

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 13, 2024; 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. ET
Rooms 401-402, Philadelphia Marriott Downtown

IN ATTENDANCE (ALPHA ORDER)

Danielle Arigo, PhD, LP Chair, Membership Council	Marian L. Fitzgibbon, PhD, FSBM Chair, Development Council, Gift Acceptance Committee, and Leadership Institute Committee	Sharon L. Manne, PhD, FSBM Chair, Scientific Education Council
Ellen Beckjord, PhD, MPH, FSBM President-Elect	Charles Jonassaint, PhD, MHS Member Delegate	Scherezade Mama, DrPH Chair, Professional Advancement Council
Joanna Buscemi, PhD Member Delegate	Bernard Fuemmeler, PhD, MPH, FSBM President	Margaret L. Schneider, PhD, FSBM Immediate Past-President and Chair, Leadership Identification and Inclusion Committee
Roger Figueroa, PhD Chair, Advocacy Council	Jun Ma, MD, PhD, FAHA Chair, Publications Council	Sandra J. Winter, PhD, MHA Secretary/Treasurer and Chair, Finance Committee

REGRETS (ALPHA ORDER)

Brian D. Gonzalez, PhD Member Delegate		
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STAFF (ALPHA ORDER)

Lindsay Bullock, CAE Executive Director	Andrew Schmidt Senior Program Manager	Tara Withington, CAE Consulting Partner
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CALL TO ORDER, CALL FOR DISCLOSURES, AND CONFIDENTIALITY REMINDER

Dr. Fuemmeler called the meeting to order at 9:52 a.m. ET.

ADDRESSING VOLUNTEER (DIS)ENGAGEMENT

Ms. Bullock opened the discussion by noting the following top-level SBM goal: Getting the right volunteers into the right roles, for the advancement of SBM's mission/strategic goals and for a rewarding volunteer experience. Achieving this goal has gotten more and more difficult. Ms. Bullock then provided some background on recent trends in volunteer engagement throughout SBM and across other EDI clients. While SBM hasn't seen a decline in membership numbers or participation in programs generally, there has been a marked increase in the number of attempts required to recruit new council/committee members, SIG officers, candidates for leadership positions, and even nominees for SBM achievement awards. For existing volunteers, it's been necessary to provide more lead time and send additional reminders for routine tasks, with more time investment from group chairs and SBM staff to pick up the slack. Ms. Bullock clarified that SBM hasn't had any programs at outright risk of failure due to these trends, but as some volunteers begin to miss their obligations or see calls cancelled for lack of quorum, other volunteers may find their involvement with SBM to be less worthwhile and disengage themselves as well, resulting in a dangerous feedback loop. Some volunteers have also begun being asked to be paid for service, a fundamental change to the nature of volunteering and organizations like SBM. Further, more high-level SBM positions are being filled by volunteers with little or no prior SBM experience, resulting in issues with continuity, long-term goal achievement, and leadership pipeline; Ms. Withington noted that trend can eventually be fatal to an organization.

Board members shared their own observations relating to disengagement within SBM, in other scientific organizations, and at their home institutions, echoing comments about more and more colleagues declining volunteer opportunities and an increasing amount of follow up required for volunteers to complete necessary tasks.

The board broke out into small groups for two rounds of discussion centered around identifying (1) possible causes for these trends and (2) potential steps SBM can take to mitigate their impact on the organization. While broader trends may be out of the organization's control, board members were encouraged to think about ways that SBM can both adjust its volunteer needs and expectations to account for members' changing capacities, and ensure that the volunteer opportunities it offers are suitable and rewarding for members while also meeting SBM's organizational needs.

Several potential key causes for volunteer disengagement were identified by the board, including lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on professional organizations, new job responsibilities leaving less bandwidth for service, the need for greater volunteer recognition, and a culture shift among younger members relating to work/life balance.

