board’s decision to incorporate this Committee into the Special Program Working Group and invite all who wish to participate; (2) Dissolve the current Committee effectively immediately; (3) Ensure all future efforts related to this topic will embrace the ideals of the committee donors and our partners, Sac State; and (4) Commend the Committee Co-chairs, Ginger Mack, Jennifer Cummings, and Muffy Francke for their outstanding work. *Motion/Second*: Seiler/Abelson – after the discussion (see 4.3.1.2), approved unanimously.
    - 4.3.1.2. Discussion: David acknowledged that the way this ended was unfortunate and reminded the Board that Special Project Funds don’t belong to any one committee or subcommittee and that they need to be closely coordinated with the university. Susan Brackenhoff expressed regret that the committee disbanded and offered that they could be very pleased with the progress they made. Sarah Ryan-Roberts suggested that the board acknowledge and reinforce the great work the committee has done. Deborah asked Susan and Sarah to help her draft a letter of expressing the Board’s gratitude to the committee for all the work they did. Pam O’Brien suggested an article in the Recorder about the Committee and all they accomplished and what is going to happen with the remaining funds.
- 4.4. **RS Budget Workshop 2022:** Wellsfry
  - 4.4.1. Norv started his presentation by stating that this annual presentation allows the Board members to know how the budget is developed and what is done with it. He started the slideshow by (1) identifying the budget process to set goals, (2) identifying a plan to accomplish these goals, and (3) then using a measurement mechanism to determine how you are doing against the identified goals.
    - 4.4.1.1. Norv reviewed the Budget Calendar. The calendar starts in the January/February time frame with the Budget Workshop being a key component, the Committees developing their budget proposals from February to April and sending it to the Finance & Administration (F&A)

Committee on April 18, the F&A Committee developing a draft expenditure plan during April and May and presenting the draft Budget at the May Board meeting, in June the Board approves the Budget and in July the Budget is implemented. Then, over the next year the F&A Committee monitors revenues and expenditures and spending in relation to budgets.

- 4.4.1.2. He identified the components of the budget – Revenue and Expenditures and discussed the sources of revenue and the components of the expenditures. Membership is the primary source of revenue. Special revenues include donations to the scholarship fund, member donations, and special projects – including the ASI Pantry and University Foundation Special Projects Fund that emerged from the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Project – these are in partnership with Sac State.
- 4.4.1.3. Expenditures include Fixed and Discretionary. Fixed includes staff salaries and employment taxes, insurance, phone, supplies, rent, technology (registration system, Constant Contact), credit card service fee, and UEI charges. Discretionary includes expenditures for Committee operations.
  - 4.4.1.3.1.1. Chuck Wiseley asked about on-campus costs and Norv described some costs related to RS events. David Abelson asked about dues increases and Norv said that based on the current revenue stream, he did not anticipate the need to increase dues. The “Give a Little Extra” campaign has precluded the need for a dues increase at this time.
  - 4.4.1.3.1.2. Cindy Suchanek asked for additional information about the relationship between reserves and deficits, and Norv explained that the reserves would be used to cover deficits, if needed.
  - 4.4.1.3.1.3. Norv further explained that the Reserves consist primarily of unspent funds from previous years plus special funds and serves as a cushion for projected and unexpected expenditures each year. In addition, the Foundation is another budget item that is carefully watched because it is managed by the university and which is used to fund student scholarships and special projects in partnership with Sac State.
- 4.4.1.4. Norv will be sending the Committees the budget request forms. Norv suggested that Committees put in their estimated costs up front rather than waiting as it’s easier to establish the budget than change it later. Discussion ensued regarding on-campus programs and the need to help members feel comfortable returning to in-person classes.
- 4.4.1.5. Norv then presented the next steps and due dates for the budget process.
- 4.4.1.6. Chuck raised the issue of members learning to gather in person and whether the RS should hold some sort of event in the summer to encourage it. Deborah said she would be covering the Summer event during her report.

## 5. **Committee Updates:**

### 5.1. **Nominating Committee:** Davis-Lyman

- 5.1.1. Barbara mentioned that they are fortunate to have Warren Bonta on the committee because of his past experience and knowledge as well as Susan Brackenhoff, a new board member, who also brings a wealth of experience from serving in other organizations in a similar role. Barbara challenged the Board members to encourage those people in their community to apply for one of the MAL or officer positions. She continued by saying that they have received outstanding applications and still need more. Barbara said that her committee will bring a slate to the Board before April. Chuck asked to use the logo on business cards he wants to make and Ken suggested that he drop by the office to pick up the RS business cards already produced.

