



## Southwestern Association of Criminal Justice

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Hello fellow SWACJ members!

We hope that everyone is staying safe, sane, and relatively productive during these strange times. The sudden online transition of the Spring 2019 classes was certainly a disruption to everyone's lives. Unfortunately, our Spring courses were not the only things that have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. As many of you know, all of our national meetings (ACJS and ASC) were cancelled this year and many regional societies have been cancelled as well. After a great deal of thought and consideration, the SWACJ Executive Board has decided to cancel this year's conference.

Please understand that we did not make this decision hastily. This decision was made after a great deal of thought and consideration of the effects on the organization as a whole. Let us start by providing some background on how conference set-up gets organized just in case you are unaware. The contracts with conference hotels are negotiated at least a year—if not two years—in advance of the conference. We are consistently planning out in advance to get the best rates in the best possible locations. When we sign these contracts, the hotels “give us” meeting space for free as long as we spend an agreed upon amount, which typically include hotel rooms and food and beverage. If we hit this threshold, we are only financially responsible for the amount we spend. If we do not reach this threshold, we are responsible for the entirety of the hotel's lost revenue. For the 2020 Omni Hotel contract in Austin, if we did not meet the contracted amount, we would have to pay the hotel up to \$30,000.

As most of you probably know, SWACJ is funded almost entirely by membership dues and conference registration fees. Unlike some of the bigger organizations that bring in revenue from their journals, SWACJ gets approximately \$200 per year in these fees. To assess the likelihood of conference participation, given the travel restrictions placed on us by many of our universities, we sent out a survey asking people about their travel plans for SWACJ and university travel restrictions. The good news—from our perspective—was that about 28% of the responding members said they would definitely show up to the meeting this year; however, that number would not have put a dent in the number of rooms (and thus revenue) that we would need to pay for the conference hotel.



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Unfortunately, we do not have the cash reserves that other organizations have for covering these sorts of situations. Further, we usually have a substantial student presence at the conferences that is often hard to model because of the last-minute decisions that permit or prevent students from attending. When we asked members about the likelihood that their university would permit them to bring students to the conference, only 14% thought this was a possibility. To be sure, we are not making any money from the students who attend—we now may be breaking even—but the students stay in hotel rooms which goes towards fulfilling our quota to the hotel.

These are some of the things that the Executive Board had to consider when deciding whether to hold the 2020 SWACJ conference this year. Although, the conference is cancelled this year, we were able to work out an agreement with Omni, in which the 2022 conference will be held at the Omni Hotel in Austin, TX. We are not able to cancel the contract, but we were able to reach an agreement with the Omni Austin to move it to 2022. With that in mind, below are some general information for the upcoming conferences.

#### 2021 Conference

We are happy to announce that the 2021 SWACJ annual meeting will be in Little Rock, Arkansas. We will be spending the next year getting ready to welcome everyone back (and in greater numbers we hope!) to the SWACJ family. We know that university budgets are likely going to be tight for travel funds and donations, that help offset and defray some of the costs of the meeting, may be limited. The Executive Board is actively working on this and trying to find any and all possible sources of revenue and ways to minimize the costs to the organization. If you have any thoughts, experience, or are independently wealthy, please contact a member of the Executive Board. We are definitely interested in hearing from you about ideas. Also, there is a button on the bottom of the SWACJ homepage for members to make donations.

2021 Conference Hotel: Doubletree Hotel Downtown Little Rock

Dates: October 13-16, 2021

Room Rates: \$96 single and double rooms

Other Amenities: Free wifi and welcome amenities

Parking: \$10 a night (discounted rate)

#### 2022 Conference

As stated above, part of the cancellation of the 2020 annual meeting involved the re-negotiation of the 2020 contract in Austin to 2022. Therefore, the 2022 conference will be at the OMNI Southpark in Austin, Texas. Below is the information about this conference.

2021 Conference Hotel: Omni Austin Southpark

Dates: October 19-21, 2022

Room Rates: \$159 single and double rooms

Other Amenities: Free Wifi in guest rooms (lost other perks when we renegotiated)

Parking: Free parking

### 2020 SWACJ Memberships

A few years ago, the SWACJ Executive Board moved to combine membership fees with conference fees. Since there will be no conference this year, all members who attended the 2019 annual meeting will have their membership extended until 2021. For individuals who did not attend the 2019 annual meeting, or for new members, there is a \$25 fee to become an active member of SWACJ, which includes voting privileges on board members and items brought to the membership by the board. The link to apply and pay for memberships will be located on the SWACJ website under the Membership tab.

### Call for Nominations and Elections

There will be two executive board member positions that will become open in October 2020: Second Vice President and Webmaster. Any nominations (self or other) for these positions should be sent to the SWACJ board by midnight on September 13, 2020, so they may be voted on in the general business meeting in October 2020. Nominations should be emailed to [swacj.org@gmail.com](mailto:swacj.org@gmail.com) - please indicate the full name of the person being nominated, university affiliation, and the position when submitting nominations. Also, volunteers are needed on the audit committee. This is a good way to become active in SWACJ and often audit committee members end up running for executive board positions. Anyone interested in being on the audit committee, please contact the board at [swacj.org@gmail.com](mailto:swacj.org@gmail.com).

### General Business Meeting

Normally, the general business meeting would be held on the last day of the SWACJ annual meeting. With the cancellation of the 2020 annual meeting, there will be a general business meeting via Zoom on October 14 at 5pm (central daylight time). This meeting will be open to all voting SWACJ members. New board members are usually voted on during the general business meeting. Since the meeting will be online this year, an online voting ballot will be sent out to members on October 12, two days before the general business meeting and the new board members will be announced at the general business meeting. Please look for this important email.

### Final Thoughts

If there are any lingering questions or concerns about any of the information in this newsletter, please feel free to reach out to anyone on the Executive Board and we will do our best to get you answers. Also, be on the lookout for information that will be coming down the pike about other updates from the organization—including the announcement of the new editor of the Journal of Qualitative Criminology and Criminal Justice.

Thank you to all of our SWACJ members for their continual support. We appreciate all of you and we hope that you are doing well.

Sincerely,  
Tusty  
Jon  
Mike  
Molly  
Lynn  
Tammy