

2007 Geochemical Society Board of Directors Meeting
Sunday, August 19, 2007
Cologne, Germany

Meeting called to order at 8:45 am.

Present:

Board of Directors: Susan Brantley (President), Marty Goldhaber (Vice-President), Youxue Zhang (Treasurer), Jeremy Fein (Secretary), Frank Podosek (GCA Editor), Josef Werne (OGD Secretary), Malcolm McCulloch (International Secretary), Andreas Lüttge (Director), Yaoling Niu (Director), Laura Reisberg (Director), Vincent Salters (Director)

Guests who attended parts of meeting: Seth Davis (GS Business Manager), Barb Dutrow (MSA President), the Council of the European Association of Geochemistry (EAG), Goldschmidt Organizers (see below).

President's Report:

The following discussions arose from the President's Report (which is attached):

The Board discussed the Guidelines for Organizing a Goldschmidt Conference in order to update the Guidelines for Goldschmidt Conferences which we maintain on the web. This discussion resulted in the following two motions:

Motion: *At North American Goldschmidt conferences, GS and EAG members will be charged member registration rates. Persons that register as non-members shall be asked to choose to join either society, and two years of membership fees shall be sent to the society that they choose. The GS will work with local organizing committees to determine if other organizations shall receive the member discount.*

Salters motion, Zhang seconded. VOTE: 10 for, 0 against.

Motion: *The GS will make funds available for student travel to all Goldschmidt meetings. A committee of the GS shall determine to whom the funds will be dispersed. Awardees shall automatically become GS members.*

Zhang motion, Salters seconded. VOTE: 10 for, 0 against

There was discussion of pros and cons of having a professional organizer for Goldschmidt conference, and whether GS or EAG or both can make this agreement. It was concluded to explore this possibility further and that each society may need a separate agreement.

Discussion of profits from Goldschmidt Conferences: various models have been used in the past with respect to profits from the Goldschmidt. The group informally discussed the benefits of splitting profits from the conference into thirds: One part goes to the host organization, one part to GS, and one part to EAG. However, it was also pointed out that splitting money between the organizations entails fees for changing currencies and that the EAG has requested that such changing of currencies be eliminated.

Brantley led a discussion of how the Business Office functioned this year with respect to Goldschmidt. At last year's Board meeting, it had been decided to fund a new parttime person to be hired in the Business Office in order that Seth Davis have more time to manage the Goldschmidt Conference. Seth reported that he had hired two different people during the past year, but neither had stayed with the job. Because of those difficulties, he did not have the time needed to be proactive with respect to Dominique Weis and the Vancouver Goldschmidt, but rather reactive with respect to answering her requests. There was not time to discuss the fact that the GS had decided last year to append a \$10k payment charge to the Goldschmidt conference overall fees in order to pay for the extra time that the Business Manager expends helping the Goldschmidt. This extra payment is presumed to be still in the Vancouver budget, but this extra payment has not been discussed with the organizer of the 2010 meeting.

Brantley led a discussion of future GS Business Office needs. She urged the GS Board to consider expanding the business office significantly in the near future. The financial auditor thinks that GS needs to implement professional accounting practices. In the long run, it may be beneficial to consider sharing an office with MSA and/or AGU in order to share financial activities and to have more of an outreach/education component to the GS. It was noted that WashU provides a large subsidy for the business office in Saint Louis.

Brantley led a discussion on trademarking the name of the Goldschmidt Conference. One option that she investigated was that the society could put 'TM' as a subscript to the conference name for free, thereby offering some trademark protection. This would be a common law trademark and would give the Society much of the same protection that a legal trademark would give us (legal trademark would put a small R in a circle after the name and would allow faster legal recourse if the trademark was violated). More formal measures would be costly (\$1500 per country) and would need to be done on a country-by-country basis. It was informally resolved that we should add the 'TM' subscript to all future references to the conference, effective immediately. In the future we may seek a legal trademark in the U.S., and this would at least protect us from another society using the name and advertising in the U.S.

Vice-President's Report Discussion: all openings on GS committees have been filled, with attention paid to discipline, location, and gender balance. Also, Goldhaber attended GSA's A&AS meeting in Boulder, CO, and discussed issues related to this.

Business Office Report Discussion. Discussion of report (see attached). New website will be ready end of September, with greatly enhanced capabilities and coverage. Davis also discussed his hiring activities over the last year, as well as his activities with respect to managing the Goldschmidt Conference (see discussion President's report, above). Davis also produced a GS pin this year which was given to a few people for critique and will be produced in volume next year for distribution to volunteers after they cycle off committees.

