

**MINUTES**  
**ACADEMY OF ACCOUNTING HISTORIANS BUSINESS MEETING**  
**April 12, 2008**

**Held at the first joint mid-year conference of the Academy of Accounting Historians and  
the Public Interest Section of the American Accounting Association,  
at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Arlington, Virginia**

The meeting convened at 1:05 p.m.

Present: Hiroshi Okano (president, chair), Ed Coffman, David Dennis, Dale Flesher, Joan Hollister, Dan Jensen, Yvette Lazdowski, Jim McKinney, Stephanie Moussalli, Gary Previts, Jennifer Reynolds-Moehrle, Vaughan Radcliffe, Robert Russ, Tomo Suzuki, Tom Tyson, Steve Walker, Greg Waymire, Tiffany Welch (Academy Administrative Coordinator)  
Guest: Tracey Sutherland, Executive Director, American Accounting Association

1. Report of President Hiroshi Okano

The minutes of the business meeting of August 7, 2007, were previously approved and published in the *Accounting Historians Notebook* (v. 30, no. 2).

An accounting history research conference will be held in China in 2009 at Peking University in Beijing. It will be jointly sponsored with the Academy of Accounting Historians and the Chinese Society of Accountants. The vice president of the Chinese Society is Guo Dao Yang, the keynote speaker at the 1988 World Congress of Accounting Historians. The conference date will be announced as soon as possible, and will probably be in mid-July, perhaps July 15-17.

President Okano presented a plaque and the thanks of the Academy to outgoing president Stephen Walker.

2. Schoenfeld Award; report of Stephen Walker, chairman of the Schoenfeld Award Committee, and Jennifer Reynolds-Moehrle, Treasurer

Report of Stephen Walker:

"In accordance with the terms of the scholarship an Award Committee was established comprising the President (Stephen Walker, Chair), the Editor of *The Accounting Historians Journal* (Dick Fleischman) and Dr Hanns Martin W. Schoenfeld.

"Applications for the inaugural Margit F. Schoenfeld and Hanns Martin W. Schoenfeld Scholarship in Accounting History, 2008 (worth \$3,000) were invited before 31 December 2007.

"Notice of the award was placed in accounting and accounting history journals most likely to be accessed by eligible applicants. These included *Accounting Historians Journal*; *Accounting, Business & Financial History*; *Accounting History*; *European Accounting Review*; *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*; *De Computis*; *Contabilità e Cultura Aziendale*. Notices were also posted on various accounting history-related websites (in the US, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Japan) and attachments sent via email membership lists.

"Two applications for the award were received:

"Sonia Granado Suarez, University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

"Delfina Rosa da Rocha Gomes, University of Minho

“The committee saw merit in both applications but decided to award the inaugural scholarship to Sonia Granado Suarez to assist with her PhD research into ‘The History of Noble Household Accounting: The Marquisate of Adeje, the County of La Gomera and the Seignorial Estate of El Hierro, Canarias, 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries’. The committee expressed the view most strongly that the successful applicant should attempt to secure the publication of at least one article in the English language from her PhD.

“The successful applicant was informed of the committee’s decision on 10 February 2008. Unfortunately, Sonia Suarez will not be able to attend the joint- research conference in Washington. However, she does intend to be present at the World Congress in Istanbul. This would be an appropriate venue to formally present her with a plaque or certificate (as specified in the terms of the scholarship).

“Stephen Walker, Chair  
1 April 2008”

Reynolds-Moehrle said the \$3,000 (US) has already been sent to the award winner. She noted the amount of the award is limited to no more than 5% of the total in the fund.

Reynolds-Moehrle inquired whether it’s possible to improve the number of applicants. Walker said the prize had been widely-publicized in relevant European journals, in Spain, Italy, Portugal, etc., and he is puzzled by the lack of interest. He thinks interest in the award will take off eventually.

### 3. Report of the Administrative Coordinator, Tiffany Welch

#### A. Membership

Tiffany Welch distributed a report of the geographical dispersion of Academy members (available to members upon request). As of March 31, there were 244 individual Academy members (vs. 317 at the end of last year), and 297 institutional members. However, membership dues are paid throughout the year, and she will send out a call for renewals soon.

Flesher asked for the US vs. non-US breakdown of membership, but Welch did not have those figures.

#### B. Website

Welch distributed a proposal for re-design and re-location of the Academy website (available to members upon request). Currently, the website is hosted by Rutgers University. Its appearance is not very user-friendly, and if a member emails Welch with a change to be made, she cannot do it herself but must work through Rutgers employees. Welch recommended moving the Academy website to Case Western Reserve University, where it can be hosted by the Weatherhead School of Management. In Option I, the Academy content would not change, but the layout would be based on the Weatherhead template and some PDF files would replace some of the current content. In Option II, the content of the pages would also change, to shorten some of the long pages and construct a database-driven directory (instead of PDF files) that would allow alteration of entries as necessary.

