

SASA AGM 2019

15 JULY 2019

HELD AT PRETORIA SOUTHERN SUN

1. Opening and welcome

The chairperson of the meeting, President Babalwa Magoqwana, welcomed everyone. She explained that this congress was organised by the executive committee of SASA with support from some members of the SASA council rather than by a local organising committee based in a university. The host university had pulled out at the eleventh hour. She apologized for some glitches in the organization of the congress as a result of this extraordinary situation. She further explained that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) is for members in good standing, non-members could sit in but could not vote.

2. Apologies

Carin Runciman (UJ), Jay Govender (UKZN) and Darlene Miller (Wits).

3. Adoption of agenda

The chairperson welcomed input on the agenda. The agenda was adopted. Moved by Jantje Xaba (Stellenbosch) and seconded by Hlengiwe Ndlovu (Wits).

3. Minutes from the 2018 AGM

The chair asked the delegates to go over the minutes page by page checking for accuracy. The minutes were adopted. Moved by Siyabulela Fobosi, seconded by Zanetta Jansen (UNISA).

4. Matters arising

4.1 SARS

Mokong Mapadimeng (HSRC) wanted to know if the South African Review of Sociology (SARS) assistant had still not been paid. Babalwa Magoqwana, the chairperson, responded that as far as she can remember Carin Runciman, the treasurer, had said the person was paid. She promised follow up with Carin. Zanetta Jansen reported that she remembered that Carin requested a spreadsheet of the hours worked and she is not sure if this was sent to the treasurer. Jimi Adesini (UNISA) suggested that the matter be referred to incoming executive committee (Exco).

5. Secretarial report

Trevor Ngwane, the secretary, tabled his report. After going through it, the chairperson invited the house to comment or ask questions. The house did not raise any points.

6. Treasurer's report

Trevor McAurthur, the treasurer, tabled his report to the AGM. He noted that the report goes up to December 2018. One issue he highlighted was the move to online banking. He thanked the signatories for their cooperation and commitment. He noted the problem of annual membership and the delay caused by late membership renewals. He reported that the 2018 membership was 126. He thanked universities who continue to pay membership fees. He also thanked Luke Sinwell and Tina Uys who are in charge of the SASA virtual office. He went over the figures noting that the SASA finances have been audited and found in good order.

Discussion:

1. Jimi Adesina wanted to know about the Taylor & Francis increase in publishing fees.
2. Zanetta Jansen wanted to know about the increase in bank charges.
3. Mokong Mapadimeng wanted to know about SASA investments seeking clarity about the fact that they were reflected as two separate accounts in the treasurer's report.
4. The treasurer responded saying the two investments were of the same duration but were kept separately. Further, Taylor & Francis had increased fees due to their internal challenges.
5. Babalwa added saying Taylor & Francis had said SASA circulation was low hence the higher fees. However, she felt that we must question Taylor & Francis on this.

6. SARS report

Zanetta Jansen gave her report on the operation of the SASA journal. She referred the house to the minutes and secretarial report on the issue of the challenges faced by SARS and the subsequent decision to dissolve it. She gave some details on how SARS operated and the challenges that it had faced. Initially, there were five editorial collective members. The SASA council had considered the question of the backlog in the publication of articles and of the journal issues. There had also been the problem of reviewers and when they had approached Taylor & Francis the latter had said it is up to SARS to add reviewers to the pool in order to reduce the backlog. She noted that a part of the backlog went back to the editorial collective before the one that was dissolved. She told the AGM that SARS is seven months behind schedule but the new editorial collective was making progress. Issue 3 is being prepared for publication and it will be a special issue, and another issue is in the pipeline. She highlighted some successes. Taylor & Francis had reported that there is an increase in SARS downloads and circulation of the journal. The circulation (subscriptions) are high in the USA and Europe, also Asia, low in Africa. Smaller subscriptions in South and Central America, Australia, etc. More issues downloaded in 2018 than in 2017. She felt that the theme and direction of the journal were important.