Discussion of potential MSA-GS relationship regarding Goldschmidt participation by MSA. Barb Dutrow, president of MSA, joined the meeting at this point to participate

in this discussion. She presented some of the history of the GS-MSA relationship: In 1998 – MSA agreed to have GS join to create the RiMG volumes and to run short courses (and attend at member rates). Much of this agreement was brokered between then-GS President Mike Hochella and MSA Business Manager Alex Speer. MSA would like to have a formal agreement with GS with respect to their participation in the Goldschmidt meeting. They have felt that such an agreement was almost in place during the discussions of the RiMG volumes. According to Dutrow, there was discussion at the time of the RiMG “merger” of having MSA participate in the planning and technical co-sponsorship of Goldschmidt conferences – and MSA council voted to accept this. Now MSA wishes to pursue this more formally, and to work out a written agreement for co-sponsorship. MSA wants to be identified with the meeting in order to raise visibility and participate scientifically; to have a place where they could present the Dana medal (they need a spring/summer meeting), hold sessions, and in general to provide an outlet for a fulfilling meeting. MSA would like to be represented formally on the scientific program committee for each conference; they would like to have their logo on advertising; set up a no-cost booth at the conference; and have their members register at membership rates.

There followed a discussion of the complexities of GS-EAG control over Goldschmidt conferences and the value of the meeting to the identity of both GS and EAG. For the near future, any MSA agreement would be just with GS and would just pertain to N. American meetings. Concerns were voiced over perception of N. American bias of granting special status to MSA, and concerns were discussed regarding control over the conference. Many subsidiaries societies might desire similar relationships with organizing committees or with the GS for Goldschmidt meetings.

The agreement would involve no direct expense to GS, although it was mentioned there is the loss in collection revenue from MSA delegates. If the agreement goes forward, the GS would need to add to the North America Goldschmidt Policy that future Goldschmidt conferences in North America must include MSA appointed members of the Scientific Programming Committee. The next MSA council meeting is in October (GSA-Denver), and it was agreed to attempt to finalize a resolution by then.

This relationship was, in general, viewed positively by all present, and there were a number of positive aspects discussed of this relationship. It is generally perceived that the GS-MSA relationship is a strong one and important to both societies. The GS Board will consider the formal agreement in more detail in the months to come.

GCA Executive Editor Report

The following items were discussed: Subscription price same in 08 as 07. Cambridge Pubs will produce and handle abstracts for Goldschmidt Conference for Cologne and Vancouver – GS has already agreed to this. Elsevier has agreed not to exhibit in Arms Shows. Submissions are increasing – 2007 will be about 800 per year. Acceptance rate is about 56% - stable. Hardcopy subscriptions going down – due to online access. Currently at about 425. Almost 600,000 hits on website. 56K downloads by 16K users. About 1/3 of submitted papers are from US, 1/3 from Europe, 1/3 from others. 17% of AEs are women – trying to expand diversity w.r.t. geographic location and gender. Brantley

reiterated the need for diversity of the AEs. GCA is significantly above average in author satisfaction of Elsevier journals. Podosek encouraged more liberal format guidelines – authors can embed figures and put captions under figures in submitting manuscripts, or even can submit fully formatted manuscripts.

Brantley thanked Podosek for an outstanding job. She also requested that Podosek begin discussions with the Publications Committee about the changes in publishing that are ongoing: open access may be required in the future and open access journals such as Geochemical Transactions are starting to garner extremely high citation rates. Will open access changes harm our Society's journal? What should the Society be doing about this or thinking about this? The Publications Committee is encouraged to discuss this and report back to the Society in Vancouver their opinions of this trend and how it will affect our journal.

Treasurer's Report: in general, finances are in very good shape. Total assets at end of 2006: \$928K – 5-6% increase from previous year. Income from GCA subscriptions, Elsevier royalties from GCA, membership dues, interest, special pubs, other. Expenses from GCA subscription fee to Elsevier, GS Business office, Elements, Newsletter, Student travel grants, insurance, website, others.

Membership services cost 1.5 times membership dues. No financial need to increase membership dues.

Salters moved to accept 2008 budget as presented, Goldhaber seconded. VOTE: 11 for, 0 against.

Audit of 2005 year Finances. Conducted by Berry Financial Group. The Society is in good financial shape: for a small society, the budget is relatively large and relatively liquid. The auditors suggested the following improvements: implement automated online web accounting system to relieve Treasurer from detailed accounting related tasks. Prepare a written document of financial policies and procedures. Better maintain records. Develop conflict of interest policy. Develop fiscal responsibility policy. Create a stronger relationship with an accountant.

