

Society for Values in Higher Education

Views and Values

Executive Director's Corner



[FM 2021](#)

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As we approach the upcoming summer meeting, I have mixed emotions. There certainly is some sadness. Like all of you, I was disheartened by our inevitable but wise decision to move to a virtual meeting. It will be great to see all of your familiar faces on my computer screen and even see some new ones, but it will hardly compare to the “collective effervescence” (Emile Durkheim’s famous phrase) that we experience at times at our in-person meetings. Sharing meals and drinks and taking the time for long and sometimes rambling conversations are just not possible in a virtual environment. We’ll all be missing those opportunities for a second straight year, and we are justifiably saddened by that fact.

I also am experiencing a bit of sadness because this year’s meeting marks my last as Executive Director—a position I have held for nearly 11 years. It has been an honor. I’m proud of the work we’ve done—consistently excellent and thought-provoking meetings, new initiatives to engage members, two international symposia, public outreach (even all the way to China), moving the national office from Portland to Bowling Green, KY, continuing the publication of the best interdisciplinary journal in the academy (*Soundings*) and securing its sustainability through Penn State University Press, cutting costs to live more within our budget, and restoring our reserve funds/quasi-endowment to pre-Great Recession levels. I describe this as the “work we’ve done” because it certainly was not my doing. It involved all of us, starting with simply incredible staff members—first, Pam Montgomery and Renee Devereux in Portland, and then Sandy McAllister in Bowling Green. The “we” also includes all of those Board members and officers who dedicated their time and energy to advance the mission of the Society. The “we” also includes all of you, who have supported the Society financially, emotionally, and spiritually. Last but not least, the “we” includes Laura, who has been my partner in all of these efforts and who also made her own significant contributions to the organization. I’m so

glad that Laura and I could join so many wonderful people and do our small part on behalf of the Society.

But I’m not just filled with sadness. I’m also filled with great hope. I believe the future is bright for the Society. The Board deserves great credit for the hiring of Dr. Vivienne Felix as the new Executive Director. She will bring new ideas and energy to the position and provide great leadership. Along with the experience and institutional memory of Sandy McAllister, the Society’s office will continue to effectively manage the organization and ensure its sustainability. I also am heartened by the infusion of younger scholars on the Board and as officers. I think this bodes well for our future. They have been drawn to this work for some of the same reasons that many of us veterans have been. But they also have new motivations and new visions about the Society—reflected most powerfully perhaps in the recent name change to the Society for the Future and Higher Education. Many of us old-timers (I can’t believe I’ve made it to that status, even if just barely) will continue to share our wisdom by landing spots on the Board, helping with various projects, or by simply sending unsolicited e-mails. But it is likely that the Society will head in directions that we cannot even imagine at this point. And, that is as it should be. Many of us have been members for decades, even raised our children to become Society members. We have done our part to preserve the Society for the next generation, and it is now their duty and privilege to shape it and sustain it for the generations after them. There’s no sadness though in recognizing this fact. Only hope.

Again, I really do look forward to seeing your faces this summer. I think we’ve done another great job in planning a virtual meeting that will make the best of a bad situation. We’ll think, talk, catch up with one another. We’ll celebrate both the rich tradition of the Society for Values in Higher Education and the promising prospects of the Society for the Future of Higher Education. See you soon!



97th Annual Conference

July 13-16 2021

Can We Talk?

The University's Role in Public Discourse

*** The conference will be virtual ***

[REGISTER NOW!](#)

FEATURED SPEAKERS

Erica Stone, Assistant Professor of English, MTSU

Tuesday, July 13, 1:00-2:30PM (ET)

“Breaking Down Barriers between Academic Research and the Public:
How Higher Ed can Fulfill its Role in Public Discourse”



Given that the public funds so much of university research, shouldn't that research be more accessible to the public? That is a question at the heart of Dr. Erica Stone's advocacy within higher education and in the public arena. She advocates for “inclusive, democratic research” that breaks down barriers between higher education and the general public. Breaking down such barriers may even be critical to fulfilling higher education's role in public discourse. Join us to discuss these issues with Dr. Stone. [Learn more about Erica and her work.](#)



Cailin O'Connor, Associate Professor of Logic and Philosophy, UC Irvine

James Weatherall, Professor of Logic and Philosophy, UC Irvine
Wednesday, July 14, 1:00 - 2:30PM (ET)

The Misinformation Age: How False Beliefs Spread

Join us for a conversation with Cailin O'Connor and James Owen Weatherall as we discuss their book, *The Misinformation Age: How False Beliefs Spread*. Their work examines the many factors that contribute to consensus and dissensus—particularly in regard to science and public policy. It also has great implications for thinking about the role of the university in an era marked by rampant misinformation and disinformation. Learn more about [Cailin](#) and [James](#). More about [The Misinformation Age: How False Beliefs Spread](#).



