

Maize Genetics Cooperation Board of Directors
October 31, 2023 on Zoom
Minutes

BoD members present:

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

Absent: Jeff Ross-Ibarra (At Large Member)

Invited guest: Ruben Rellan-Alvarez (MGC Conference Steering Committee Chair)

Community members in attendance: Jennifer Nemhauser, Ramin Yadegari, Denise Caldwell

Motions in blue

Meeting began 4:30pm Central time

1. MGC Treasurer's report

Summary of current funds held by MGC.

Endowments are both held at Univ. MO.

Total Liquid Assets includes both restricted funds that can only be used for conference expenses (the majority of what we have), and unrestricted funds that can be used for any purpose that advances the mission of the organization (funds in this category come from MGC membership dues). These spending rules are dictated by our 501c3 status.

Restricted & Unrestricted Funds - Current Status

Two Endowments at Mizzou:

Principal Balances (not spendable): \$121,772 \$185,747

Interest (not current): \$53,422

Bank Balance (Aug 23): \$372,189.34

Total Liquid Assets: ~\$420,000

**Restricted & unrestricted incomes have not been tracked, so all funds should be treated as restricted.

This balance gets us close to the goal of having enough money to pay in advance for a conference, which expands our options for where we can go (up to now we have been limited to sites where they will accept partial payment after the conference).

2. MGAC (Maize Genetics Advocacy Committee) report/review of charge and activities

MGAC charge: advance the interests of the international maize community; advocate for the community's needs. Full charge here: <https://www.maizegdb.org/mgc/advocacy/charge.php> Currently consists of the BoD (elected) + 5 at-large members (appointed).

MGAC Chair has started working with NSF program officers to help the maize community develop a strategic plan for utilization of current/new funding opportunities (e.g. through a series of workshops). Initiative in progress.

Another part of MGAC's charge is to conduct an annual survey of community needs, but this survey hasn't occurred in the past year. BoD discussed optimal timing for this survey.

MGAC also partners with the Awards and Nominations Committee on the McClintock prize – selection of awardees, and publicity.

BoD agreed last year that MGAC membership should be largely separate from BoD membership, but this change has yet to occur. BoD discussed how to recruit and appoint new members.

3. Motion to approve Oct 2 BoD meeting minutes made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

4. Roots & Shoots offer for free-of-charge ombuds service at 2024 Maize Meeting

NSF Roots & Shoots RCN (<https://rootandshoot.org/>) has funds to pay for ombuds services at 2023-24 conferences of participating societies including ours. Ombudsperson's main function will be to receive and help us respond appropriately to CoC violation reports, but they can also talk with meeting participants about any issues in their area of expertise. BoD discussed whether this is something we want.

[Motion to approve accepting the free ombuds for 2024 was made, seconded and unanimously approved.](#)

5. Plan for working group to update Code of Conduct/Meeting Agreement

BoD wants to revise conference Code of Conduct and response process documents in light of recommendations from the R&S Inclusive Conference Workgroup in time to have these posted for the 2024 Maize Meeting. Plan emerged to assemble a workgroup of ~4 people that will work on this and present draft revised documents to the BoD for discussion at their December 2024 meeting.

6. Community Digest

BoD wants to begin issuing twice a year communications to the MGC membership about the activities of our committees and other initiatives on a twice/year. BoD discussed optimal timing, and titles for the communication. First communication planned for February 2024, shortly before the Maize Meeting in Raleigh.

Meeting adjourned 6:30pm CT