Welch recommended Option II as the database is easier to maintain. The cost to the Academy would be a one-time fee of \$750, with no maintenance fees afterwards. The College of Business recommends doing it in July, after they change their templates. The Academy would need a new web address, and Rutgers could redirect those who go to the old site.

McKinney recommended the Academy obtain its own name and have sites point to it. Gary Previts noted that we would prefer that Google direct searchers to our website instead

of Rutgers. Robert Russ pointed out it depends on the number of sites that reference our new site. Previts acknowledged it would take time for Google to put us first.

McKinney recommended moving the site as is over to Case Western (Option I), and later doing Option II. Reynolds-Moehrle asked what the move would do to our financial functions such as credit card payment processing and our VeriSign contract. Previts said the Academy used to pay \$500 twice a year to Rutgers, but the arrangement suffers from rapid turnover in Rutgers support personnel and varying quality of service. The President can approve this move because its cost is under the \$1,000 limit that he can approve. McKinney and Reynolds-Moehrle volunteered to help Welch with the project.

Moussalli asked if the minutes of Academy meetings might be posted on the website, in addition to being published in the Notebook. Steve Walker asked if non-members should have access to the minutes. Jim McKinney suggested a "Members Only" area of the website. Jensen noted that under U.S. law, tax-exempt nonprofits must make their records publicly available in the Form 990 informational return. In the light of the U.S. statutes, Walker withdrew his objection.

Welch inquired who would speak to Rutgers about this change. Reynolds-Moehrle noted that Rutgers does not bill the Academy regularly, and Previts noted they bill when prompted to do so. He suggested that the questions about the credit card payment functions should be answered first and then Previts and McKinney will notify Rutgers of the change. This might occur this summer. Welch said she would work on this in June. Previts will inform Miklos Vasarhelyi at Rutgers that the Academy is leaving soon.

McKinney discussed the domain name(s) we should use and said he would look into it.

Returning to the question of posting the minutes, Previts suggested an archived section of the website or possibly links to the *Notebook*, or just posting the minutes. Walker thought members should still receive the minutes by email and Flesher agreed. The group agreed informally to posting the minutes on the website.

#### 4. Treasurer's Report, Jennifer Reynolds-Moehrle

Reynolds-Moehrle said the independent auditors have received all the information and will finish their work shortly. Last year the auditors filed for an extension; she does not know if they will do so again this year.

The Academy's financial position at the end of 2007 will be emailed to any interested member upon request. Assets are \$305,949. The Academy is ahead by \$6,700 this year from interest income on certificates of deposit of \$8,400. This year's interest income will not be that high, as rates are lower.

John Yeakel very generously donated \$50,000 to the endowment fund without restrictions. There was also a substantial anonymous donation and Hans Martin has completed his donation. Stephanie Moussalli noted that an article is planned for the *Accounting Historians Notebook* on the Yeakel donation. Richard Vangermeersch had told her that Yeakel did not wish for publicity for himself, but did wish to publicize the endowment in the hope that other donors would also contribute.

Tyson asked if the money might be used for doctoral scholarships. Reynolds-Moehrle agreed that plans should be made on how to use the endowment fund, which is now about \$85,000. Previts noted that the Hans Martin endowment of \$100,000 is intended to benefit senior doctoral students, and there is a strong preference for European students. He added the AAH might sponsor students attending its conferences. Flesher added that the Academy has had donations in the past for that purpose, and Reynolds-Moehrle added that Barbara Merino had made such contributions.

Walker remarked that a number of proposals to regenerate the Academy had appeared in his report last year and that while Tyson's suggestion is useful, it is one of a number of options. McKinney noted the existence of a doctoral committee that could consider the

subject. Previts remarked that this discussion is indicative of one of the problems addressed in Walker's report last year; the Academy needs to refocus and set up mechanisms and time frames and viable assignments of responsibility. Under the Academy's current structure, how can tasks like this one get done? Proposing uses for the money before the organization is back on its feet is futile. He added that he was not opposing Tyson's proposal, but that he is anti-"ad hoc-ery."

Reynolds-Moehrle suggested the August meeting might be devoted to strategic planning. Previts argued that 3% on \$80,000 is only about \$2,500, with which many different things might be done. Choosing one, given the time constraints of Academy members, is difficult and the total amount would not be enough to sway a doctoral student towards history. Furthermore, the membership committee is not effective, due to fundamental issues about the future of the Academy.

Lazdowski believed that student membership is declining because they switch to full membership upon graduation; Ph.D. programs do not allow historical dissertations. McKinney noted few doctoral students had attended this conference, despite being encouraged to do so. That may be because it's history, or the chairs may not have forwarded the information to them.

