

Minutes of the RSAI Council Meeting, Buffalo, November 5, 1997

Present: Batey (President and ERSA), Cuadrado-Roura (ERSA), Donaghy (Executive Director and RSAI at-Large), Florax (for Snickars, PRS Editor-in-Chief, ex officio), Harrington (for Amrhein, at-Large), Haynes (NARSC), Higano (for Fukuchi, PRSCO), Jackson (RSAI News Editor, ex officio), Kohno (Observer), Krmeneč (Treasurer, ex officio), Munro (PRSCO), Nijkamp (ERSA), Schaffer (NARSC), Thill (PRS, North American Editor). Regrets: Bailly (RSAI at-Large), Gibson (PRSCO), Isserman (NARSC), Park (PRS, Pacific Editor, ex officio), Poot (RSAI at-Large), Reggiani (RSAI at-Large), Yang (PRSCO).

1. The meeting was called to order at 9:15 AM by President Batey.
2. The minutes of the Rome Council meeting were reviewed and accepted as corrected for misspellings of several names.
3. President's Report: Batey reported that because of continuing delays in publishing and mailing issues of Papers in Regional Science, RSAI is in danger of losing its 2nd-Class not-for-profit mailing permit. The permit saves the Association about \$16,000 annually in postage.
4. Executive Director's Report: Donaghy reported on the production schedule for remaining issues of Volume 76 of Papers in Regional Science (PRS), announced that a winner had been chosen for the RSAI Award for the Best Dissertation in Regional Science (Jiun Jiun Ferng of Cornell University), announced the schedule of forthcoming Council Meetings (12/8/97 Wellington, 2/18/98 Monterey, 8/28/98 Vienna, and 11/10/98 Sante Fe), and announced that Angelo Rossi and Art Getis had been elected as the new at-large members of RSAI Council and would begin serving their terms in January of 1998.
5. Update on negotiations with potential local organizing committees (LOCs) of a Year 2000 World Congress: Nijkamp reported that a memorandum of understanding has been drawn up between Lay Gibson and the Lugano/Ticino LOC. (Copies of the memorandum have been distributed to all members of the Long-Range Planning Committee and the Council.) Lugano/Ticino represents a 'no-risk' undertaking and the LOC can be expected to organize a congress that is first-rate in every way. Holding the congress in Lugano/Ticino would not, however, serve the end of spreading ideas of Regional Science to parts of the world beyond the North America, Europe and the Pacific. While holding the congress in South Africa would serve this end, it is now a risky proposition. If asked to host the congress, the LOC has indicated that it would respond in the affirmative and then form a South African (SA) RSAI section. There are presently institutional problems in South Africa that would delimit the amount of support that the LOC could enlist from SA Universities. Nijkamp urged that, unless we adopt the 'Singapore Congress' model, we should not pursue the SA option at this time. (It may be reconsidered as a potential site for a world congress in 2004.) Instead, RSAI should proceed to organize an international symposium that might contribute to the formation of a SA RSAI section and lead to a regional conference in the near term.

Discussion: Haynes supported Nijkamp's reading of the situation in South Africa and suggested that RSAI must reach out to the Indian sub-continent and Latin America, as well as South Africa. Haynes submitted that all three areas should be considered as possible locations for a world congress in 2004. Munro added that 'fly-in' conferences (organized along the lines of the Singapore model) must leave something behind in order for them to be considered a success. He also voiced a concern that holding a world congress in late May in 2000 might detract from an ERSA Congress in another location in August. Cuadrado Roura reminded the Council that the world and ERSA congresses held in 1992 encountered no such problems. With respect to promotion of regional science in Latin America, Cuadrado Roura argued for development of a supernational Ibero-American section from which national sections might be spawned subsequently. Batey commented that there is a need to ensure that a Lugano/Ticino congress includes scholars from less developed countries and areas of the world in which RSAI has no presence.

Action: The Council agreed to commit to Lugano/Ticino as the site of the year 2000 World congress, and to commit to organizing an institute or symposium in South Africa in early 1999. Nijkamp also proposed that organizing for the Lugano/Ticino World Congress proceed at once so that a firm announcement can be made at the Council meeting in Wellington. All proposals were accepted.

6. RSAI News Editor's Report: Jackson discussed opportunities for expanding the scope of RSAI News and RSAI's worldwide web presence. He noted that future issues of RSAI News would include episodic features (e.g., on software) and a rolling conference calendar. Jackson argued for the development of an abbreviated web-page version of the newsletter. He asked for increased submissions of material and indicated that he was moving to standardize the collection and submission of information. Jackson suggested that important information about the Association and its history could be archived on a web page and requested financial support for a quarter-time graduate student assistant to develop and maintain the same.

Discussion: Batey commented that RSAI could substantially increase services to its members by implementing some of Jackson's suggestions. Harrington suggested that a web site such as Jackson was proposing might serve to acculturate a new generation of regional scientists. Schaffer cautioned that we need to be careful not to kill incentives for disparate members to join RSAI. Jackson responded that RSAI needs a greater web presence and that we should be able to separate out information that is proprietary from information that should be made available to the public.

