



AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Online Board Meeting Minutes
Sunday, August 18, 2019
Time: 2:00 PM [EST]

SPECIAL MEETING CALLED BY PRESIDENT SMITH-WARSHAW

1. Roll Call

Janice Smith-Warshaw, President
James Wilson, Vice President
Jason E. Zinza, Treasurer / Interim Secretary
Lorraine Flores, Professional Development Director
Christine Sharkey, ASLHS Coordinator
Beatrice Pfaff, Chapter Affiliation Director
Amy June Rowley, Evaluation and Certification Director

Guests:

MJ Bienvenu
Laurene Simms
Octavian Robinson

Absence(s):
David Martin, Communications Director

2. Meeting called to order at 2:02 pm EST

3. President's Report

- a. Purpose of meeting: To discuss comments received by ASLTA from members in response to each of the 2019 conference keynotes. Comments ranged from positive to negative.
- b. Introductions.

Key Excerpts:

- MJ Bienvenu: Intent was to build on points raised by both Octavian Robinson and Laurene Simms. Wanted to shake up people's complacency and encourage self-reflection. Expected that some people would respond negatively - these people are individuals who have not fully examined their place in the ASL education field.
- Octavian Robinson: Negative reactions from some attendees can be understood through the lens of "hearing fragility", similar to the concept of white fragility. Concerned that a few select pieces from each keynote are jumped on, rather than seeing them in the context of the whole message. My keynote sought to urge all attendees to think consciously about what each teacher brings to the classroom.
- Janice Smith-Warshaw: It is clear that after each keynote address attendees needed time to unpack and process the content. Not having an opportunity to do so likely made negative reactions more distressing for attendees.

ACTION ITEM: In future conferences, devote discussion time after each keynote address.

- Amy June Rowley: There is a wide variety of perspectives regarding the traits and qualifications an ASL teacher should have. A significant topic is the role / place / status of hearing individuals teaching ASL. I want to emphasize that there is no universal perspective on this. The ASL teaching field has not had the opportunity to really unpack and explore the issue and its implications.
- Laurene Simms: Hurt feelings, personal reactions to controversial topics, and feeling marginalized are symptoms of a larger issue, which is that ASLTA has not taken clear stands on various issues. As an organization, take stands on audism, linguicism, or other issues, and this will provide a stronger foundation for people to understand how they are part of and influence the discussion.
- James Wilson: Historically, the ASLTA certification system has served as a gatekeeper ensuring high quality ASL teaching happens, regardless of whether that teacher is Deaf or not. It doesn't matter if a teacher is Deaf or hearing, as long as they have ASLTA certification.

ACTION ITEM: Janice Smith-Warshaw to create a statement on the keynote addresses. Emphasize that the keynote addresses reflected the opinions and perspectives of each presenter, not necessarily that of ASLTA. ASLTA is committed to respecting and valuing all people.

4. Vice President's Report

No report.

5. Secretary's Report (reported by Jason E. Zinza)

No report.

6. Treasurer's Report

No report.

7. Chapter Affiliation Director Pfaff

No report.

8. Evaluation and Certification Director Rowley

No report.

9. Professional Development Director Flores

No report.

10. Communications Director David Martin

No report.

11. ASL Honor Society Coordinator Sharkey

No report.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 3:00 pm EST

Meeting Minutes respectfully submitted by Interim Secretary Zinza.

Future meetings:

September 8, 2019 at 6:30 pm EST

October 13, 2019 at 6:30 pm EST

December 15, 2019 at 6:30 pm EST

January 12, 2020 at 6:30 pm EST

February 9, 2020 at 6:30 pm EST

March 15, 2020 at 6:30 pm EST

April 12, 2020 at 6:30 pm EST

May 10, 2020 at 6:30 pm EST

June 14, 2020 at 6:30 pm EST