

**NeMLA Board
Meeting Minutes
November 2nd, 2019**

11:00 AM Eastern: Phone/webcam conference

Board Members Present:

- Creative Writing, Publishing and Editing Director, **Abby Bardi**
- German Studies Director, **Alexander E. Pichugin**
- Anglophone/American Studies Director, **Benjamin Railton**
- Second Vice President **Bernadette Wegenstein**
- First Vice President, **Brandi So**
- President, **Carole Salmon**
- Graduate Student Caucus Representative, **Christian Ylagan**
- Anglophone/British Literature Director, **Elaine Savory**
- CAITY Caucus President and Representative, **Francisco Delgado**
- Comparative Literature Director, **Katherine Sugg**
- Cultural Studies and Media Studies Director, **Maria Matz**
- Pedagogy and Professionalism Director, **Maria Plochocki**
- French and Francophone Language and Literature Director, **Olivier Le Blond**
- Spanish and Portuguese Language and Literature Director, **Victoria Ketz**
- Past President, **Simona Wright**
- Women's and Gender Studies Caucus Representative, **Sarah Goldbort**
- Italian Studies Director, **Emanuela Pecchioli**
- Membership at Large/Diversity, **Susmita Roye**

Non-Board Members Present:

- Executive Director, Carine Mardorossian
- Administrative Coordinator, Derek McGrath
- Graduate Assistant, Ashley Byczkowski
- Exhibitors and Promotion Coordinator, Claire Sommers

I. Executive Director's Report, Carine Mardorossian

A. Approval of Spring 2019 Board Minutes:

1. ED Mardorossian made a motion to approve the minutes for Spring 2019 minutes at 11:12 AM. Approved with no corrections. Motion to approve by Ben seconded by Elaine Savory.

B. ED Mardorossian listed and thanked the NeMLA Staff and fellows for their contributions and commitment:

1. Derek McGrath: Administrative Coordinator and Marketing
2. Ashley Byczkowski: Graduate assistant
3. Claire Sommers: Promotions, Professionalization and Exhibits
4. Solon Morse: Graphic Designer, Posters, Newsletter, Program

C. NeMLA Graduate Fellows

1. Cassandra Scherr, Editor, Events and Social Media Fellow

2. Dana Venerable, Editor, Events and Social Media Fellow
3. Jiwon Ohm, Awards Fellow
4. Nicole Sedar, Awards Fellow
5. Callie Ingram, Convention and Editor Fellow
6. Patrick Clancy, Convention and Promotions Fellow
7. Maria Diaz, Visual Archive Fellow
8. Valentina Ospina, Visual Archive Fellow
9. Korine Powers, Local Boston University Fellow
10. Cory Charpentier, Local Boston University Fellow

D. 2020 Convention

Professor Mardorossian discussed the growth potential of NeMLA. The deadline was not extended but there were more submissions than last year. ED Mardorossian is projecting more attendees than last year due to how central the location is as well as due to auditors' growing interest.

- SESSIONS
 - **Boston** 580 sessions submitted and 470 approved
 - **DC** 585 sessions submitted and 443 running
 - **Pittsburgh** 573 submitted and 380 running
 - **Baltimore** 537 submitted sessions Baltimore and 385 running
- ABSTRACTS
 - **Boston** 3525 submitted and 2093 accepted
 - **DC**: 3028 Abstracts submitted and 1894 approved
 - **Pittsburgh**: 1658 approved and 1604 in Baltimore (where 2600 were submitted)
- SECOND SESSIONS
 - 99 second session requests, 95 granted! 55 in DC (all accepted) and 51 requests in Pittsburgh with 5 accepted.
- THIRD SESSIONS
 - Some sessions drew up to 40 abstract submissions so it made sense to organize 3 sessions. There were 3 third session requests this year that were granted.
- LOCATION! LOCATION! LOCATION! MARRIOTT COPLEY BOSTON
 - Professor Mardorossian praised the staff and service of the hotel
 - **ROOM RESERVATIONS: Board members need to make their own reservations first and then forward their numbers to Derek McGrath.**
 - **A/V ARRANGEMENTS:** the bidding war is on.
 - **FOOD AND BEVERAGE:** NeMLA will no longer advertise receptions and coffee breaks in the program or online.
 - **SET UP:** The exhibit room will be in the nicest, largest ballroom, on the same floor and in full view of the registration area (a real formal registration desk with storage!) on the fourth floor. There will be the headshot station, coffee breaks, poster presentations for the undergraduate forum and summer fellows, the job clinic and exhibitor workshops in the same space to draw circulation to exhibitors.

