

CUAA Working Committee Meeting

Minutes of the Meeting

August 2, 2009, 3:00-4:00 PM

Venue: Residence of Tarak Bhar, Mclean, VA.

Meeting Coordinator: Bidhan Bandyopadhyay

Attendees: Dilip Som, Bidhan Bandyopadhyay, Ranjan Pati, Ranjan Gupta, Lokesh Bhattacharya, Tarak Bhar and Bratin Saha. Sruti Chatteraj and Roopa Biswas could not attend.

Historical Overview: Tarak Bhar started off the meeting by providing a brief historical overview about CUAA:

- CUAA started off as Science College Alumni Association (SCAA) in 1996 - the very first meeting during which the concept was introduced, was held at Pilgrim Hill Recreation Center in Silver Spring on Sunday, May 5th, 1996 with 42 attendees. SCAA was renamed as CUSCAA (Calcutta University Science College Alumni Association). Subsequent monthly CUSCAA meetings were then held at the NIH campus. The primary objectives were to foster Research and Education at Calcutta University (CU) through the alumni.
- Starting from 1996, a Newsletter was published every November: Nov. '97, Vol1; Nov. '98, Vol. 2, and Nov. '99, Vol. 3.
- In 1997, CUSCAA had a "meet and greet" session at the Banga Sammelan at the King of Prussia, near Philadelphia. It also had an article of incorporation in Maryland.
- In 1998, a Calcutta-based Newspaper "Pratidin" featured an article on CUSCAA, written by Purabi Chakraborti.
- CUSCAA was later renamed CUAA to include all other Departments of CU, besides the Science College. However it later became clear that organizations with the same name existed elsewhere in the U.S.; in particular, a letter was received from the CUAA of New York. To avoid conflicts, CUAA was renamed CUAA-DC.

Next, Bidhan Bandyopadhyay briefed the group about the current CUAA working committee. The Interim Committee will continue until a permanent committee is elected in November. Therefore, the primary responsibility of this committee is to organize the Annual Meeting of CUAA in November. He proposed three (3) main Subcommittees under the overarching working Committee, outlined their purposes, and suggested names for each subcommittee:

(1) Cultural Subcommittee

The main purpose of this subcommittee would be to draw up the agenda and to organize cultural programs for the Annual General Meeting (AGM) scheduled in November. The names of Lokesh Bhattacharya and Roopa Biswas were suggested as key members of this subcommittee. It was mentioned that Pramita Chatterjee who helped organize cultural program in the past would be a great resource for help. Bidhan noted that Roopa would be an asset in accessing the Bengalis in the Baltimore area.

(2) Food & Refreshments Subcommittee

The main purpose of this subcommittee would be to organize and coordinate the food preparation for the November Annual Social. It was suggested that Sruti Chatteraj and Ranjan Pati would lead this subcommittee and that Mrs. Sikha Bhar would also assist in whatever capacity she could, but she did not want to be part of the subcommittee.

(3) Communications and Funds Subcommittee

The main purpose of this subcommittee would be outreach and management of CUAA funds.

Everyone agreed that CUAA membership had declined over the years and that there was even less interest in participation in CUAA activities by the younger Bengali residents of the MD/DC/VA community. Several members commented that among the younger alumni there is a general perception that CUAA is an organization comprised of senior CU alumni and that this perception needed to be changed, if CUAA is to survive in the upcoming years. The consensus was that there were many CU alumni in the greater Washington-Baltimore area who had not heard of CUAA or simply did not show interest and that there was a need to recruit new members from the region. The goal would be to spread the news using all modes of communication (phone, email, newsletter publication and words of mouth, on personal basis or at other Bengali events) and to create interest among the younger crowd, perhaps through a targeted announcement. The first and foremost action for outreach purposes would be to update the CUAA Contact Directory, starting with reference materials such as the Sanskriti Directory.

It was decided that the CUAA website need to be updated to make announcement of the Interim Committee, indicating its Subcommittees and the date and venue of the upcoming Annual Meeting.

Suggested key members of this subcommittee were Dilip Som, Ranjan Gupta, Ranjan Pati and Bidhan Bandyopadhyay. Ranjan Gupta noted that he would be happy to work behind the scenes and help with Secretariat functions but did not feel comfortable approaching people directly by phone

or otherwise. Bratin Saha explained that this would not be a problem as different members of this subcommittee could play different roles to accomplish the goals. Others agreed.

Lokesh raised the question about having a newsletter at the time of CUAA AGM. Bratin Saha suggested a (fourth) Publication/Newsletter subcommittee. Bidhan proposed that newsletter should be part of the responsibility of the Cultural Subcommittee to which all committee members agreed. Dilip Som suggested a (fifth) "Etcetera" subcommittee that would be responsible for miscellaneous activities. No decision was taken about the "Etcetera" subcommittee.

All reached consensus that Bidhan Bandyopadhyay would serve as the coordinator for the CUAA Committee. Another decision was that Tarak Bhar and Bratin Saha would play advisory roles without taking any "formal" office position in the CUAA Committee.

Other Issues:

Non-Profit and Tax-Exemption Status for CUAA-DC -

Dilip Som argued that obtaining a "Non-Profit" status (501 C) for CUAA was not worth the application fee of \$300; it would only be appropriate if many CUAA members were making large donations to the organization.

However, Lokesh Bhattacharya argued that obtaining a "Tax Exempt" status for CUAA from the IRS would be beneficial and could be done by submitting a simple application (Forms 1023/1024) to the US Treasury. Dilip Som agreed to file for the tax-exemption status.

Date and Venue for November 2009 CUAA Social

All agreed that the Potomac Community Center (PCC) remains a convenient venue for the November social and is easier to reserve than any school auditorium. Consensus was reached that this year the social would be held between 3PM-7PM on any of the following Sundays in November - 8, 15 or 22. For a trial run, Sunday was chosen, as people often have other commitments on Saturdays [Note - all previous socials were held on Saturday evenings]. Dilip Som would check the calendar regarding conflicts with any other major Bengali events (e.g., Jadavpur University Social) and make reservations, based on availability at the PCC.

Future Meetings and Resolutions:

There was discussion about having additional meetings is necessary while others thought that an electronic meeting would suffice - no conclusion was reached. In subsequent meetings the discussion would focus on actions of

every subcommittee, recruitment of other members to each subcommittee, and additional goals of CUAA (e.g., charitable activities).

It was decided that the minutes of this meeting would be reviewed by all attendees and the final approved copy will be posted on the CUAA-DC website for public opinion.

The meeting was adjourned with thanks to Tarak Bhar and Bratin Saha for the illuminating historical information and valuable advice.

[Meeting Note Takers - Bidhan Bandyopadhyay and Ranjan Gupta]