

SIP Organization Name Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 30, 2016

Members attending: Karlee Fellner, Kyle Hill, Carolyn Barcus, Joe Gone, Angela Enno, Janet Thomas (minute taker)

Members absent: Joseph Trimble, Carolyn Thomas-Morris

Guests/Council of Elders: John Chaney, Teresa LaFramboise, Rebecca Foster, Daniel Foster, Mark Daniels

Guests unable to attend: Douglas McDonald, Candace Fleming, Jacqueline Gray

I. Review of process

Karlee reviewed the process that we have gone through to get to this point. She recounted the business meeting last June. She noted that the term “Indian” is perceived as offensive and derogatory in Canada, except within the community. Other SIP members from the U.S. expressed that they did not identify with that term; Indigenous people from Hawaii, Alaska, South America, and Central America are not covered by that term. Karlee recalled a general sentiment in favor of respecting the feelings and opinions of the Elders.

Mark was in attendance in June. He recalled that the discussion was leaning toward a name change, and that Joe Trimble was in favor of a name change. Carolyn pointed out that there were important voices not represented at the meeting, and so this committee decided to directly reach out to the Elders by inviting them to participate in this meeting.

II. Discussion about a possible name change

Rebecca said that she felt her voice and those of others who were a part of the founding of the organization were getting put aside. Rebecca said that she is proud of being an Indian. She described how hard her grandfather fought to preserve Indian culture. She said that traditional Indian culture discourages Elders from arguing and speaking up about their views, and she expressed concern that, if the identity of the organization changes, they may just quietly withdraw.

Rebecca noted that if SIP changes to include all of these other groups, then the organization will no longer be what it was conceived to be. American Indian graduate students and psychologists needed a place to go and that led to the formation of SIP. She expressed concern that those who do not identify as American Indian are now telling SIP members the correct way to do things.

Doug sent his opinion. He wanted to maintain the SIP name as it is, unless Joe Trimble and others voice a different view, in which case he would defer to them.

Teresa pointed out that Alaskan Natives are included in the current name. She observed that there is a new generation that wants to put everything out on the listserv. Teresa

added that SIP was originally designed to give Indian people a voice in mental health issues.

Mark suggested that we have a prayer to set the tone for the meeting.

Dan clarified that he would not leave the group just because of a name change but said that he is aging and so may be backing out of the group. He talked about the affiliation he feels with First Nations people as well as Indigenous people in South and Central America and other places, but he said that he is and always will be an American Indian.

Dan offered a prayer.

John said that he has not heard a convincing argument about changing the name, and so he wanted to vote “no.”

Angela expressed that she is both Indian and Native American. Her tribe has been split at the U.S. border as a result of colonization. She expressed frustration about the desire to separate people by these borders. She said that the commitment to the term, “American Indian” feels like a rejection of Native people who live outside the current U.S. borders.

Angela said she was heartened to see how tribes from all over have joined the effort at Standing Rock, adding that “we are stronger together.” She thought we should approach the conversation from a place of love and joy.

Mark brought up the issue of a possible name change years ago, and the conversation was shut down. He emphasized his desire to be respectful of other Elders. Mark pointed out that, if the organization was being formed today, the language would be different. Today, we use different terminology in our academic writing, and the organization’s name would reflect that.

He observed the concern that by changing the name, the focus could change. He noted that SIP has been very inclusive of Maori, Canadian, South American, Central American relatives. Mark said he saw changing the name to be more inclusive as nothing but a benefit, and it is reflective of a spirit that has been a part of SIP.

Rebecca said there is pressure in some communities to change the ceremonies to modernize them. Elders have declined those requests because these ceremonies have been the tradition for centuries. SIP is inclusive, but the Elders hold on to the old ways. Moving into the modern will cause the loss of everything. She and Dan will be leaving their jobs in June, and no one has come to take over for them. She said that she found it offensive to say that being Indian was an embarrassment.

Kyle said that he grew up with the term “Indian,” and he is comfortable with being called Indian. He mentioned that East Indian people have expressed interest in joining the organization and that the term has been confusing for them.