### 5.2. **Program Committee:** Suchanek/O’Brien

5.2.1. Pam will speak about the catalog and recruitment. Cindy will address Rendezvous and Orientation and the Leaders Workshop.

5.2.1.1. Pam reported that the Program Committee members expressed many opinions about the catalog: some people liked the At-a-Glance section, others liked the PDF, and a prospective member wanted something by topic, which is currently in the Index. Further, Pam mentioned that the search box in the Flipbook would allow one to search by topic and it would then list all offerings within that topic. Some people felt the catalog was still too long and despite having reduced the number of pages, additions like the Covid protocols and a dedication, among others, meant an additional 8 pages where 2 had been budgeted for. Pam asked those who have been around for some time to try out the flip book to learn some new tricks about how to use it. For example, Pam shared that she learned from Sarah about the toolbar at the bottom of the flipbook and the tool she found most helpful was the 'share' tool – it was easy to use and offered multiple ways of sharing the flipbook with others.

5.2.1.2. The next topic was recruitment for the Program Committee. She mentioned that from the list they were given some people chose to join the Committee and they are very happy that Nancy Findeisen joined the committee waving the recruitment flag. Deborah, Nancy, Pam, and Cindy met and developed an article for the next month's Recorder (see Teach, Connect, Share) and have a three-pronged strategy of using the Weekly Update to help come up with ideas for topics and leaders. Nancy suggested brainstorming sessions around a poll that asked members what types of programs they were most interested in – first was history second was arts and culture. This provides some structure and a database of people who might be interested in presenting these topics. She mentioned that Lorene and her were keeping a 'tickler' list of potential programs and program leaders and gave a couple of examples. Pam challenged the Board members to talk with their friends and find out what they would like to see in the Fall and let her know.

5.2.2. Cindy praised the work that Evie Boggs and others did to hold a very successful Rendezvous and Orientation. She mentioned that Evie is looking for someone to shadow her to take over this responsibility at some point. The Program Committee will be discussing whether to take this back on campus and this discussion will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

5.2.3. Cindy praised Mike Agron for the terrific job he did leading and hosting the Program Leaders Workshop and said that it would likely be modified for the next round: the preliminary session would be for new people and then break out with people who are returning, and then take the Tech Hosts in a different direction.

5.2.4. In terms of recruitment, Cindy said that people could get their feet wet by starting with a single presentation, say in Jack Jennings' Tuesday Speakers Series or Ranny Eckstrom's Big History Series on Monday then afterwards offer a three-week seminar. Especially with the support that the Program Committee will provide them, she anticipated that they likely will not be as nervous to continue.

5.2.5. Ken thanked everyone for their efforts on the Rendezvous and Orientation. In terms of recruiting, Ken mentioned that he will be creating a slide to recruit folks from his seminar as possible leaders/facilitators/tech hosts. Bob was wondering if it would be a good time to contact the alumni associations of Sac State, Pacific University and some of the others, to recruit folks who have retired from teaching at the university level and that could make up a larger cohort of the seminar leaders and presenters. Bob offered to help in this endeavor by contacting some of the people from Pacific if he were told the texts or advertisements the Program Committee would be using.