- **SPECIAL EVENTS:** 7 special event speakers scheduled and one for pedagogy and professional in the form of a workshop.
- **UNDERGRADUATE FORUM:** The forum will take place on Saturday afternoon in the exhibit room rather than on Thursday to avoid conflict with the students' class schedule. It will consist of poster presentations only.
- **POSTER PRESENTATIONS:** We are closing poster presentations for the general membership so avoid overlap or conflict with the undergraduate posters and the Summer Fellows.
- **WORKSHOPS** are \$10 to enroll (to make sure people don't reserve a spot and don't show up) and we approved 8 workshops offered by members, including one in Italian. This year we have Michigan UP with us and they are flying one of their authors from Brazil to talk about a book they are releasing: please make an effort to attend and advertise it. We want to support the publishing industry. The author **João Cezar de Castro Rocha** is Full Professor of Comparative Literature at the Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro. He was the President of the Brazilian Association of Comparative Literature from 2016 to 2017 and is the author of eleven books. He is a Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.
- Registration for workshops is open already.
- **JOB CLINIC AND MENTORING:** please sign up for slots.
- **MEET THE AUTHOR:** still going strong
- **SEMINARS** increased from last year (45 from 42 in DC and 39 in Pittsburgh):

NEW INITIATIVES:

- **THE HUMANITIES ON THE ROAD:** We have expanded the "All of NeMLA reads together" initiative to include "The Humanities on the Road" which makes Christina Milletti's role as interviewer of our creative keynote official. In addition, the interview will be recorded and made available to members for educational purposes. We are always looking for ways that makes NeMLA live on past the conference. For 2020, it is Andre Dubus III's GONE SO LONG: A NOVEL we are all reading and a book signing and reception will follow (with both Dubus and Christina Milletti signing copies of their latest novel!). For 2021, it will be MANHATTAN BEACH: A NOVEL that will be the subject of "NeMLA Reads Together" by no other than Jennifer Egan. **Video** of the interview available to the membership for if they choose to teach the books.
- **BOOKS:** Members' recent books will no longer be on display in the exhibit room. Instead, we will offer a table for members to display their author flyers with a note about their session time and day so people can find each other. This will be networking initiative.
- **ADAPTATION sessions:** we have a group of scholars who have chosen NeMLA as their home and who have brought adaptation as a focus to NeMLA. They have gone through the regular channels of vetting and ten sessions in adaptation will be offered in 2020.
- **MAST: the media journal** was launched and has an impressive advisory board of media scholars. MAST stands for Media Art Study and Theory. It comes from a tradition of MEDIA ART (hybrid form of practice and theory) as it was developed at UB so is unlikely to compete with the film studies focus of Modern

Language Study. It is also digital. Its launch and inception did not cost NEMLA a dime. Professor Mardorossian paid for the two graduate students' stipends out of her own research funds.