Joe G. said he had not formed a strong opinion about the name change, seeing arguments on both sides. Tradition is by definition conservative. Joe said that the term “Indian” is important in the U.S., given all of the many societies, government agencies, and programs that include it. He said there are legal reasons for using the term, in addition to the political reasons. Joe said he thought SIP should defer to the Elders and drop the idea of considering a name change at this time. It could be revisited in the future.

Dan said “theoretical physics is advanced one death at a time.” He said that American Indian was not a proud term at one time. As an Indian, he said “we sought to bring pride and accomplishment to the term.”

John said he was glad to hear everyone’s voices today.

Teresa summarized that she, Dan, Rebecca, Carolyn B., John, and Doug are opposed to the name change. Joe T. was open to and leaning toward a change (based on comments made at the meeting last June). Mark is in favor of a name change.

Carolyn B. expressed her respect for the young people who have other opinions. Carolyn said she grew up as a Black Feet Indian. She understands that others may want to do something different, but her desire is to retain the name.

Kyle suggested that the committee give a report to the full membership in June. Carolyn recommended that he submit something in response to the call for programs for the next SIP Conference.

Karlee said she is still thinking about those who were not able to participate in this call and those who expressed other opinions at the June meeting and on the listserv.

Although in favor of a name change, Angela said she would like to defer to the Elders at this point and close the discussion.

III. Decision

A decision was made to retain the name, American Indian and Alaskan Native Society of Indian Psychologists.

Kyle said he thought this was a beautiful process. He and others expressed gratitude to everyone for participating.

IV. Future plans

Carolyn said that the process seemed to be ready to be concluded. Kyle said he would email committee members about a follow-up meeting.

**SIP Organization Name Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 13, 2016**

Attending: Karlee Fellner, Kyle Hill, Carolyn Barcus, Joe Gone, Janet Thomas (minute taker)

Absent: Angela Enno, Joseph Trimble, Carolyn Thomas-Morris

I. Issues from previous meeting

1) Decision about whether to convene a talking circle at the SIP conference to discuss the matter of the organization's name.

2) Question regarding borders, i.e., whether the organization is intended to include only Americans or those from other countries such as those in North and South America.

3) Analysis of comments from the listserv

Joe T. notified us that he had an unexpected conflict and so could not attend the meeting today. During our last meeting, he offered to try to identify a graduate student to analyze the content of the comments on the list pertaining to the organization's name. He wrote to let us know that he was not able to find a student to do this analysis.

II. Process for considering the organization name

Joe G. recalled that we had not resolved the question as to whether the decision should ultimately be deferred to the elders, and if so, exactly who belongs to that group.

Carolyn B. said that the Council of Elders is comprised of all of the past presidents of SIP, and others that may be added.

Karlee suggested that we remain flexible about what to do following the talking circle. She said that a decision might come out of that discussion.

Carolyn B. noted that many of the elders no longer attend the SIP conference. She suggested that we could send them the past minutes and invite them to a conference call.

Joe G. suggested a process of either letting the individuals who attend SIP make the decision (a group that would include non-Native people), or one in which everyone could participate. He thought we should either let the elders decide or include the whole organization, perhaps using the listserv.

Carolyn B. said that, if the talking circle is included, it should be a piece of the process. Native members should make the ultimate decision about the name.

Janet said that she would not weigh in on the decision. Carolyn suspected that Steve Behnke would likely do the same.

Karlee said that a talking circle at SIP would not necessarily require the exclusion of everyone who could not attend in person. She suggested that others could participate by phone or through the use of other technology. Another option would be for people to submit something in writing that could be read during the talking circle.

Karlee added that she had envisioned non-Native members being a part of the talking circle, and she suggested that they could share ideas from their own perspectives. She said that this would give everyone an opportunity to listen to every voice in person, and that it would be a different conversation than one that might occur on a listserv.

Joe G. said that he believes everyone would welcome a ceremony, but that the Council of Elders should be the ones to decide. If the talking circle is to be an important part of the process, then we have to consider that many of the decision makers are not likely to be in attendance. Most of them do not typically attend the conference, and the cost of travel would make it difficult or impossible for many to come. So, they would not be able to benefit from the input of those in the talking circle.

