

IC Meeting 26 June 2015

Present: Peter, Ann, Swapna, Anna, Tony, David Wagner, Brian, Beth, Jayasree, Kate, Milton, Daniel.

Apologies: Eva, Annica, Robyn, Wee Tiong, David Kollosche

Brian Greer, Milton Rosa and Daniel Orey were welcomed to the Committee.

Discussion re-issues of "race"

The committee shared their personal responses to the discussions and also perspectives they had heard from others. It was decided to "sit with things" for the meantime, and that our ongoing discussions will inform decisions going forward. It was noted that any discussion regarding race should include the connected constructs of gender, language, class, (dis)ability etc., and that these play out at different levels in the MES community.

There was strong support for starting the conference with different voices on MES experiences and opportunities for participants across contexts to share stories of who they are. This should be part of the conference programme, and not just an optional pre-conference activity, and may involve a rethink of the "traditional" conference opening format of an opening address / plenary.

Composition of the International Committee

With all nominations for the IC submitted and the possibility of having 20 people on the committee, the discussion revolved around:

1. Regional "representation": Will some voices be too loud? Does "representation" mean consulting with others in the region or simply having the interests of the region on the agenda in the IC discussions? Is there enough diversity to keep issues of language etc. on the agenda? Are there other issues besides geography that we should be considering in our attempts to ensure a diverse committee?
2. Experience of academia and MES conferences, given the leadership role that the IC has to play in the community: Should graduate students be included? Should nominees have attended at least one conference (including the current one)?
3. The size of the IC and length of tenure: What is too big for productive conversations? Might an individual not join the conversation and then raise the same issue as problematic later?

It was agreed that we cannot apply criteria in retrospect, and that we will discuss rules later if problems emerge with the current IC.

A genuine sense of willingness to get involved was regarded as important and it was noted that MES8 has generated such enthusiasm. It was argued that graduate students involvement is important; not only can the IC play a mentoring role, but the positioning of graduate students in academia varies across regions. It was suggested that regional "representation" will happen as the conference moves to different parts of the world, and that members of the committee have a role to play in ensuring that some voices do not become too loud in the IC discussions. It was noted that some committee members (both the existing and new members) may be less involved going forward when the energy of the conference dissipates a bit and we return to our many other duties. Members may choose to stand down if/when they feel they do not have the time for the

work (as has happened in the past), or they feel a region is over-represented. Criteria under consideration include:

- Maximum size of 20
- Need to have attended at least 2 MES conferences
- Maximum of three people per country
- Term limits on membership

It was agreed that Peter will contact all those who have been nominated to confirm their participation in the IC. This email will also include an invitation to contact other IC members for more information re- the work of the committee as necessary. The IC will continue to discuss issues related to committee composition as they arise going forward.

IC convenorship – how do we decide on the convenor in future, and what is the term?

Peter noted that, currently, the role of convenor is to keep the bigger picture of MES in view, bring the committee together when decisions need to be made, move for decisions to be made, keep un-resolved issues on the agenda, take up issues raised at a conference. It was also noted that the choice of “convenor” rather than “chair” is deliberate.

The committee thanked Peter for taking on this role and doing this work and agreed that, since he is a founder of the community, he is the ideal person to fill this role. Peter noted that he would prefer to stand down after one more year, and is available to mentor a new convenor into the role and stay on the committee post his term. After a discussion it was agreed that Beth would take over from Peter. It was agreed that Peter would “mentor” Beth in the next year and handover during MES9 in Greece, June/July 2016. Thereafter Peter will stay on the committee and provide support as necessary, for one more year, with Beth shadowing in the 6 months before MES9 and Peter shadowing in the 6 months after.

(Since the IC meeting Peter and Beth have agreed the following. Peter will do the MES9 opening and announce there the handover to Beth. Beth will chair the Agoras and the conference closing. Peter and Beth will decide who chairs the IC meetings in Greece. Possibly Peter does the first then Beth does the rest.)

Moving forward to the 2017 with the conference – thoughts on bigger organizational issues

Relationship between IC and LoC: Brian noted that for the organization of MES8, he asked the IC for advice as necessary. He recommended that in future, certain IC members should be tasked with supporting and working more closely with the LoC.

Conference opening: See ideas under **Discussion re-issues of “race” and voice** above. It was also suggested that participants be asked to upload a photo and short bio of interests on the conference website. The technology and related costs for this type of activity (either before or during the conference) should be investigated. It was agreed that establishing the norms of community at the beginning of the conference and reminding participants during the conference may help us to address issues of voice etc. that arise at each conference. The ideas of “Allies for Change” is one possibility, and Beth agreed to pursue this option. It was noted that we need to represent these initial

activities as the most important part of the conference, and not just as an add-on prior to more traditional conference activities.

Discussion Groups: Committee members agreed that the MES8 experience has confirmed once again the value and power of the discussion groups. It was suggested that attention be paid to distributing plenary speakers more evenly across discussion groups, and possibly being more deliberate about the construction of the groups (it was noted that the latter has been tried in the past, but there was a shift back towards letting the groups happen).

Language: It was agreed that translation of presentations in languages other than English should be explored for MES9. Some possibilities are using slides in English (as was done for one Spanish presentation at MES8) and drawing on conference participants for translation.

Free space: It was questioned whether there should be more spare time at MES conferences. It was suggested that venue space does impact the discussions outside of programme time. A Mujaawahah-like space in the programme is a possibility.

Volunteers: It was suggested that conference organizers seek volunteers for tasks such as translating, editing etc.?

Timeline for MES9: Brian suggested that registration and submission deadlines should include time for extensions, for example, reviews tend to take longer than planned, with many reviewers only responding to second emails. It was also suggested that the setting of MES deadlines should take into account deadlines for other conferences. It was agreed to use the MEC mailing list and a Facebook page as well as IC email discussions to finalise a date for the 2017 conference.

Registrations: No day registrations will be permitted at MES9.

Conference size: The MS conference increased from 93 participants in 2013 to approximately 150 in 2015. It was suggested that it may be necessary to put a cap on the numbers to avoid the conference losing intimacy. 200 was proposed as a possible maximum, but no final decision was made.

Teacher participation: Different models of teacher participation should be investigated, for example, having teachers attend a "conference within the conference" as at MES8, participating throughout as at MES7, or possibly school visits. Some teacher-participants in 2017 will be contacting Anna with ideas for the 2017 conference.

Payment for plenary speakers: It was suggested that plenary speakers should have their accommodation (in the conference accommodation), registration and travel paid by MES. However, concerns were expressed about whether this is possible in different contexts and it was suggested that too many rules may constrain the conference organizers. For example, including these costs in registrations may make the fees too expensive. It was suggested that too many rules would not take into account contextual differences re-costs. It was suggested that we find out whether a plenary speaker is willing to self-fund participation.