



North American Society
for the
Sociology of Sport

Agenda
November 4, 2023
8:00 am – 9:30 am

NASSS Board 2022-2023: Brian Gearity – President, F. Michelle Richardson – Past President, Jay Laurendeau – President-Elect, Rachel Allison – Secretary, Malcolm Drewery – DCCC Chair, Derek Silva – MAL, Lars Dzikus – MAL, Letisha Brown – MAL, Bob Case & F. Michelle Richardson – Conference Site Locators, Jasmine Hamilton – Parliamentarian, Cheryl Cooky – SSJ Editor, Michael Friedman – Treasurer, Kasie Murphy – Grad Rep, Stacey Flores – Grad Rep, Jen McGovern (Web/Communications), Nancy Spencer – Archivist, Heather Van Mullem – Elections, William Bridel – Membership

Not present: Lars Dzikus, Jasmine Hamilton, Nancy Spencer

1. Call to Order
 - a. Brian Gearity welcomes all at 8:07.
2. Introductions
 - a. Jay Laurendeau: Is there an agenda for this meeting?
 - b. Brian Gearity: No.
3. Developing an Agenda
 - a. Brian Gearity: Carissa is here as a nonprofit expert, also mentioned putting an attorney on retainer.
 - b. Derek Silva: We should discuss why there is no agenda and not using Robert's Rules to call the meeting to order.
 - c. Brian Gearity: After last night, I knew we needed to talk as a Board. The bylaws don't say that we use Robert's Rules.
 - d. Derek Silva and Cheryl Cooky: Article 13. [Derek reads Robert's Rules part of bylaws.]
 - e. Brian Gearity: Move to call to order
 - f. Derek Silva: Second [all generally nod in assent]
 - g. Brian Gearity: The trouble with this last bit of time post COVID to now is this, figuring out our agenda. I can put together an agenda and send it out. We want to have a collegial dialogue about where we are and where we go. I appreciate you pointing that out.
 - h. Derek Silva: The issue we have is an utter lack of governance, care and commitment to bylaws for processes put in place. Can we list an agenda and vote to accept it? What's the process of this meeting – that is my recommendation.
 - i. Brian: Here are the items I have: ex-officio member reports, then move to a closed executive session, team building, more introductions, a conference debrief, scheduling

the next meeting, non-profit management discussion. Things we need to do in the months to come are the priority. What to add or amend?

- j. Derek Silva: Add new business.
- k. Cheryl Cooky: The Board does include ex-officio members. What is the process by which they get dismissed from the meeting? What's the rationale for moving to executive session?
- l. Brian Gearity: The Executive Board is growing, this is just in the interest of efficiency and moving things forward.
- m. Cheryl Cooky: But Ex-officio are members of the Board.
- n. Brian Gearity: Okay folks can stay. Voting members do need to meet to move things forward. We sometimes get large in this meeting and can't move things forward.
- o. Carissa Gump: I have a suggestion for agendas. Moving forward you can add into the bylaws that prior to any annual meeting or Executive Board meeting, an agenda will be distributed within 30 days. Not presented only at meeting.
- p. Jay Laurendeau: Moves to approve agenda.
- q. Cheryl Cooky: I'm okay leaving, if people don't want ex-officio members present.

4. Website and Communications

- a. Brian: I have resigned as listserv administrator. We can replace or upgrade the website and communications to make this position obsolete. We can use tech with Cvent to integrate with SSJ and have member lists or discussion boards. To investigate that and its cost is the suggestion.
- b. Michelle Richardson: I have no desire for that position but what goes into it?
- c. Brian Gearity: Mostly requests to add. I use the monthly new member roll to add people, people change email addresses, approve announcements, send out decorum rules, reminders, enforcement, but that is rare.
- d. Bob Case: Job announcements.
- e. Brian Gearity: Yes, I pass them along. It takes about an hour a month.
- f. Jen McGovern: I don't know if my position can take something else on. This could be rolled into the web committee – membership coordinator could do this role if its mostly adding and taking people off.
- g. Brian Gearity: We need an ad hoc communication committee to look at listserv, web, etc.
- h. Jen McGovern: Or a little social media team, we could revisit that. If we did upgrades to the website, that could do what we want in theory.
- i. Brian Gearity: The web designer we were connected to is based in New Zealand. He can do a membership portal with a login tying in to SSJ. He put together a menu of options for us, different price points.
- j. Kasie Murphy: Moving what is now on the listserv onto the website will generate a lack of access unless members get a notification if something is posted. We do use the listserv over email so members have information and can respond easily. News about jobs is very important, if they aren't checking the web won't have that.
- k. Brian Gearity: Right now, I manually have to copy and paste to email subgroups like presenters. One system with all of those folks would be easier.