The interim editorial collective had made four suggestions to improve operations at the journal. There was the question of whether to maintain the international board. There was a suggestion to employ a SARS administrator. There was a suggestion to identify themes in line with SASA working groups.

Discussion:

1. Frank (UCT) wanted to know whether the challenge with Taylor & Francis was specific to this journal or not. He supported employing or paying an administrator. But he did not support paying reviewers and the editorial collective.
2. Crispen Chinguno (Sol Plaatje) noted that in the last AGM there had been a discussion of reviewers, he wanted to know how many SASA members were active in reviewing articles.
3. Mokong told the AGM that as part of the dissolved editorial collective they had had problems with reviewers and the withdrawal of papers at advanced stages. He noted that academics are under pressure because universities use publications as an income stream. Academics withdraw articles because some journals are quicker to publish. He noted that ScholarOne does not facilitate interaction with authors. In some instances it had become necessary to manually expedite or speed along the publication of articles. Some colleagues are not willing to help. He supported paying an administrator or assistant a stipend as and when it is required. He supported reducing the issues from four to three. He noted that editorial work was voluntary and people faced work pressures.
4. Jimi Adesini said that we must distinguish between processing articles and the ScholarOne system. He suggested that SASA waives the conference fees for the editorial collective as a form of reward. He said he was not familiar with ScholarOne but if there is a database of reviewers then they can be nominated. He said he uncomfortable with the idea of expediting some authors' articles. He further noted that Taylor & Francis is an IBSS indexed journal; the SARS impact factor was higher than some international journals. He said it was understandable that if you don't get a response from a journal for long you would withdraw your article. He felt that the AGM should keep the interim collective in place and then explore ways to resolve the bottleneck. He noted that he had not been approached by anyone to review an article.
5. Mokong noted that it is hard to know what was happening with the journal unless you were directly involved with it. He clarified that expediting is done within the system of ScholarOne whereby you approach someone with expertise on the area and then if that person is not on the database then you upload them. Sometimes if you approach some people they refuse. He felt that people were withdrawing their articles not because of delays. He suggested that SASA might not be able to afford the payment of honoraria including the employment of an administrative assistant.
6. Zanetta noted that it just the SASA journal that faces challenges of backlogs and with reviewers. However, SARS used to have four issues per year and two were late hence the crisis. She explained that the reason some people had never been asked to review articles is because ScholarOne mostly has overseas reviewers and the system selects for you. She went over the problems of the old collective including the work system that they used.
7. Babalwa, chairing, requested that the AGM pause the agenda and not complete this discussion. The reason was that the AGM was running late and our guest speaker, Professor Mandla Makhanya, had arrived. She suggested a tea break.

7. Welcome address by Professor Mandla Makhanya (UNISA Vice-chancellor)

Jim Adesini introduced the guest speaker reminding the house that Professor Makhanya is a sociologist by training and was once vice-president of SASA.

Professor Makhanya delivered his speech which was well received by the AGM. His covered the themes of the role of sociology in a rapidly changing world; the Fourth Industrial Revolution and how we must not allow it to be driven by the hard sciences only; how we must harness technological changes to address our problems; the need for the South to assert itself vis-a-vis the North in matters of knowledge and technology; the need to leverage indigenous knowledge; the need to be responsive to the new generation of people and scholars.

Babalwa thanked Makhanya for his speech and for hosting our conference at UNISA. She then called for another tea break.

8. Adoption of reports

The secretarial report was adopted. Moved by David Cooper (UCT), seconded by Jimi Adisini (UNISA).

The treasurer's report was adopted. Moved by JP and seconded by Jantje Xaba.

9. SARS interim editorial collective

The discussion of the SARS report was resumed and finalised. The question was the appointment of a new editorial collective and the choice was affirming the interim collective or appointing a new one.

Mokong suggested that in taking this decision we must make sure that we are in line with the SASA constitution.

