

March 2019



Community Development Society Communique to Members

This communique from the Community Development Society (CDS) Board of Directors aims to provide a status report and vision for CDS as the Society enters its 50th year.

The CDS board has been working actively to build financial stability, operational capacity and member engagement. The board would like to inform members of progress in these areas.

1. Financial Stability

The fundamentals of CDS remain strong, both financially and operationally. However, while a successful event in terms of its content and interaction, the Detroit conference was far more expensive than anticipated, leading to a one-time budgetary shortfall of nearly \$57,000. The board has put measures in place to manage this shortfall, recoup funds as soon as possible, and ensure that this situation is avoided in the future.

The board has accessed reserve funds in the Strategic Initiatives Fund (SIF) to make up for the shortfall and continue normal operations. The SIF has accumulated over the years from surpluses from previous conferences. Since these funds are comprised of conference surpluses from past years, they are the most appropriate funds to overcome our current budget shortfall.

This fund is managed on our behalf, similarly to the CDS Endowment, through the Greater Milwaukee Fund (GMF). The performance of this fund over the past several years has been very strong. The board has committed to the goals of not letting the fund drop below \$100,000, and replenishing all borrowed funds within 10 years.

The CDS Endowment, including funds used for scholarships (notably, travel and international scholarships) have not been affected by the one-time budgetary shortfall. The Society continues to operate a profitable journal and has stable membership numbers.

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Fiscal Plan

In conjunction with the Finance Committee, the board is developing a comprehensive fiscal plan. The Managing Director is working with the Treasurer to identify cost savings that will have minimal impact on CDS operations. The plan also includes the adoption of new financial and organizational procedures that are in line with best practice for a modern non-profit organization.

Cap on conference costs

The board has placed a cap on conference expenses. This will ensure that all future conference expenses are identified well in advance and capped in the lead up to each annual conference (unless additional costs are borne by external funders or the conference host).

2. Operational Capacity

The board was faced with the sudden resignations of former President Bryan Hains and Vice President Craig Talmage. This not only led to a gap in leadership at a critical time but also disrupted the natural succession of leadership positions. This highlights the need to revisit the organizational bylaws.

A special board committee has completed an in-depth review of the CDS bylaws with input from a pro-bono Missouri nonprofit law attorney. Once approved by a majority vote of the board in January 2019

, the revised bylaws were published in the *Vanguard* in February with a request for feedback from the membership. We have not received any feedback to date and encourage all members to review the new bylaws and provide comment.

If changes are advisable, a final board vote of adoption will then again be followed by publication in the *Vanguard* and we will ask the membership to informally accept them by acclamation at the next Annual Meeting.

We are now turning our attention toward the Policies and Operational Guidelines (POG) with expert input to ensure that they are consistent with the bylaws and up to date for a modern non-profit organization. The revised POG will include guidance for:

- Directors and Officers,
- Committees,
- Financial Management,
- Human Resources Management,
- Administration, and
- Academic Journals.



To further develop organizational capacity, a Past Presidents' Advisory Board has also been formed to more actively engage them in deliberative discussions and strategic initiatives.

3. Member Engagement

Through its Membership and Program Committees, the board is progressing ways to more actively engage members. This includes encouraging greater member participation in CDS committees, regular communication from the board about the direction and activities of the Society through the *Vanguard* and other means, and greater opportunities for member input into CDS decisions and activities. This includes maximizing the use of technology in having members communicate with each other and participate in CDS events.

Building and diversifying membership

An ongoing priority is continuing to make CDS attractive to new members and to better retain existing members. This will be achieved by the Program Committee's commitment to organizing and delivering activities and events such as regular webinars and deliberative discussions that engage members beyond the annual conference.

With support from the Marketing and Communications Committee, the Membership Committee is looking to better engage a wide range of people involved in community work who don't necessarily see themselves as CD professionals. These include people who work in government, non-profits, industry, and other organizations involved with communities. Attracting these colleagues to CDS is important not just to build potential membership but to more richly engage CDS in the full dynamic of community development in its current state of practice. Similarly, a broad range of academic fields that address community development issues will be included in communications to encourage transdisciplinary scholarship and membership.

The Membership and International Committees are working to support the establishment of CDS Chapters in the U.S. and internationally. The board is also working to better operationalize the revamped MOU with the International Association of Community Development and to foster a stronger working relationship with IACD.

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Member Input into Revised POG and Bylaws

The CDS encourages all CDS members to review the revised bylaws and make comments. Please review the revised version in the February and March 2019 issues of the Vanguard and provide your feedback to Margaret Stout by email to margaret.stout@mail.wvu.edu Thank You.

Endorsed by the CDS Board:

Maryam Ahmadian	Michael Fortunato	Kurt Mantoya
Leanne Avery	Huston Gibson	Daniela Mattos
Cindy Lyn Banyai	Lisa Gilchrist	Margaret Stout
Caitlin Bletscher	Jane Leonard	Kyle Patrick Williams
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