Action: Batey asked Jackson to prepare a one-page proposal for consideration at the Wellington Council meeting.

7. Report from the long-range committee on publication issues: Harrington presented a report from committee chair, Amrhein. From his discussions with Blackwell's and a librarian at the University of Toronto, Amrhein has come to the view that, while many new publication options are evolving, RSAI should expect to continue printing its publications for at least five years. RSAI should, however, begin now to investigate electronic publishing, indexing, and aggregation and the digitization of past issues of PRS. Amrhein urged that publication arrangements concerning print and electronic media be explored with several commercial publishers before entering an agreement with one.

Discussion: Batey thanked Harrington for the committee's report and asked that they look further into issues of electronic indexing and aggregation and the digitization of back issues of PRS.

8. Batey distributed copies of his report on publications he had presented to the Council in Rome to members not present at the Rome meeting. He reviewed the recommendations of the report, which the Council had accepted (see the minutes of the Rome Council meeting), and reminded the Council that it had authorized a delegation to negotiate a publishing agreement with Springer-Verlag (one of three commercial publishers with whom he had been communicating).

9. Report on negotiations with Springer-Verlag and the editors of the International Review of Regional Science: Donaghy briefly reviewed two alternative arrangements for publishing PRS proposed by Springer-Verlag (SV)—outlined in Batey's Rome report. He explained that both arrangements are unacceptable to RSAI because they would deprive RSAI of essential operating revenue and expose the Association to an unrelated business income tax (or UBIT). He then discussed a counter-proposal made to SV according to which SV would supply RSAI with sufficient copies of the journal to meet its membership's needs at no cost. (RSAI would still mail copies to members.) SV, in turn, would be allowed to run several pages of advertising and would take over institutional subscriptions. SV would not sell copies to individuals. SV would, however, be expected to share a fixed amount of institutional sales revenue with RSAI—in effect, making a 'hold harmless' payment to the Association. (RSAI's accounting firm and the University of Illinois Mailing Center have confirmed that this arrangement would neither expose RSAI to a UBIT nor jeopardize the 2nd-class not-for-profit mailing permit.) Donaghy noted that

SV did not find the counter-proposal financially attractive and had responded with another proposal of its own. According to SV's third proposal, the arrangements would be similar to those outlined in the RSAI counter-proposal but would result in a much smaller annual payment by SV to RSAI (from institutional sales revenue) explicitly to defray administrative and editorial costs. Donaghy reminded the Council that negotiations were also being conducted with the editors of IRSR on including IRSR in the RSAI membership package. Negotiations seemed to be converging to an arrangement whereby RSAI would purchase copies of IRSR for all its members, incur postage costs, and pay the editors a small subsidy for editorial work. The total costs to RSAI would exceed by a small amount the expected gain in revenues from the dues increase in 1998. Donaghy noted that lack of action on this issue was due largely to uncertainties on the part of the editors about the journal's future direction. Taking into account both the expected increase in revenue from dues and the potential loss of the 2nd-class mailing permit, Donaghy outlined several scenarios involving different combinations of publishing arrangements and financial developments from best- to worst-case. In the worst case, if RSAI were to commit to including IRSR in the membership package, accept the latest offer from SV, and lose the 2nd-class mailing permit, it could turn a \$20,000 operating surplus into an operating deficit of comparable magnitude in one year's time.

Discussion: Haynes cautioned against moving too quickly in publications matters; the Association is in a sound financial position and should not expose itself to unnecessary risk. Nijkamp argued that SV's most recent offer did not appear unreasonable to him, and that, in view of the incoming editor-in-chief's desire to work with a commercial publishing house, it seemed unwise to consider further the inclusion of IRSR in the membership package. In any event, he asserted, RSAI must do everything in its power to retain the 2nd-class mailing permit.

Action: It was agreed that Batey, Donaghy, and Florax should continue to negotiate with SV for more favorable terms and that the decision of whether or not to include IRSR in the membership package should be tabled until the status of the 2nd-class mailing permit could be determined.

10. Report from incoming PRS editor-in-chief: Florax distributed a memorandum discussing conditions under which he would prefer PRS to be edited and published. Florax called for improved communication between super-regional editors, transition to a commercial publisher, reconstitution of the editorial board, production by professionals, financial support for editorial assistance, and more frequent meetings between super-regional editors. Florax noted that enough papers had been accepted to fill the next volume.

Discussion: Batey thanked Florax for his report. Cuadrado Roura commented that PRS would enjoy wider readership if its contents reflected wider interests. He also emphasized the need for the editors to solicit strong papers.

11. Treasurer's Report: Andrew Krmenc distributed the annual financial statement and made the following observations. The Association is in good financial health and continues to run an operating surplus. Investments now are almost equal to one year's operating cost. Over the last two years, the size of the operating surplus has been larger than usual because RSAI has not been billed for the services of a technical typist or compositor in publishing PRS. Charges for such services are expected to be incurred in 1998.

12. Jackson moved that the RSAI Award for the Best Dissertation in Regional Science be renamed after Barclay Jones. The motion passed by acclamation.

13. The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 PM.