The planning committee is disappointed that we are not able to meet in person, and understand that many are zoomed out. However, even virtually, the annual conference is an opportunity for reconnection and rejuvenation. Our familiar Morning Groups will meet, though in the afternoon, we've scheduled two timely and relevant chats, and are planning the social events everyone enjoys. We've chosen a new virtual platform that is easier to use; a zoom upgrade will allow for moving between rooms, much like moving between tables when we are in person. We hope you join us! [Contact the office with any questions.](#)

Seminars (AKA Morning Groups)

All of our regular seminars will be running during the virtual conference, though a little later in the day to accommodate being spread across time zones. Not all seminars are running every day, or for the same length of time, so be sure to check the schedule. More information about each group can be found [here](#).

Town Hall Meeting

Because the Town Meeting will be virtual this year, we will be sending out any documents you may need ahead of time. All Fellows are allowed to comment or ask questions about anything discussed at the Town Meeting. Please keep an eye on your inbox for those documents.

Memorial Service

The Memorial Service this year will be on Friday, July 16 at 2:00pm Eastern time, following the Town Hall Meeting. We will be remembering Greg Sapp, Albert Meyer, and Al Rabil. Please let [Sandy](#) know if you know of anyone we have left off the list.



Could it be your dues payment?

Thanks to all who have contributed to our Annual Fund and paid their dues. Our last round of dues and Annual Fund letters has been mailed. We depend on your dues and contributions to keep our programs and operations running smoothly. Don't delay! Return the form you were mailed or go here to:

[Pay Dues](#)

[Contribute](#)

Board News

Welcome Dr. Vivienne Felix New Executive Director



As Eric Bain-Selbo prepares to "retire" from his role as Executive Director, the Board of Directors is delighted to announce that Dr. Vivienne Felix has accepted an offer to assume the Executive Director role.

A formal search for a new Executive Director began in October 2020. The search committee, chaired by Sandy McAllister and including Maria Victoria-Abricka, Roxana Cazan, Allen Dunn, Melanie Howard, and Judy Meschel, reviewed a very strong pool of applicants and unanimously recommended Dr. Felix as a finalist for the position. The Board of Directors affirmed this recommendation and was delighted to learn that Dr. Felix accepted the position.

Dr. Felix serves as the Senior Associate Director of Experiential Learning at New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. She brings to this position 17 years of experience in higher education with academic affairs, student affairs, and central administration. Her experience with program development, fundraising, and creative collaboration will be a great asset as she steps into this role.

Dr. Felix will officially take office on July 1, and we look forward to welcoming her to this new position in the coming months!

Board of Directors

We'd like to congratulate new Board members, Stephen Baker and Sylvia McTague, and returning member Eric Ecklund. All three have been active members of the Society and bring invaluable experience to the Board. They will begin their terms in July 2021. A huge thanks to outgoing Board member Eddie Carson, and Vice President, Julie Phillips for their service to the Board and the Society. Terry Shoemaker will take office as Vice President in July. If you are interested in running for the Board or would like to nominate someone for next year's election, contact [Dorothy Hurlburt](#), SVHE Nominating Committee Chair.

Other Board News

In January 2020, the Board of Directors approved a change to the organization's bylaws that would allow for the Board to appoint up to three members to strengthen and/or diversify the Board. Since that time, the Board solicited nominations for these appointments and made select invitations to individuals who bring with them experience, training, and expertise that will allow the organization to continue to thrive. We are delighted to announce the first of these appointed Board members:

- Rosalyn Davis: Clinical Associate Professor/Faculty Diversity Liaison and Director of Mental Health Counseling Program at Indiana University Kokomo
- Mays Imad: Professor in the Department of Life and Physical Science and Coordinator of the Teaching and Learning Center at Pima Community College
- Brandon Render: PhD Candidate in the Department of History at the University of Texas-Austin