5. Approving an Agenda

- a. Jay Laurendeau: The agenda has still not been approved. There is a reason for doing so – what’s the order of conversations. Consider the difficult events of last night. What is the conversation we should be having?
- b. Michelle seconds motion to approve agenda.
- c. Brian Gearity amends motion to include all Board members.
- d. Jay Laurendeau: I move that we place agenda items of ex-officio reports and team building to the end. The conversation about last night needs to be first, move this up.
- e. Brian Gearity: I don’t know if we are going to solve last night, so was seeking a middle ground with any critical reports first.
- f. Jay Laurendeau: That’s my point. That can’t be subject to how quickly we get through other things. There has to be a way to best use this time together – other reports can be sent electronically.
- g. Derek Silva moves to move agenda item about SEEDS first.
- h. Jay Laurendeau seconds.
- i. Stacey Flores: Is somebody a Parliamentary right now? They should always be here.
- j. Cheryl Cooky: In our university senate I was chatting with our Parliamentary. We talked about Robert’s Rules vs. Keesey. We need to have someone here certified in procedures.
- k. Carissa Gump: I recommend hiring an independent Parliamentary with no skin in the game.
- l. Stacey Flores: Before we move out of Robert’s Rules we need to move into Robert’s Rules. We should use something clearly.
- m. Derek Silva: We are governed currently by Robert’s Rules. I move to call to question, amendment to move up discussion of SEEDS.
- n. Vote on amendment: all in favor, no opposition, no abstention.

6. SEEDS/Business Meeting

- a. Jay Laurendeau: It was a difficult meeting. We lost some folks and alienated some folks. It seemed as though this was not about SEEDS but other deeper questions and issues.
- b. Malcolm Drewery: What is the why? There were lots of underlying things going on that everyone wasn’t privy to. The story of why the contention, it was there from the beginning. I do feel that we lost a lot of people, it was unnecessary. In their heart, everyone wanted SEEDS to move forward, it is good for this organization. Antiracism is the direction we wanted to go. There were issues everyone did not know, that were not fully explained. It seems that the SEEDS people didn’t do something previously that needed to be corrected, things were asked for and not provided, couldn’t move forward until that correction was made.
- c. Cheryl Cooky: I echo what you both have said, we should step back and ask why are we upset about this? What does this tap into for me? Some underlying current. I have never witnessed something like that before at NASSS or anywhere in my career and I have been harassed. I have seen some shit. At the root of it, not even just the SEEDS part. We need to reflect on ourselves as an organization. What is that triggering, what trauma or emotions? That is not NASSS. A healing process needs to happen. Maybe we were able to move on, but I saw new members crying in the hallway. People were hugging, one

member gave out hugs. Pockets of conversation happened but the Board needs to address this in a collective way. Students of color, first time grad student members, were upset and crying, saddened. I have something to bring to the table and have extensive experience in NASSS. I am thankful to serve this organization but I am not going to silence myself anymore, even though I don't have a vote on the Board.

- d. Brian Gearity: I am not trying to shut down anyone's voice, was trying to move things forward in expedient manner.
- e. Derek Silva: I have notes after speaking with members. I would like to read a statement:

"I think we can all agree that last night's business meeting was not only embarrassing from the perspective of the board of governors of NASSS, but also something of a threat to the very legitimacy and existence of this organization. Not only was the board positioned as unprofessional and not collegial, but I heard from several members that the conduct they saw and experienced last night will make them question returning to this conference and rethink their membership in this organization going forward.

In my view, as voting member of the Board, what we saw and experienced last night was one of the most unprofessional, undemocratic processes that I have seen in my career and represent an existential threat to the future of NASSS as an organization. The damage done to members, particularly racialized and new members, may, in effect, be irreparable and we, as a Board of Directors, may have pushed members away permanently and thus threatened the continued existence of NASSS as a scholarly organization. If I were a new member present at the Business meeting last night, I would not be returning as a member of NASSS because it doesn't seem like a positive or collegial space. Nor does it seem like a space where, despite our claims of a deep commitment to anti-racism, decoloniality, and inclusion, we are not willing, to use a popular turn of phrase, put our money where our mouth is. However, the substance of the motions raised last night is not what I would like to bring up for discussion. Rather, I would like to focus on the *process of what happened and its alignment with our mission and our current bylaws*. At the business meeting, we saw and experienced first-hand:

- 1) The lack of care and attention paid by the Board leadership to the equitable application of the very Bylaws putatively being used to govern our meetings and business affairs vis-à-vis by example a lack of minutes presented to members, lack of attention paid to meeting procedures outlined by our bylaws, lack of understanding of governing process, and unprofessional conduct by members of the Board of Directors at NASSS that threaten the mission of the organization.
- 2) Lack of knowledge and transparency of the democratic process ingrained in our bylaws – including, but not limited to, attempts to prevent discussion and democratic, collegial governance vis-à-vis by example the application of bylaws and the claim to not be governed by Roberts rules of order as outlined in Article 13 of our bylaws.¹
- 3) Attempts to undermine the democratic process at the 2023 annual meeting by evoking bylaws to prevent voting by members on issues relevant to the membership vis-à-vis motions presented by SEEDS (irrespective of whether such bylaw changes would have passed), which threaten the mission of the organization to promote, stimulate, and encourage the sociological study of play, games, sport, and contemporary physical culture.

- 4) Contributing to perhaps irreparable damage with all members vis-à-vis the lack of transparency, collegial governance, and democratic process in decision-making relevant to NASSS and its current mission.

MOTION: With this in mind, I move that the Board of Directors call a meeting of members as outlined in Article 2, section 2 of the Bylaws, which states that *special meetings of the members may be called by the President, the Board of Directors, or not less than one-tenth of the members having voting rights*, on the matter of a discussion and vote on evoking article 4, section 5 of the bylaws, which states that *any officer may be removed by a two-thirds majority approval of the members at a meeting of members whenever the work of said officer is deemed likely to undermine the mission and goals of the society*, to remove Dr. Brian Gearity from the position of President of NASSS.

In line with Article 2, sections 3, 4, and 7 of the bylaws, this meeting will be held electronically, and notice of the meeting will include the purpose or purposes for which the meeting is called shall be stated in the notice.

I ask for a second on this motion.”

¹ Article XIII: The rules contained in the most recent edition of Robert’s Rules of Order, revised, shall govern all meetings of members and directors and committees of this society where those rules are not inconsistent with the articles of incorporation, these bylaws, or special rules of the order of the society.

- f. Jay Laurendeau seconds.
- g. Brian Gearity: What is the rationale?
- h. Derek Silva: I read the rationale, threatening the mission of the organization.
- i. Stacey Flores: Can we have a discussion with the person considered for removal present?
- j. Derek Silva: The motion is for a special meeting of the members. It is the members who may discuss removal, not the Board.
- k. Brian Gearity: what is the threat I pose to NASSS?
- l. Derek Silva: This is quite clear in what I wrote. The NASSS mission is to promote study of play, games, and physical culture. There has been an undemocratic process and improper use of bylaws as a result of which members may not come back, that is the threat.
- m. Brian Gearity: I have been the President-Elect. The academic conference program has been my main task. With the program committee, fulfilling that role has been what I have done until now
- n. Michelle Richardson: Last night was hard, I did not feel well. Undemocratic, I keep hearing, and I take offense to this. Everyone was able to speak and give their point of view. No one wanted to compromise. What was asked early on was what’s the underlying current. It is before people entered that space there were conversations about what was going to be done. Prior to the conference people were trying to have this handled via the listserv instead of the proper place for the business of NASSS, to sit down and talk. I take issue with what we are saying. We are a Board and we are in factions. That’s not good for the organization as a whole. Some felt it was Us-Against-the-Board and some on the

Board were doing that instead of being a united Board. SEEDS is a good program, no one doubts its validity. The point was that processes were not followed. Part of the processes, transparency, there is none because they have no reports. Get them to give us the information. Everyone in the room was operating on half-truths, asking us to give the money, make it a line item and equating it with DCCC. DCCC has never had a line item. NASSS does not pay for speakers except for keynotes at the conference. In terms of leadership, we can and should all be versed in Robert's Rules. No one purposely tried to mess that up. I take full responsibility for not having an agenda, that is on me. Trying to remove leadership creates another crisis in leadership. We can find a way to sit down and come to an accord. Nobody is going to be happy because we are going to compromise, no one gets everything that they want. Lead with what is best for NASSS.