To address the difficulties that disengagement could cause for SBM in the future, board members proposed contributing more resources to understanding and promoting the benefits of each SBM volunteer opportunity for the volunteer, and making information about those opportunities easily accessible for members (including creation of sample member journeys and volunteer pathway stories). For members who joined SBM after the pandemic or have been slow to return in recent years, communications could be developed positioning SBM as a professional home for scientists at all stages of their careers, particularly through the SIGs as essential sites of networking and mentoring. Also within the SIG context, the board highlighted the importance of recognizing current volunteer leaders and ensuring that any additional efforts to recruit new volunteers are matched by a commitment to supporting existing volunteers in their roles. Finally, the board suggested leveraging existing SBM programs such as the Early-Career Research Mentoring Program, Diversity Institute for Emerging Leaders, and mid-career Leadership Institute as part of a volunteer/leadership journey, to help identify potential candidates for future volunteer roles and encourage participants in these

programs to view them as first steps toward greater involvement with SBM. Additional platform/software and/or staffing may be needed to accomplish these items, and the Board will continue to discuss these needs.

Ms. Bullock thanked the board for their insights and reported that SBM staff had already begun work on several projects similar to potential solutions suggested during the discussion, including a volunteer portal for the SBM website and enhanced internal tracking of volunteers and volunteer opportunities across the organization.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK UPDATES

Board members reported on progress so far in calendar year 2024, for each of the 2024 priority strategies in SBM's 2021-25 strategic plan.

Outcome 1: Awareness and Impact of Behavioral Medicine

Strategy 1: Strengthen strategic partnerships with AHA, ACLM, AAMC, and ecoAmerica

Dr. Figueroa reported that progress continued apace in advancing relationships with ecoAmerica, AHA, and AAMC, and the Organizational Partnerships Committee will work to identify new approaches to fostering a partnership with ACLM.

Strategy 2: Grow industry sponsorship/financial support of SBM

Dr. Fitzgibbon reported that SBM had secured a record \$100,000+ in sponsorships for the 2024 Annual Meeting, and efforts to engage companies year-round are ongoing, including via VIP partner meetings during the Annual Meeting.

Strategy 3: Define DEI goals for SBM

Dr. Fuemmeler presented a revised Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policy for SBM, arising from the board's deep-dive workshop in November. The updated policy and new key conceptual definitions will help guide initial DEI goals for the remainder of 2024, and inform future areas for improvement across all of SBM's strategic framework outcomes.

MOTION: Dr. Manne moved to approve the updated Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy. Dr. Mama seconded. The motion carried.

Outcome 2: Public Education and Behavioral Change

Strategy 1: Curate Healthy Living articles based on SEO- and marketing-driven annual editorial calendar

Dr. Ma reported that the Public Education Committee recently developed a prospective calendar for Healthy Living articles, to allow for targeting priority topics and contributing SIGs at suitable times throughout the year.

Strategy 2: Investigate additional methods for sharing Healthy Living article content with the public

Ms. Bullock reported that SBM's communications staff was investigating the resource needs required to adapt Healthy Living content for other platforms, as well as search engine optimization strategies to improve SBM's perceived "authority" in search engine rankings and increase traffic.

Outcome 3: Indispensable Professional Resource

Strategy 1: Retain and recruit more student members, from all backgrounds

Dr. Arigo shared that the Membership Council maintains a close partnership with the Student SIG and will be helping to analyze a recent survey the SIG circulated to its members. In addition, the reduction of returning Student/Trainee membership dues and the creation of the special introductory student member rate prior to the 2024 membership year appear to have been successful,

though more will be known by May giving Annual Meeting timing. Going forward, the Membership Council intends to perform a more formal evaluation of the impact of the new dues rates on member acquisition and retention, as well as enhancing outreach to HBCUs and other minority-serving institutions to further the strategy's goal of serving members from all backgrounds.

Strategy 2: Build members' capacity for innovative research by identifying and providing training in knowledge or methods that will provide a competitive advantage to members and accelerate the impact of behavioral medicine

Dr. Mama presented a new proposed webinar process intended to increase the value of webinars to members and increase their engagement with SBM's webinar series. In contrast to the previous submission process where organizers could develop webinars on an ad hoc basis addressing almost any topic of their choice, the Scientific Education Council conducted an analysis of past Grand Rounds webinar popularity, responses to past Annual Meeting evaluations, and a member survey relating to training needs to develop an initial list of 5 priority training topics for 2024-25 that any new webinar proposals will be expected to address. By requiring webinars to focus on one or more of these priority topics, as well as requiring all proposals to be co-developed by two or more SIGs or SBM councils/committees, future webinars will be more likely to be directly relevant to a wider range of members. Under the new submission process, the Scientific Education Council will also be responsible for accepting and reviewing proposals during two limited submission periods each year, allowing the council to curate an intentional calendar of webinar presentations at least six months in advance. SIGs interested in presenting topics that don't align with the new guidelines or that would be relevant only for their members will be encouraged to host their own webinars outside of the Grand Rounds series or adapt the content for other platforms.

