

Second Annual Meeting of the Consortium of Social Science Research Centers and Institutes

The Second Annual Meeting of the Consortium of Social Science Research Centers and Institutes was held on April 10 – 11, 2008. Hosted by George Mason University, the meeting brought together the leaders from a dozen of the leading academic institutions dedicated to the social and behavioral sciences. The meeting focused on the development of organizational bylaws, appointment of an Executive Committee of the Consortium, decision on future meeting and collaborations with the Consortium of Social Science Associations.

Beginning with a welcoming dinner at the Sette Bello Restaurant, consortium members were able to, in an informal manner, discuss common issues and meet and greet school representatives. On the following morning, Steven Vallas, Executive Director, Center for Social Science Research, George Mason University (GMU) welcomed the membership to GMU and Washington, D.C. Following the welcome, Howard Silver, Executive Director of the Consortium of Social Science Associations, described the functions and activities of his organizations and outlined potential opportunities for collaborations between the two organizations. Afterward, John Aldrich of Duke University provided background on the origins and purposes of the Consortium of Social Science Research Centers and Institutes. One important decision was to drop the word national from the Consortium name in order to encourage international collaborations and membership.

The Business Session was chaired by Jules Heisler, also of Duke University, where draft bylaws were reviewed and suggestions for revisions were identified. Also, at this session the Executive Committee for the following year was voted upon and John Aldrich was voted as Chair and Karen Cook, Stanford University, as co-chair. Karen Cook volunteered to host the next meeting at Stanford and it was determined that the host of the next meeting would be elected as Executive Committee Co-Chair and Chair-designee. Jules Heisler was asked to revise the draft bylaws and to circulate to the newly elected Executive Committee for review prior to dissemination to the membership. John Aldrich was to call a meeting of the Executive Committee to finalize the draft bylaws and to identify the amounts for dues and to plan the next meeting of the Consortium.

After the business meeting, attendees had a healthy discussion on issues affecting the membership including: mechanisms to foster interdisciplinary collaborations, striking a balance between long-term organizational development and constituent needs, communications strategies for improving visibility for the social and behavioral sciences on campus and beyond and managing administrative relationships.

The group adjourned and was looking forward to meeting again at Stanford to further develop the Consortium.