

Nordic Society for Middle Eastern Studies
Board Meeting, 8-9 March 2018, Copenhagen University
Minutes

Present: Mark, Charlotte, Brynjar, Ulla, Susanne, Pekka, Hannu, Thorir

Excuses: Leif

1. Opening

- a. Introduction round of board members.
- b. Appointment of chair of meeting. Mark
- c. Appointment of secretary of meeting (to take minutes). Susanne
- d. Approval of the agenda

2. Membership

- a. Report on status (Mark). The situation is not good and we must do something about it. Mark informs the board that Knut Vikör has a member list with 165 people, and we have the lists of participants from one of the last two conferences that had more than 100 participants each. The website form is not working for new members. We decided that it is a main priority to e-mail all former members and ask them to renew their membership. The Facebook group can be used to identify potential members who are not on Knut's mailinglist. We can also identify potential members through board members' networks.
- b. Proposal to establish a system such as Wild Apricot to manage membership in future. Mark informs that such systems for a fee manage membership. In that case one person needs to be responsible for running the system. We all agree in principle.

3. Finances

- a. Presentation and approval of accounts for 2017-18. Mark presented the account from 2016 and 2017 and the board had no further comments.
- b. Proposal to open an NSM bank account was accepted.
- c. Proposals for policy on reimbursement of Board expenses. When possible board meetings should be held in conjunction with other arrangements already paid for; if possible the host institution should pay. Those who cannot find funding for travel and accommodation will be reimbursed. This is a temporary policy that we will revisit later. Board dinners should be paid for by NSM.
- d. Discussion of possible grants to support NSM. Primarily we need to make sure the membership fees are working. All board members need to search for foundations that can support NSM. We will return to this issue at the next board meeting.
- e. Presentation and approval of budget for 2018-19. The board approved of the budget presented by Mark. The budget for useful initiatives may also be used for Facebook promotion.

4. Communications

- a. Status reports
 - i. Website & FB (Pekka). Pekka is communications officer. He informs about the changes and updates on the website, which will be more of a static site. He has created a Facebook group which has around 350 followers at the

moment. Suggestions for new posts should be sent to Pekka who administers the group. Focus will be on Nordic research or countries.

- ii. Membership lists (Mark). We have some lists. We need to create a proper membership list on the new membership system.

b. Issues

- i. Style issues for website (Pekka). Pekka notes that we need to improve the website. He suggests that we employ someone with graphic design skills to help design a new website as part of the new membership system. The board agreed. Pekka will search for a suitable person. This will be covered by the NSM. The expected cost is 3000 skr.
- ii. Possible other material for website. The board agreed that we should have a section for job ads, which will be open. Members responsible for placing job ads should be contacted and asked to send their job ads to Pekka. This can be done when the membership list has been prepared and the new website is working. Pekka stresses that we need to keep the site updated if we want to include information about job ads and student courses or program. Ulla agrees to take responsibility for a section on student courses and programs. Information about past events of the NSM and upcoming events should also be added to the website.
- iii. Should NSM re-send EURAMES bulletin? The board thinks that it is a good idea to continue with that.
- iv. Should NSM have its own newsletter? The board does not think so.

5. Coming events

- a. Report on preparations for London PhD workshop (Susanne). The call will go out next week. Inviting local people to give lectures and participate in discussions is probably a cheap option. Board members who have the possibility should attend 1-2 days and pay their own expenses. A good idea is to arrange an excursion. Pekka will publish the call on Facebook and website and we will spread it in our channels.
- b. Report on preparations for Helsinki conference (Hannu). 21-23 August 2019 is planned. The dates coincide with the beginning of the semester in Sweden and Norway. Hannu will check if the week before is possible due to that, 14-16 August. External funding will be applied for to cover expenses for keynotes and social events. Mark mentions that some conferences have excursions. Hannu and the organizers will consider that. Hannu mentions that poster presentations may be included as well. Keynote speakers will be contacted shortly. Those who have good connections with potential keynotes will contact Hannu. Keynotes should be both Nordic and from the Middle East. Mark notes it will be the 30th anniversary of NSM and that could be acknowledged somehow.
-Proposal to publish conference papers. Mark. A published volume of selected papers may be possible. Or the Finnish Oriental society if it is on Amazon etc., or another Nordic Press. Routledge may be an option. Editors will be Pekka and Hannu who can add others.
- c. Proposal for 2022 conference in Iceland (Thorir). The location and facilities are good for a conference. Accommodation fees are not too high. Flights may be expensive unless booked early so it is essential to announce the dates and acceptances early.

Probably hold the conference in the middle of August. Sweden will be responsible for the conference in 2025.

- d. Proposal for PhD workshop in Bergen. Mark suggests that we should have some kind of activity each year. 2020 PhD workshop in Norway, either the Bergen summer school or in Oslo. Mark will send the information about the summer school to Brynjar and Charlotte. 2021 MA-workshop in Sweden.

6. Board issues

- a. Members' intentions were discussed. Pekka will try to find out who was put on the 2016 electoral committee, and if that does not succeed we will propose the 2013 committee to the general assembly.
- b. Officer
 - i. Proposal for Chair after Helsinki. We need now a chair designate to propose to the electoral committee and to serve as acting chair when Leif is not available. The board suggests that Mark takes this position and he accepted. The electoral committee will be informed before Helsinki.
 - ii. Appointment of Secretary. Susanne agrees. Her address should be the official address of the NSM. Pekka and Susanne will try to change the registration address from Lund to Stockholm.
 - iii. Appointment of Treasurer. Ulla agrees to be treasurer until Helsinki. The immediate reimbursements must be arranged.

7. General brainstorming performed.

8. No other business.