- o. Jay Laurendeau: I don't think this is about SEEDS, it's about governance. What processes so that we hold any entity accountable? We need to be accountable as well. You said a number of times that no one is compromising, that it's the process we follow to have productive disagreements and we will do that as an organization. Well, we need governance processes to allow that to unfold in a way we've agreed to. We needed an agenda and the ability to approve it. Clearly many came just for the SEEDS conversation. There couldn't then be any amendments to the agenda. Let's name it – we are in a crisis. The question is, what's the path out the crisis.
- p. Bob Case: My sense was that we had a group that wanted to run a preconference and wanted funding and they didn't really follow the procedure of budget request and so on. The process of budgeting protects the organization so we don't bleed money we don't have. We only needed to put in a process to accommodate them in the future. I've been here 40 years, no need to rehash all this. We are stuck in the weeds of a President removed and all that, let's just get on with it. Some of the same people complaining about SEEDS were at NASSM and they were saying that NASSS is the greatest thing since sliced bread. We were receptive, tried to deal with issues, and now we think we are in anarchy. Organizations always survive. Let's talk about it but not get stuck in the weeds.
- q. Michael Friedman: I'll provide a view from 30,000 feet then get more specific. I see no disagreement over the concept or idea that we should be doing this. It's a question of how. In terms of how, process, the process collapsed in all ways. I was lax as Treasurer in budgetary oversight. Our financial situation is quite robust. Never want to lose \$50k in 2 years but we had the cushion, ability to run a program like this, I don't regret decision to support it. The process failed. I did not give oversight, people involved did not offer proper reporting, failed going up to Brian and Michele, blame for everybody. The question isn't pointing fingers, the question is moving forward in a constructive way. Further recriminations and removing a President, then what?
- r. Stacey Flores: I am going to say something and then leave. Whether there is anarchy or not, most of the SEEDS participants were there last night. My first NASSS was last year, I was told not to go to the business meeting and didn't go. But I met really great scholars last year who encouraged me. But the onboarding is terrible, I don't know what the hell is going on. There is no understanding of process, didn't know where this meeting was going to be. Marginalized students felt triggered, no one wants to come back, and these are all first-time members. We talk about losing money. This is good but- Its either good or it isn't and if it's a money issue then figure it out. Why are you not registering and paying dues knowing what they need to cover? You say it's not a normal process for

NASSS to pay honorariums but you can't ask marginalized scholars to do extra work without compensation. Nobody batted an eye about compensating students to volunteer. I got \$109 for a room and \$30 for meals – that's not even to \$125 – process and money. Figure it out. In this space I'm already going to be marginalized. What we study isn't even taken seriously, most of my peers want to leave academia because of this. To sit through this for 2 years is a lot. You are going to lose a lot of people, no reconciliation last night, it is not easy. I can't sit in here now, I have a presentation later today. [Leaves the meeting]

- s. Malcolm Drewery: That's the why. Why hasn't been explained.
- t. Cheryl Cooky: I'm so sorry on behalf of myself, as a NASSS member. We have had more conversation on this board about whatever amount of money, \$x that SEEDS spent. We are applying standards of process and procedure to this program that we as a Board do not uphold. I appreciate your comments Michael and there are implications of this, yes, but I have not seen this in 27 years. More conversations about SEEDS money than the \$16k AV costs – Bob you asked that question and fucking Board - I am fucking angry. The Board asked nothing and did fucking nothing. We study antiracism and I know we are all committed to this. I know your hearts and you as people. To suggest that something is functionally wrong with this body, the motion is about governance not about SEEDS. Why it;s not happening is wrong with governance and current leadership. I am following along with Stacey I am leaving. I can't fucking do this anymore. Rachel, keep the fucks in the minutes. [Leaves the meeting]
- u. Michelle Richardson: You asked the why.
- v. Malcolm Drewery: What was going on last night.
- w. Michelle Richardson: Part of why is the Board, the other part is asking SEEDS to provide something and they're not giving that. They've been asked for budgets, reports. Board in a position to say, how to justify giving you what you are requesting and you are not being transparent? We may be broken but when do we start trying to right the course, right the ship? We are all committed to antiracism. I am a Black woman and I understand the need for this. But nothing can go unquestioned. Don't get offended, just answer the question so we can figure it out. Instead of people talking in their groups instead of sitting down. Too many conversations happened before anyone entered that room. People were charged up on the Red Bull in their minds, in an us against them mindset. That truly isn't NASSS.
- x. Kasie Murphy: Processes haven't been followed. Why don't we have a bylaw for how to ensure processes? Last year the DCCC Chair was absent and programs still ran, why cant this also be run? How can we penalize volunteers? Right now we are penalizing students and further marginalizing students. I think we need processes and Robert's Rules. I have no idea what Robert's Rules are but in having conversations, strict rules can silence people. Some were talking out of order and a Parliamentarian would have shut them down, silenced some. We need to hear from the membership, rethink strict policies.
- y. Carissa Gump: By calling a special meeting, thus confirms that this Board is dysfunctional. Will further hurt the organization. The Board needs to come together and recognize the need for governance. Let's stop talking about how screwed up it is, but how to move forward – learn from what happened. You need a Parliamentarian, need to follow bylaws, all should read them, need to read Robert's Rules, need a basic education on how to be Board members. You have a great responsibility to members of this organization.