5.3. **Technology Committee:** Ryan-Roberts

- 5.3.1. Ken mentioned that Sarah had to leave early.
  - 5.3.1.1. Here is a chat message from Sarah Ryan-Roberts: *So, everyone, as I shared with Ken before, I need to sign off early. Jeff & I submitted our Tech Committee report previously so it is part of the Board email. Send me an email if you have any questions.*
- 5.3.2. Ken invited Laurye to provide any updates and she said there was one new Tech Host this semester and there are still openings. The COP meets every other Wednesday at 10 am and the THUS group meets at 3:30pm the first and third Monday of the month.
- 5.4. **Membership, Diversity, and Community Engagement (MDCE) Committee:** Martinez/Omar Freeman
  - 5.4.1. Darryl had to leave early and Ken reported that the window to join the Renaissance Society would be kept open until mid-March. Debbie Martinez is working to revitalize the u-mentor program.
    - 5.4.1.1. Here is a chat message from Darryl Omar Freeman: *I have to leave early today so I will summarize our oral report. You heard the membership numbers which under the circumstances is not too bad (112 down from last Year). Co-chair Debbie is leading the charge to revitalize our participation with the U Mentor program. She has communicated to our committee members and the Ambassadors to volunteer for the program. Ken has more information on this. Also, March is Women's celebration month and in keeping with that theme I have a special article on Jewish women contribution to the Clothing Labor Unions development in our country in the March Recorder "Ethnic Reflections" Stay Safe.*
  - 5.4.2. David complimented whoever designed the ad in the February issue of the Senior Lifestyle magazine for the valley community newspapers: It is clear, concise, and compelling.
- 5.5. **Communications and Marketing Committee:** Seiler/Murphy
  - 5.5.1. Deborah said she worked on it with the folks at that publication and although membership results haven't been spectacular, the ad gets the RS brand out there for now. In addition, they finished the annual report and she and Ken had meetings with some top-level people from Sac State including Donna Jensen (Gerontology), Jim Reinhardt (UEI) on campus and with the head of PR (Jeannie Wong, VP Communications), Mark Hendrix from IRT, the Assistant Dean from the College of Continuing Education, and Rebekah Rabirotff, Director of Development, on Zoom.
  - 5.5.2. Rack card project is complete. Anyone who wants them to contact the office because there's an ample supply there. Pam suggested to use them as book cards. David asked to have them mailed or Bob suggested to scan both sides and email them too. Deborah will provide them.
  - 5.5.3. Summer Speakers Program: Identified 8 Fridays in June/July – two confirmed speakers – setting up 8 presentations in the Del Norte Room – late morning in person and Zoom, free to RS members and public. Follow those programs with social events, like brown bag lunch, Arboretum Tour to get people back on campus.
  - 5.5.4. Lorraine spoke about Facebook and Twitter: Facebook page is built up and members are very enthusiastic about it. Twitter needs photos and "likes" to get more traction. Working on making it more succinct and compelling. Looking to see about putting Facebook and Twitter together. Tom introduced a Sac State intern who is working with the Forum committee and offered to introduce her to Lorraine. Lorraine will put out an email with all the links to the Board. Lorraine would like the Recorder to have the links and Deborah suggested to work with Jennifer Kerr. Cindy said to look at page 58 of the catalog for a visual and the links that they could use.
  - 5.5.5. Ken reported that he met with President Nelsen, which was very productive.
- 5.6. **Resource and Development Committee:** Findeisen
  - 5.6.1. Nancy asked Ken to share that the fall solicitation letter brought in over \$12,700 – approximately \$10,700 was for scholarships and \$2,000 for the Special Program Fund. Nancy felt comfortable that they would make the \$18,000 goal for scholarships this spring. In addition, over \$19,000 was contributed for the "Give a Little Something Extra" campaign.

**5.7. Scholarship Committee:** Brownfield

5.7.1. Laurye said that the report is included in the Board packet and provided an update about the software and that everything looks good. She reported that they received 80 scholarship applications and 38 of those are in final status. Application closes on March 2<sup>nd</sup> and she hopes to get more applications. Barbara praised the relationship that Laurye has forged with CSUS, a wonderful working relationship, so that RS will be able to use some of the Sac State technology for the scholarship program, something that RS did not have in the past. This will make the process more efficient for both parties.

**5.8. Forum Committee:** Suchanek/Finerty

5.8.1. Tom reported that the first Forum was quite successful and that the second would be President Nelsen and Coach Taylor with Kristen Tudor, Special Assistant to the President, as the moderator. He reported that they are in the process of looking over 25 potential speakers for the fall and have a great list that Michele has been putting together. He further reported that four new people have expressed interest in their committee from the poll that was recently put out and they might be bringing on some new Forum Committee members.

5.8.2. Tom showed a brief video introducing the Committee's new intern from the Sac State Communications Department – Katie Roye.

5.8.3. Discussion ensued regarding the Forums and ASI Pantry slides that Lorene will send out after the meeting.

**5.9. Gerontology Committee:** Brackenhoff

5.9.1. Susan reported that the mentors will be getting their mentees' addresses and email addresses next week, there are 40 and the program is going very well. Serena Rodriguez with the UC Davis Alzheimers Research Center is in contact with them and will be recruiting adults age 60 to 79 to participate in a study concerning effective lifestyle changes on memory loss.

6. **Reports:** See Board packet

7. **New or Urgent Business:** None

8. **Adjourn:** 3:32 pm

9. **Next Board Meeting:** 1:00 pm Monday, March 14, 2022

Respectfully Submitted by:

Lorene Sarne (for Bob Benedetti, Secretary)