Karlee suggested that we extend a strong invitation to the elders to attend. If they are willing to participate, but cannot attend in person, we could find a way to include them using technology.

Janet suggested that the elders could be contacted and asked whether they are willing and able to participate. With that information, we could decide how best to address whatever concerns they raise.

Carolyn B. said that she has a list of the Council of Elders and that some of them are no longer members of SIP. She offered to send them an email asking them to convene. This would mark the first time the group has ever been asked to convene.

Joe G. suggested that we invite them to rejoin the organization. Carolyn B. said that they could be invited to join, but that it would be disrespectful to require that they pay dues in order to participate in this process.

Janet asked whether we needed to ask the Executive Committee before convening the group. Carolyn B. said that we should inform them, but do not need permission.

Carolyn clarified that we will begin by inviting the elders to participate in a conference call meeting with our committee. When we know who is willing, we can then set a time. Kyle and Karlee will draft an agenda for that meeting between the elders and our committee. The committee will review and modify that draft agenda as needed.

The next meeting for the committee will occur on **Wednesday, November 30th** at 1:30 Eastern, 12:30 Central, 11:30 Mountain, and 10:30 Pacific time.

**SIP Organization Name Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 23, 2016**

Attending: Karlee Fellner, Kyle Hill, Carolyn Barcus, Joe Gone, Carolyn Thomas-Morris, Joe Trimble, Janet Thomas (minute taker)

Absent: Angela Enno

I Agenda

Kyle reviewed some of the concerns that were raised at about the name of the organization at the annual meeting and in subsequent posts to the SIP list.

We discussed how to approach this discussion today, and we decided to focus on process.

II. Process for addressing the issue of the SIP's name

Carolyn M. reflected on her 20 years of membership in SIP and recommended a cultural approach that does not impose a deadline but allows whatever time we need to make this decision. She further suggested that the ultimate decision about the organization's name be turned over to the elders. Carolyn expressed a preference for the name "American Indian and Alaskan Native Society of Psychologists."

Karlee mentioned the "border issues" that should be considered. Karlee elucidated her point: The borders between the United States and other countries are arbitrary and were established by the colonizers. The boarders were drawn without regard to tribal homelands, and they divided numerous communities. She wondered whether she, as a Canadian, should be a part of the discussion if the organization is exclusively "American."

Carolyn M. said that she wants SIP to be inclusive, but she didn't believe that SIP could or should advocate for people from other countries. She further suggested that an organizational mission statement could delineate the intent of SIP to be inclusive and welcoming to everyone.

Joe G. suggested that we have too many suggestions for names to call for a vote at this point. Regarding process, he noted that several people have suggested that we wait and consider letting the elders make a decision.

Carolyn M. said she was not comfortable voting on the matter.

Karlee suggested that SIP could create a talking circle (including ceremony) next June that would allow everyone who can attend to participate in a discussion of the issue.

Carolyn B. noted that we should try to minimize divisiveness, and such a process (i.e., a talking circle) could allow for that. Meeting outdoors would allow for ceremony, and Carolyn said she could arrange for an outdoor location for this purpose. It was proposed that this be done somewhere other than the University, possibly on Monday evening.

Carolyn M. underscored her earlier suggestion that a council of elders, informed by the comments made during the talking circle, should make a final decision about the name.

Carolyn B. thought it would be best if the group could reach consensus in the talking circle. If the discussion becomes too divisive, and a clear decision does not emerge from the talking circle, then the default decision would be to leave the name as it is and to table further consideration of a name change for some period of time, such as 5 years.

Joe T. suggested that a content analysis of all of the comments received would be helpful in illuminating the thoughts, feelings, and opinions of those who have submitted their ideas. He has software that could be used to extract this information in an objective manner. Joe offered to identify a graduate student in his program to do this.

Joe G. said that, if the decision is put to the elders, it seems clear that that they will decide to retain the name, and so he wonders whether it is worth the work involved.

