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MEET THE OFFICERS

A series of interviews with the officers of the Business History Conference (produced and edited by web editor Paula de la Cruz-Fernández)

Four members of the Business History Conference are nominated yearly by the Nominating Committee to be part of the **Board of Trustees for a three-year term**. Two of them are voted by the membership right before the annual meeting. Trustees are the organization's backbone as most decisions ought to be approved by a majority of this board (between 15 and 18 members). In this issue of *Meet the Officers*, we get to know more about Dr. Heidi Tworek's role as a trustee and in other committees of the BHC. Tworek became a trustee in 2019 though her service to the Business History Conference dates back to 2018.

Tworek is an associate professor of history and public policy at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. She is also senior fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation and a non-resident fellow at the German Marshall Fund of the United States and Canadian Global Affairs Institute. Her research focuses on the history and policy of communications and media. **Tworek thinks that "Business history lies at the heart of that research. While many communications and media scholars examine content, I also consider how media and communications business practices and structures shaped what content could even be created in the first place."**

As part of the BHC, Tworek has been in various positions since 2018. In recalling her work with the liaison committee, Tworek notes that she "coordinated several panels under BHC

auspices for other conferences, such as the American Historical Association and the Society for the History of American Foreign Relations (SHAHR). **Many historians may not even realize that they are business historians and would be very welcome at the BHC. The liaison committee tries to raise awareness about the BHC** by coordinating with other scholarly societies, which hopefully encourages more historians to consider attending the BHC." Tworek also served as chair of the **Krooss Dissertation Prize committee** last year, and is especially proud of this work: "I don't know any other conference that clears its schedule to ensure that the panel for the dissertation prize finalists has no competitors. That really shows how much the BHC cares about early career members." Finally, Tworek has also served as a trustee of the BHC.

I asked Tworek, **"What do you think has changed the most in the organization since you first attended a BHC conference?"** For her, **"The BHC has become even more fundamentally committed to internationalizing and diversifying its membership. There's still much to do, but it's exciting to see efforts like including Spanish-language panels in 2021."** (#BHC2021online). From here, she adds, "The BHC is really thinking about how to incorporate online events, even as travel becomes possible again for some groups of people. There have always been inequities in holding in-person conferences and it will be exciting to see how online events could include different



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[interview continued]

scholars and generate new connections." Tworek also sees several new directions emerging for the field: "First, the massive growth in the history of capitalism and economics has also increased interest in business history. Second, business history continues to become more international and global, as we can see from the publications in *Enterprise & Society*. I hope these trends continue alongside others like interdisciplinary and collaborative research as well as research incorporating techniques from digital humanities. As sources are increasingly born digital or accessed digitally, that opens up many new possibilities for the topics and techniques of business history research."

To support and guide new members and young scholars in business history, I asked, **"What advice would you share with junior scholars in the field?"** For Tworek, "That's a hard question because things have changed tremendously even in the comparatively short time since I received my Ph.D. in 2012! I would advise **junior scholars to take advantage of the many opportunities to get involved at the BHC, in part because the BHC is really investing in helping junior scholars to think about multiple career paths.** I don't know of any other scholarly society so dedicated to helping junior scholars succeed, no matter whether they stay in academia or take another path." To conclude, she added that **"I'm proud of how the BHC values and tries to support newer members by showcasing their work, like at the Krooss Prize finalists panel.** As trustees, we have also focused on how to support graduate students and early career researchers, for example, by making this year's conference [#BHC2021online] free for those groups."

Next in these series

Dr. Ai Hisano, Associate Professor at the Interfaculty Initiative in Information Studies/Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information Studies at the University of Tokyo, Japan.

<https://www.aihisano.com/>

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**[Paula A. de la Cruz-Fernández](#) or [@cruzmosu](#)
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