Stacey is saying I have no doubt you lost members. You gotta get your shit together for it to survive.

- z. Bob Case: For subgroups who want to get some funding - I had to fill out pre-approval to be here from my department and when I return, I have to give a complete budget and if I don't follow the procedure I eat that money. I know that up front. That's the root, we need a process. If we will have a preconference we need a request in advance, the Board looks at it and approves them or not, and then they need to stay within the confines. And that wasn't set up and that's the problem, am I wrong? They should've given a document, spend \$2k over you have to eat it.
- aa. Derek Silva: We are talking in circles. The motion under consideration is not about SEEDS or funding. The motion is about governance. The spirit of it is that the members need to speak about the direction of NASSS and that's why a special meeting. The members can meet and vote on the future. We are in the crisis. Last night was the culmination, there's no going back. We need to have a discussion as a membership, there is no moving forward or consensus.
- bb. Carissa Gump: Aren't you the elected voice of the members?
- cc. Derek Silva: Does Carissa have voice or vote on this Board? I move that she not participate in discussion.
- dd. Malcolm Drewery: Why was it pointed at Brian?
- ee. Brian: In the past year, I worked on the Wolff fund, SSJ contract, listserv, and conference organization. With SEEDS, the part that bothers me is the lack of collegiality perceived for wanting this special meeting. We have worked together for years and I thought with a level of decorum. When I became President-Elect, I realized we need help with onboarding and this is why Carissa is here in part. Why the conference theme is no theme, thinking ahead, need to update things from a nonprofit management standpoint. It is hard to know all bylaws and apply them all equally. When I became President-Elect with all the documents, I reached out to Past Presidents, Jeff and others – the conference itself is massive. It is a lot of work, with the Steering Committee, Conference Locators, coordinating spaces and people. We need to do that easier or help fix that better. I reached out to Jeff and Judy and they didn't want to talk about the conference program. There has to be coordination. They had a budget that I didn't know about – lack of sharing of documents and information. Jeff and Judy don't want to engage, they say they will be in touch. They got \$25k for 3 years. We need to do a baseline budget. Baeth talks about where is the budget transparency? We can report these things and we should. They declined help offered with the bylaw change, even though I reached out multiple times – that part, I don't understand. Why can't we work together to do this? I don't know why this isn't happening together. Early October they sent a request for funding, want to facilitate a budgeting process. How can we expand it to other groups – wording in bylaws is a little exclusionary? That's the history of some of that, too, struck me as bizarre. Billy Hawkins and I emailed, that whole process seems to have been very dysfunctional, too, and I don't know why. You could see that this was going to happen. I welcome the opportunity to reconcile, to invite them to an upcoming meeting.
- ff. Kasie Murphy: I don't pick sides or anything, but the wording under removal: 2/3 approval of members. [Reads bylaws]. Refers to “work” of the society. Brian started as President today, was previously President-Elect. My understanding of this language is that Brian did uphold standards of the role he was previously in. There was a massive

problem last night but ousting a President-Elect who did do the role he was in is not the approach we should take, no personal blame. We do need to do something drastic and make a commitment sooner or later.

gg. Michael Friedman: I have an offer, if you need a human sacrifice put me up there.

hh. Derek Silva: The body of work language can be interpreted in a strict sense or broader scope as precursor to current position. I move to call the question on previous motion.

ii. Michelle Richardson: Second.

jj. Vote on motion: [Derek Silva re-reads]. 4 in favor (Allison, Brown, Laurendeau, Silva); 5 in opposition (Drewery, Friedman, Gearity, Murphy, Richardson), no abstentions.

kk. Derek Silva moves to adjourn the meeting.

ll. Letisha Brown seconds.

mm. Brian Gearity: Will send Doodle poll to schedule next meeting. Adjourns the meeting at 9:30.