MOTION: Dr. Buscemi moved to approve the new Grand Rounds Webinar process. Dr. Manne seconded. The motion carried.

Strategy 3: Explore creation of an SBM Peer Reviewer Academy

Dr. Ma reported that over 40 applications were received for the initial Peer Reviewer Academy cohort, and roughly half of those applicants were accepted and had completed a training webinar and initial series of mock manuscript reviews.

Strategy 4: Solidify SBM's brand "voice" and tone for maximum social media engagement from members and prospective members

Ms. Bullock shared that SBM's communications staff was conducting an audit of all SBM-affiliated social media accounts, reviewing competitor organizations' social media presences, and developing a SWOT analysis to identify potential focus areas for future content.

CONSENT AGENDA

In reviewing the reports submitted to the board, Dr. Fuemmeler highlighted the report from the Finance Committee for its response to the "Commitment to Diversity" prompt and its commitment to ensuring appropriate support for SBM's diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in the budget.

MOTION: Dr. Buscemi moved to approve the January Board of Directors meeting minutes, all Council/Committee/Publication/Member Delegate reports, and updates to SBM's Investment Policy. Dr. Manne seconded. The motion carried.

ANNUAL MEETING CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS

Dr. Beckjord recused herself from this discussion and left the room.

In light of consistently low numbers of Annual Meeting attendees claiming CEs and new CE accreditation guidelines resulting in fewer eligible credit hours each year, Dr. Fuemmeler asked the board to consider whether SBM should continue to offer CE credits for future meetings.

Because individuals who work for certain types of companies are prohibited from involvement in any capacity in any credit-offering activity, continuing to offer CEs could be counterproductive to SBM's goal of increasing industry representation at the Annual Meeting and among the membership while potentially reinforcing a perception of a two-tiered conference program, where credit-eligible sessions are more valuable and industry-affiliated presentations are seen as less rigorous or less scientifically significant. Offering CE credits would also prohibit members who work in industry or have other potential conflicts from serving as part of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, per guidance from SBM's credit provider. This could be especially problematic if an SBM president was not able to be involved in meeting planning.

On the other hand, many of SBM's peer organizations offer CE at their meetings so removing credits may make the Annual Meeting less appealing in comparison and could forfeit some of the perceived legitimacy of SBM's scientific programming.

Board members voiced their support generally for sunseting CEs, with Dr. Buscemi noting that while she personally claims credits from the Annual Meeting and appreciates that SBM has continued to offer CE, the burden of collecting financial disclosures during the abstract submission process has often been a source of criticism from authors in the past. Dr. Arigo added that beyond its efforts to connect with industry, SBM has also been trying to attract more clinicians to the Annual Meeting, and that audience could be especially unlikely to have an interest in attending a conference without credits and may be unable to obtain institutional support for traveling to meetings without CE.

Dr. Fuemmeler suggested that the board pilot the removal of CE for 2025, without precluding SBM from offering credits at future meetings if it appears that their absence has a pronounced negative effect on registrations.

MOTION: Dr. Buscemi moved to suspend offering continuing education credits during the 2025 Annual Meeting and revisit the discussion for future conferences before the 2026 Annual Meeting. Dr. Arigo seconded. The motion carried.

Dr. Beckjord returned.

2024 ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE

Dr. Fuemmeler reported final attendee counts as of the end of pre-registration earlier in March (1,800), and shared a calendar of key sessions and networking events that board members were invited to attend during the conference.

BOARD MEETING EVALUATION

Board members were asked to complete a brief evaluation of the agenda, materials, and members' engagement in discussion throughout the preceding meeting by scanning the QR code in the agenda. The Board was also given time to verbally evaluate its performance today. These items are new and will be recurring as way for the Board to monitor its work and ensure all voices are heard.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 2:58 p.m. ET.

Minutes respectfully submitted by A. Schmidt on March 20, 2024.