The Board discussed hiring an accountant to assist the Treasurer – either as a one time occurrence or permanent. ***Seth to look into pricing out implementation of recommendations by Fall.***

Zhang made the following suggestion: to dissolve the Meetings Assistance Program (MAP) due to low response, and high degree of maintenance. Downside to the program – there is considerable paperwork involved due to tax issues. *It was decided that we would continue this fund but stipulate that the funds have to be given to an organization rather than an individual – and this could eliminate tax implications. Also it was stipulated that GS must be acknowledged as the source of the funding.*

Investment Discussion:

Zhang suggested that the GS place their investment fund in a T Rowe Price Retirement Fund, or another similar conservative fund (TIAA, Fidelity, etc.). There followed a discussion of options for management of non-profit corporate accounts by Charles Schwab: Managed Portfolio (low degree of flexibility, all handled by Schwab) vs. Schwab Private Client (allows more input from GS, cost is higher than other option). Brantley discussed the option of having Bill Fender, of Innovest (the firm that handles GSA finances) manage GS funds. Thus three options are under consideration: a professional manager (e.g. Innovest); a fund that requires no explicit relationship with a broker (eg an indexed fund or fund such as T Rowe Price Retirement); a fund that is managed at some lower level of support than the Innovest offer (such as Charles Schwab).

Brantley, Goldhaber, Drever, and Zhang to form a committee to finalize a recommendation on investment strategies, during fall 2007.

Geochemical Database Discussion –

Salters presented the results from the Data Policy Committee. Discussion ensued.

Motion to accept the formal data policy: 11 for, 0 against. Reisberg motion. Werne 2nded.

Brantley encouraged the Society to begin to have stronger relationships with groups that are moving to provide open access to geochemical data and to maintain legacy data. She argued that this should be a big push for the Society for the future. The Society could consider supporting such groups either verbally, financially, or by web support.

Award Committee Issue: The Board discussed making award committee identities confidential. The general feeling was that this was not desirable. In general, system has worked and files have been passed from one chair to the next effectively. The Business Office could have as part of the new website a central clearinghouse for files, etc.

2008 Board Elections: We discussed how to implement the voting this fall expeditiously. Plan A) Websanity builds an on-line election form; Plan B) Seth runs an e-mail election. It was decided that one of these options should be implemented so that the election can happen expeditiously this fall. This will be implemented by Seth Davis.

Scott Wood is rotating off as Special Publications Editor, and a replacement still needs to be found. Malcolm McCulloch is resigning as International Secretary, he recommends Vicky Bennett as his replacement.

Brantley thanked everyone who is rotating off the Board for their work.

Reports from Goldschmidt Conference Organizers

Herbert Palme – 2007 Goldschmidt – largest one ever, including 600 students registered. Funds for students, attendees from low income countries. 1200 talks, 1000 posters. Tried to have keynote speakers not talk all at same time. One plenary speaker to start each day. Meeting will break even or make small profit.

Paul Beattie – presented a proposal for formalized relationship between Cambridge Publications and the Goldschmidt conference. Can provide as much or as little technical support as societies/organizing committees desire: from providing minimal tasks up to a ‘just add science’ model. Core: publications/communications/consultancy; In Cologne, input in terms of: conference design, publications, program construction, communications, registrations and payments, consultancy, financial support. ConferenceSys – software to organize conferences on order of 1000-5000 attendees. Should help conference and profile of geochemistry grow. Increase revenue and minimize liabilities; will increase the pool of organizers (won’t be scared off by amount of work a conference requires); provide IT services as required. Core Modules – on order of 100 euros/delegate; 150 euros/delegate in 2007 for more services rendered.

Hugh O’Neill – 2006 Goldschmidt – about 1300 registrants. 1160 talks; 340 posters. Net profit – about \$1000 Australian dollars after seed funding returned.

Dominique Weis – 2008 Goldschmidt in Vancouver – conference to be held at Univ. of British Columbia. Not organized by a professional organizer, but in conjunction with Cambridge Publications. 20 Scientific Themes – under general theme of ‘From Sea to Sky’. 6 Regional field trips will be offered. Break-even point between 2000-2100 registrants. Registration fee will include lunches, price of beach BBQ. A number of short courses will be offered before and after conference. Accommodation will range from basic (student dorm housing – 39 CDN) to luxurious (hotels).

Chris Ballentine – 2009 Goldschmidt in Davos – Cambridge Publications doing most of the non-scientific organization. EAG officers part of organizational structure. Venue can hold up to 2500 - 3000 people. Easy access from Zurich airport. Conference Theme: ‘Challenges to our Volatile Planet’. June 22-26, 2009. 17 Scientific Themes, plus general symposia. Breakeven: about 1800 participants.

Ted Lobotka – Proposal: 2010 Goldschmidt in Knoxville, TN, USA. Co-hosts: Oak Ridge National Laboratory, University of Tennessee, Lunar and Planetary Institute. To be held in Knoxville Convention Center: can handle 3000 people; 14 meeting rooms, exhibit and poster space, lecture hall, computer and communications technology built in. Easy access to field trips to Great Smokey Mountains National Park, Blue Ridge and Piedmont of W. N. Carolina, Valley and Ridge and Cumberland Plateau. 1600 hotel rooms downtown; 8000 in county. Airport served by 8 carriers. Inexpensive – likely about \$300 USD registration.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jeremy Fein
Secretary, The Geochemical Society
27 August 2007