Karlee recommended that we may need more than one circle to reach consensus, and that such concurrence would obviate the need to ask the elders to make a decision.

Carolyn M. agreed with Karlee that the circle would be a good idea, but she continued to believe that the elders should be the ones to make the final decision, particularly because the issue has become so contentious.

The two options were summarized:

- 1) Convene a talking circle at the convention. Trust that the group will reach consensus.
- 2) Convene the talking circle, and then defer the decision to a council of elders.

Karlee asked whether membership in a council of elders had been established. Carolyn B. said it was recommended that such a council would be comprised of past presidents, but she assumed that other elders, such as Joseph Trimble, would be included.

Joe G. expressed concern that any decision based on views expressed during a talking circle, held in conjunction with the SIP meeting, would only represent the views of those who are able to attend. Such a group may not be representative of the full membership.

The Committee ultimately decided to ponder these points, to reconvene in a month, and to continue the discussion through email in the interim.

Next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, October 13, at 11:00 am Central Time; 12:00 Mountain Time; 1:00 Pacific Time.**

**SIP Organization Name Committee
Meeting Minutes
August 22, 2016**

Attending: Karlee Fellner, Kyle Hill, Carolyn Barcus, Joe Gone, Janet Thomas (minute taker)

Absent: Joe Trimble; Angela Enno

I. Overview of the agenda

Kyle reviewed some of the concerns that were raised at the annual meeting about the name of the organization.

- East Indian psychologists have expressed interest in joining.
- The term "Indian" is considered derogatory in some places, such as Canada.

Karlee noted that there are a number of SIP members who do not identify with that term (e.g., those from Central and South America, Hawaii)

Carolyn said that we need to be respectful of those who worked hard to name the organization initially, and that we need to attend to our process. Dan Foster and Joe Trimble were part of the group that named the organization, and getting their input would be helpful.

II. Discussion of process

Joe G. raised the issue of how we might approach the decision.

1. Create a forum for discussion; vote, and let the majority rule.
2. Defer to the Elders and/or long-term members to make the decision about whether to change the organization's name.

Carolyn assumed it would be a democratic process including members of SIP.

Kyle said he wanted to find a way to make the decision-making process inclusive of all SIP members (e.g., Elders, students, academics, clinicians).

Joe suggested a process of asking people to submit suggestions for names, along with their rationales.

Karlee supported the idea of soliciting submissions to the committee members, and proposed that we could consolidate them, and present them to the membership.

Joe said the voting could be complicated in that it may not be clear exactly who is a current member. There was also discussion about who would be invited to vote. Would voting only be limited to current members?

The Committee decided it would be important to consult with Chris Morris and Wendy Peters to see what would be involved in creating a voting process online rather than just voting at the annual meeting in June.

Carolyn said that one option would be for a discussion to take place on the listserv throughout the year, and then a vote could be taken in person at the meeting.

Karlee heard that the Executive Committee may be working on bylaws changes, and they requested that we get this worked out so that they can consider the name in their work.

III. Possible courses of action

Carolyn suggested two courses of action:

1. Contact Chris and Wendy (Carolyn)
2. We start by asking people on the listserv - Tell them that we are exploring the idea of changing the name of the organization and requesting input. (Karlee)

Karlee agreed to draft an email to the listserv, and will send it to us for editing by **August 26th**. The Committee will review it.

Janet suggested that we include background information about how this issue came up at the meeting to inform those who were not in attendance. Karlee will include this in the email draft.

Kyle suggested we consider asking members for input about the process rather than moving directly to gathering ideas from the membership. Carolyn said that she believed that the Committee has already been empowered to take the lead and set a process. If other members offer ideas about the process, we can consider them, but she suggested we move forward.

Our goal is to send the email to the listserv inviting their input by September 1st. Members will be asked to submit their ideas by September 30th.

Karlee suggested that people send their suggestions to Janet who will compile them for the Committee.

Carolyn will call Angela to see if she still wants to be involved and let her know about the next meeting.

Janet will contact Joe Trimble about the meeting time.

Next meeting: Thursday, September 22nd at 9:00 Pacific, 10:00 Mountain, 11:00 Central