Kate Alexander (UJ) said the constitution gave the duty to appoint an editorial collective to the SASA council rather than the AGM. She advised that we should continue with the interim editorial collective.

Mokong agreed as long as this was in line with the constitution.

10. Frequency and format of SASA congresses

At this point Trevor McArthur took over the chair. He directed to discuss key issues arising from the minutes, the reports and as proposed by the outgoing council. The first item identified for discussion was the frequency of SASA congresses. Trevor introduced the item by reminding the house that this matter had been discussed in the last AGM. There had been a proposal for a bi-annual congress and in between, a smaller conference. The AGM had rejected this suggestion insisting on annual congresses. However, due to the difficulties faced, the council was re-opening the question for discussion.

1. David Cooper referred to the speech by Makhanya who said Sociology must the light in a changing world, for this reason he did not support bi-annual congresses. He said the anchor of Sociology is the congress and the journal. Delegates were to blame for the hardship

arising out of the Exco acting as an LOC. Perhaps we can learn something from the USA where congresses are rotated systematically between university departments. He noted that the SASA programme was impressive, he suggested that the AGM identify three departments to host for the next three years who must then approach the NRF and see this as their duty. We must set up a logistics committee with seven people including paying three PhD students. We could spend R30 000 on this.

2. Jimi Adesini said he is opposed to having the congress every two years. This year was quite traumatic. A few months away from the conference the department had let SASA down. There were compelling intellectual reasons for keeping it annually. It allows interaction between different generations. These days it is hard to get money for meetings but you can get money for congresses. It is a space where the editors of the journal can scout for materials in order to encourage people to submit. Of course one full month of your life goes down the drain. But it is fulfilling. He said he had been secretary in 2001 and 2002 and his duty was to liaise with working group convenors. They had managed to raise money and for four or five times they had returned money into SASA coffers. You never make a loss. We are a small association, some like the Brazilian one are 50 times bigger than us. As soon as one congress ends, start organizing for the next one. If we break the annual mould, people will not pay their fees during the year when there is no congress.

3. Zanetta noted that the working groups only become functional at the time of the congress. They could play a more active role before the congress. This could also feed into people writing articles.

4. Trevor McArthur, chairing the meeting, told the house that the AGM's message was loud and clear. He shared that he had worked in the organisation of the 2018 and 2019 congresses and had found that departments are reluctant to do this work due to other pressures.

5. David noted that running a conference is a skilled a job. Perhaps what we need is not an administrator but a conference logistics person. They can work with an LOC.

6. Trevor McArthur noted that there would be financial implications.

7. Mokong felt that we cannot afford employing people. We can give incentives to LOC not payment. In the ISA we received no salary.

8. Jimi said we could employ someone on a part-time basis. We discussed this in Mahikeng, somebody who comes twice a week without UIF and other costs. But such administrator it is different from organizing a conference. The conference must be organized in a university, the reason we are in a hotel today is because the UNISA campus was closed.

9. Johan Zaaiman noted that there are two budgets in operation, namely, the SASA budget and that of the congress itself. The LOC works with the latter. If it is profitable we need not be the ones giving the LOC permission to employ someone to organize the conference if that is what it wants to do. We must keep the administrator issue separate. There must be institutional buy-in and agreement and not just the department.

[Discussion continued]

10. McArthur, chairing, suggested that SASA should pay for the part-time admin person. Council can work on the nitty gritty. The LOC must include a budget for hiring a logistics person.

11. Jimi felt that it depends on how the LOC works. If you have a large department that is working then things will work out. I suggest this decision is left to the LOC. The key issue is that if people want to host we must get a letter say from the Dean, not expecting money but support. A lot of it is about legwork. The activation money will be recouped.

12. David said the R50 000 initiating money must be paid back. There was a problem of recouping money from members who attended and did not pay.

13. McArthur, from the chair, noted the AGM decision as stating that the LOC will manage the hiring of a logistics person in consultation with the Council.