Waymire argued that in trying to increase market share among Ph.D. students, the Academy should figure out how to make data more accessible. All the students want to do something different, but we need to make that easier for many of them, not just a few recipients of scholarships. McKinney noted the need for access to a list of doctoral students. Waymire said there is no reason for them to join the Academy and wondered how we can lower the cost of doing this type of research. McKinney noted the associated problem of where such research can be placed, but Waymire responded that editors love historical work. Jensen reminded the group of the ongoing AAA archives project, the Global Accounting Digital Archives Network, with its collection of links to digitized accounting materials online.

Radcliffe argued that for people who are already doing accounting history, a scholarship would be an honor to their schools. He was not sure if his Academy membership had lapsed and noted that the Public Interest section of the AAA had reviewed the list of members who had not renewed and contacted them. Flesher said when he was president of the Academy, a reminder was sent out to late payers. Lazdowski had discussed a grant from the Institute of Management Accountants to study the Ford Motor Co., but the IMA had argued such a study would add no value to management accounting, evidence that the IMA also needs to support historical work.

Dennis asked if the Academy could institute automatic renewals for members. Flesher responded the members can be asked, and if they check a box "yes," he predicts over 90% will then renew. The personal touch, talking to someone, works best for new members. He suggests mass emailings followed by personal contacts and invitations to meetings, making new participants discussants, and assigning them mentors, would encourage membership. Previts thought these were great ideas but wondered who would do them. Dennis believed faculty respond poorly to emails but well to telephone calls.

Tyson asked Tracey Sutherland whether AAA sections sponsor dissertation awards. Sutherland responded that there is no AAA process to do that for all sections. But most sections have a doctoral consortium connected to their mid-year meetings, in effect running two meetings at one meeting time. Many doctoral students attend several of these meetings. Thus, students who feel forced to specialize in financial accounting can still go to a second section's consortium. Three of the accounting firms sponsor various doctoral consortia; the AAA can sometimes raise this money from the firms. The funds cover one or two nights in the hotel and the cost of the consortium; most scholarships are just for attending; the student does not have to present a paper. Flesher added that an outstanding dissertation award is often presented at the meeting. Sutherland also mentioned the AAA's Professional Ethics symposium, a huge event; the faculty who teach there love it. Flesher

added that the recent American Taxation Association had 55 students in attendance. Sutherland likes these sessions because students see how professional meetings work.

Okano noted that the World Congress in Turkey and the upcoming conference in China would be good occasions to give money. It would be good public relations if the Chinese Accounting Association and the Academy gave money to Chinese students.

McKinney asked if those present who are going to the Congress in Istanbul could take Academy flyers. Walker asked why, given that Turkish accounting historians had now established their own organization; McKinney responded that maybe some of the attendees who are not already members would join.

## 5. Report of the Secretary, Stephanie Moussalli

### A. Booth

Moussalli reported that in the past, the Academy has sometimes had a booth at the annual AAA meetings. Tiffany Welch had determined the price this year for a booth would be \$2,700, which was felt to be too high for participation this year. Would the members, however, like to consider this for the future?

Flesher pointed out that one or two registrations are included with the cost of the booth. Coffman wondered if we could share a table with another organization. McKinney wondered how many new members such a table would attract. Previts said the idea of the booth was just to advertise; it would not generate enough members to cover its cost. Flesher estimated 8-10 new members per meeting with a booth, and we could give away back issues of the *Journal* at the booth.

### B. Silent Book Auction

Moussalli asked if the members wish to continue the silent book auctions in the future, especially if a future meeting were to be held in Columbus, Ohio at the Ohio State University. Flesher said many books had already been sold. Moussalli noted that Royce Kurtz, AICPA librarian at the University of Mississippi, would probably have some books. Previts said he knew of about three boxes. Reynolds-Moehrle asked if these books should be auctioned on Ebay and McKinney pointed out the students could handle Ebay distribution. Jensen said probably an Academy meeting would be held in 2010 at Ohio State, so we should think about building up a book collection for auction by then.

## 6. Other business

McKinney asked when the next meeting would be. It was believed this would be at the August meeting of the AAA in Anaheim, California. There would also be an ice cream social as usual, probably on Sunday evening. The meeting after that would be the following spring, when the new president, Cheryl McWatters, sets it up. McKinney asked if the 2009 meeting in China would be an Academy meeting. Okano replied that it would be a joint meeting of the Academy and the Chinese Society, and would be held approximately July 15-17. Previts noted that means there will be two Academy conferences next year.

Previts remarked it would be helpful to members if this information went out as soon as possible on the website, and that it is characteristic of the ad hoc nature of Academy processes that this happens haphazardly. Flesher asked if the ice cream social would indeed be planned for the AAA conference and Tiffany Welch replied that it would.

The meeting adjourned at 2:15PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Stephanie D. Moussalli, Secretary

