Minutes of Sigma Xi USNA Chapter Business Meeting

Thursday, 5 June 2014

Those attending:
Officers:
Jamie Schlessman (chapter president)
Judy Hartman (chapter vice-president)
Charles Sweet (chapter secretary and treasurer)
Dianne Luning Prak (chapter webmaster)

Members:
David Mauriello
Dick Staley
Virginia Smith (in absentia)

Non-members:
Joe Lomax

1200 – light lunch

1210 – Opening remarks (Chapter President Jamie Schlessman):

Summary of activities since prior meeting (Nov 8th 2012)
Our chapter has been in 1.5 years of quiescence for a variety of reasons. In that time we have not met as a chapter and our activity has only consisted of members judging at local science fairs and our annual sponsorship of a calculator prize for the Anne Arundel Science Fair, judged by Virginia Smith and awarded by Jamie Schlessman.
The current officers and members would like to re-invigorate the chapter, a process facilitated by prodding (a requirement in fact) from the national organization that we write and approve bylaws for the USNA Chapter of Sigma Xi. The main business of this meeting is the presentation of the draft by-laws (also distributed electronically), discussion, and voting on approval of same.

12:20 – Presentation of draft by-laws (Jamie) and discussion by all members present.
(see attached handout for the draft bylaws and below for resolved changes)

In general the bylaws met with the approval of those present. Specific discussion/alteration of the draft is as follows:

Article IV:
- There was discussion of terms of various offices, if asynchronous terms between offices (2 years for president and VP, 3 years for S and T) were good or bad, if webmaster should have term, etc. The members resolved to keep the draft language of this article.
- Discussion of whether control of Sigma Xi NFCU bank account should be just under the secretary or dual control with president. Members resolved to keep the draft language of the article.
- David called attention to the terminology error in line 1 of the President’s description, and it was agreed by all to change “reside” to “preside”.

- Members proposed to include language specifically calling for Trident, Bowman, and outstanding departmental research students to be offered associate membership on a yearly basis. Though this discussion came up as part of Article IV under the treasurer’s duties, it may best be placed within article VI.A.4 with the inclusion of the following language: “Regularly recruit members, encourage maintenance of membership, and extend associate membership to outstanding research students in yard-wide and departmental programs”. However, the language of this clause was not agreed upon specifically prior to voting and will need to be amended to the document after discussion at the next business meeting.

Article VI.A:
- All members present resolved to add the following to the responsibilities of the executive committee: “7. Discuss and implement chapter policies within the chapter bylaws.”

Article VII:
- There was a significant discussion of the need for clarity in the definition of quorum as it pertains to the USNA Chapter of Sigma Xi. Because there currently no official roll of membership for the chapter, only an ad hoc attendance/email list, it is impossible to define a number for 25% of the current membership. All members present resolved to change the language of this article to “The quorum required for the transaction of business at all meetings of the chapter shall consist of 25% of the active members (those who regularly attend chapter meetings)”.

NOTE: The lack of clarity on the membership of the local chapter or the nearby members of the national organization is of concern to officers and members alike, and the secretary will contact the national organization to obtain a list of all those members who have declared themselves to be part of the USNA Chapter and will also seek to get a list of all unaffiliated Sigma Xi members nearby who might be interested in becoming part of our local chapter. Once this information is obtained the chapter may consider a return to the draft language or other clarifying edits to make Article VII more robust in the future.

Dick motioned to accept the bylaws with the alterations described above. Judy seconded the motion to accept and the bylaws were unanimously approved (6 Y / 0 N).

Voting on 2014 officers:

1. Virginia nominated herself in absentia for the office of president of the chapter. No others were nominated and those present unanimously voted to make her president-elect with a presidential term to start July 1st 2014 (6 Y / 0 N). On this date Jamie will then take up the role of immediate past-president – a position that by Sigma Xi tradition involves working with the
current president and president-elect on leadership of the chapter. However, this role is not an official position in the terms of the USNA Chapter bylaws.

2. Charlie made a motion to continue the term of all other officer positions (listed above) for the period of one year. Judy seconded this motion as well and it was also unanimously approved by all present (6 Y / 0 N).

3. The executive committee (ad hoc) was preliminarily determined to consist of the chapter officers as well as those members who were present at this meeting to establish the bylaws (David and Dick). Currently there is no defined size or composition for this committee in the chapter bylaws, though it was agreed by all members present that the committee ought at least to include all officers of the chapter.

Additional business:

To facilitate electronic communication with those members of the chapter who are not USNA employees, it was resolved that the secretary will establish a chapter gmail account and look into the possibility of a chapter google drive cloud for dissemination of documents and conduct of electronic business (polls, etc.) for the chapter.

Many planned/proposed/possible future activities were mentioned during the meeting. The officers and executive committee will work actively toward these goals, including:

1. Jamie is working to bring CBF spokesman/radio host Tom Pelton to the academy for a seminar
2. Social gatherings – book swap/etc. perhaps off-yard (Hard Bean?) – first meeting in late July?
3. Greater/more intentional participation in Annapolis Science Café
4. Joint events with DC regional chapter of Sigma Xi
5. Effort to extend associate membership to all Trident and Bowman Scholars
6. Effort to extend opportunity for all STEM departments to nominate outstanding research students for associate membership
7. Sponsorship of a non-trident STEM research award at the yard-wide awards ceremony (dovetailed with the yard-wide poster-session as the judging venue for department-nominated projects of distinction) Charlie and Virginia are working on establishing this outreach.

1400 – Meeting adjourned