

Maize Genetics Cooperation Board of Directors
June 16, 2023 on Zoom
Meeting Minutes

BoD members present:

Marna Yandea-Nelson (Chair)
Jay Hollick (Outgoing Chair)
Wojtek Pawlowski (Incoming Chair)
Erin Sparks (Treasurer)
Mike Muszynski (Communications Director)
Andrea Eveland (At Large Member)
Thelma Madzima (At Large Member)
Laurie Smith (Secretary)

BoD members absent:

Jeff Ross-Ibarra (At Large Member)

Motions in blue

Meeting began with a closed-door segment (2:00-2:30 Central)

Open-door segment (2:30-3:30pm Central)

Community members joining:

John Fowler (CODIE Chair)
Irina Makarevitch (CODIE former Chair)
Sarah Anderson (maize genetics community member)
Anne Sylvester (maize genetics community member)
Aaron Kusmec (maize genetics community member)

1. Participant support fund discussed

2. Recommendations from Inclusive Conference Workgroup of the Root & Shoot RCN

Workgroup goal: to make plant sciences conferences more welcoming and supportive for all. Blog post describing workgroup's process: <https://rootandshoot.org/inclusive-conferences-working-group-update/> . Five subgroups worked on different aspects but BoD is asked to focus on recommendations for a Community Agreement and Reporting Structure (what we do when the community agreement is breached). Specifically, BoD is asked to:

1. Engage w-recommendations. Seriously consider; adopt where possible.
2. Adopt community agreement (in addition to or in place of) existing conference CoC
3. Participate in bystander training hosted by Root and Shoot
4. Work with R&S-supported ombudsperson on the reporting structure piece

Logistics of implementing recommendations were discussed. Suggestion made to form a group to work on this with reps from the MGC Board of Directors, CODIE, and our Conference Steering Committee.

3. CODIE Recommendations for enhanced inclusion and belonging at the Maize Genetics Meeting

- i. At future MGM Fostering Diversity Plenary talks:
 - a. Promote awareness of potential for harm (guidelines given to audience)
 - b. Move this plenary talk earlier in the day to allow for conversation afterward
 - c. Have a trained moderator for who is equipped to address potentially harmful remarks
 - d. Remind audience about Community Agreement/CoC and potential harm with some specifics about what to avoid in their comments/questions about the talk
 - e. Host a “round table” with the speaker after the talk to give people a chance to discuss difficult issues in a setting less prone to misunderstanding and communication failure
- ii. Bystander training for MGC members, especially BoD members and other community leaders
- iii. Send communication from BoD to entire community acknowledging the harm that took place at the conference (echo-ing the BoD tweet from Sunday AM), and outline our reflections and actions.

Board discussed these recommendations and developed a plan for drafting the communication described in iii, above.

Meeting ended with a closed-door segment (3:30-4:00pm Central)

Addendum added June 30, 2023:

Google Form circulated after the meeting to collect votes on the following: Frank Hochholdinger, a member of the MGMSC, and Peter Wann at ConferenceDirect surveyed several sites in Germany for the 2026 Maize Meeting. They presented detailed information for two sites, the Maritim in Cologne and the Estrel in Berlin, to the MGMSC during a steering committee meeting. The MGMSC considered location, ease of travel, safety, expense, and other factors. They voted to recommend that the 2026 meeting be held at the Maritim in Cologne. Please vote on whether you are in favor or opposed to this recommendation.

Outcome: 9 BOD members in favor of moving forward with the Steering Committee’s recommendation (unanimous)