11. SASA CONGRESS 2020

1. Babalwa told the house that we had agreed on holding the congress at the University of Venda. She reported that she had written to the department but no replies. Also, there was no response from other departments. She spoke to Crispen (Sol Plaatje) who responded positively, he is willing if we absolutely have no options. Crispen is hosting a History workshop. We need people to commit. If we go to Sol Plaatje then there must be political will in the institution.

2. Trevor McArthur said the the incoming council must prioritise this issue.

3. Mokong said Venda has only two staff members. You need institutional support, namely, Faculty support.

4. Crispen said if there is no apparent venue they are willing. We are a new university, 2021 would be better because we will have post-grads. I talked to my head of school, we have a History workshop in 2020.

5. Babalwa said there had been a proposal for Stellenbosch. Do you have an appetite?

6. Stellenbosch responded saying yes but they need to approach the head of department.

7. Babalwa promised to approach the Stellenbosh HOD.

8. Kate said the incoming council's first job is to work on this. The key is funding; the other issue is speakers.

9. The chair, McArthur, ruled that the matter must be finalized in the next two weeks by the

12. Registration of SASA as NPO

1. Trevor, from the chair, introduced the issue saying the 2018 AGM had wanted the council to to explore the registration of SASA as an NPO. But the council had found that a lot is involved. The issue was brought back for reconsideration by the AGM.

2. Mokong said that as a member of the ISA he could not remember anyone that is an NPO or had a board.

3. Jantje Xaba suggested that a committee be appointed to investigate including tax implications given the rate with which we are growing. We cannot just leave the manner as it is. The committee to report next AGM.

4. Jimi wanted to know if this was the solution, what was the problem? He suggested we get legal opinion.

5. Trevor, chairing, ruled that the incoming council address this.

12. SASA website

1. Trevor reported from the chair that the website is finally being redesigned. The aim is to make it more friendly and appealing by changing the interface. It is currently being developed, it is exciting, we were hoping to show it to the AGM but it is not ready yet. We can have hashtag relevance. We have registered it sociologyinafrica.com

2. Jimi was not happy with the domain name as it might get (African) people's backs up.

3. Trevor said it was only a domain name.

13. SASA links to other associations on the African continent

1. The chair said there was a need to link up with other associations as discussed by previous AGMs. This must be followed up.

2. Kate thanked the outgoing Exco and Council for work done [as they stepped down in preparation for the election of new SASA officebearers]

14. Elections

The new Exco and council to serve in the 2019-2020 term are:

15. Presidential address

The outgoing president, Babalwa Magoqwana gave a speech in which she named and thanked everyone who had put an effort in making this congress a success. She mentioned, among many others, council, Ntokozo Mthembu, Ipeleng, Badumile Hlongwane and Jimi Adesini. She thanked Duncan Hindle of ETDP-SETA for funding and his presence. She thanked colleagues working at SASA's virtual office at UJ Sociology department. Her speech covered many themes including increasing numbers and classes in Sociology; the role of society in a neoliberal big data society; the need to centre African knowledge; the relevance of patriarchy in building a caring society; the duty of scholars to contribute in building a better society without poverty and inequality.

16. Keynote address by Professor Clapperton Muvhanga

Malehoko Tshoedi, outgoing SASA deputy-president, introduced the keynote speaker.

Professor Muvhanga gave his well-received and wide ranging address which covered revolutionary themes including consideration of Thomas Sankara, Frantz Fanon and Amilcar Cabral's ideas; the need to engage with technology on our terms as Africans and as the South; the continued relevance of lessons from the national liberation struggle; the key role

played by women in the struggle against colonialism; the importance of African indigenous realities and knowledge systems; the great challenge facing scholars to take forward the struggle to eradicate all forms of oppression and exploitation; the possibilities and potential offered by the Fourth Industrial Revolution if approached with a revolutionary attitude.