- **NeMLA Daily Elevator Pitch:** Thank you, Claire Sommers.
 - **REGISTRATION WORKERS:** We used to reserve the opportunity to work at the registration desk for the local institution graduate students but always fell short in numbers. Now the convention fellow begins over the summer to recruit UB students also to make sure we are not short helpers. The local institution graduate students can still focus on helping with bag stuffing.
 - **PRONOUNS** at NeMLA: we are going to give our membership the option of having pronouns displayed on their name badges
 - The membership will also have the option of selecting **NO TOTE BAG** and **NO PROGRAM** as part of their registration. This is because of the survey that indicated many members are concerned about our environmental footprint.
 - Comment about adding recycling boxes and creating a specific space.
 - **SURVEY RESULTS:** We surveyed the membership after the convention and the results were informative and important. We want the members to feel heard. The main priority for members is cost.
- **FUTURE CONVENTIONS:** investigating having the next convention to be contracted (2023) in Niagara Falls by virtue of its history and urgent issues pertaining to environmentalism and sustainability/energy. There are two hotels Westin and Sheraton that would collaborate to host NeMLA. Shuttles can be organized to UB and maybe Buffalo if an event warrants it. There would be no visa issues since we would be on the American side, but members will be reminded to have their visas in order should they wish to go see the Canadian Horseshoe Falls.
 - Several comments about concern for price, transportation accessibility, etc.
 - Suggestions for the video fellows to do a promotional video about Niagara Falls.
 - **PARTNERSHIP WITH UB:** The MOU with UB is up for renewal for another 3-year term 2020-2023. The executive board recommends renewal.
 - **DATABASE:**
 - A new contract by the database programmers to tweak the database and address some of the issues that chairs have to deal with.
 - In conversation with our programmers about moving, however, to a maintenance/lease model.
 - **BOARD ELECTIONS:**
 - We used to elect people to 2nd VP who would learn after the fact that they had to fundraise for their convention and get the host institution to commit funds to the convention. In the interest of transparency, we made changes to the election process to frontload that information so there would be no surprises for the incoming VP. We now look for candidates from the host institution in the town in which the convention is to take place and we encourage them to get their institution's endorsement before running.

- **FINANCES:** Projected budget (see attachment for more detailed projections)
 - We ended DC with our 100K in savings intact and 16,928 in checking. That means we spent the projected 30K we had projected for the occasion.
 - Projected income:**

Registration/membership	\$ 283,590
Exhibits	\$5100
Host institution	\$5000
Fees	\$3050
	\$296,640
- **OTHER BUSINESS:**
 - 1/ Anglophone/American/British name change: Elaine Savory
 - Vote will be held at the convention board meeting
 - 2/ Travel funds for international attendees? (Susmita Roye)
 - Comments: money for undergraduate students (perhaps a \$100 stipend, could be put on their CV).
 - Possibility to put together a proposal to vote in the next meeting.

II. Officers' Reports

- A. British/Anglophone Literature Director, Elaine Savory**
 - a. Joseph Valente will be the Special Area Event speaker and will address disability studies and autism in his talk.
 - b. British section is doing well!
- B. Member-At-Large, Diversity Report, Susmita Roye**
 - a. Thoughts about translation services as to diversify ourselves a little more.
 - b. Will likely put a proposal forward for travel funds for international students.
- C. Cultural Studies and Media Studies Report, Maria Matz**
 - a. 67 proposals accepted
 - b. 12 second sessions granted
 - c. Lots of cross over with Interdisciplinary Humanities
 - d. Fiction, films, video games, social media; many contemporary themes.
- D. Comparative Literature Report, Katherine Sugg**
 - a. 67 proposals- 59 running. All strong paper proposals
 - b. 15 second sessions
 - c. Considering name change to include comparative literature and theory.
- E. Spanish and Portuguese Language and Literature Report, Victoria Ketz**
 - a. 59 sessions
 - b. Will try to work on suggesting more cross listings to encourage more submissions and attention to the session proposals.
- F. Creative Writing, Publishing and Editing Report, Abby Bardi**
 - a. Accepted 11 sessions and one second session.

- b. Christina Milletti will be interviewing the Keynote Speaker and will also be the guest for the creative writing area event, presenting her new book.
 - c. There is a lot of scope to bring more creative writing people to NeMLA.
 - d. Selling small press books is key
- G. French and Francophone Language and Literature Report, Olivier Le Blond**
- a. 29 sessions
 - b. 4 second sessions
 - c. A few sessions on specific authors that are full panels.
 - d. The special area event speaker will be addressing issues outside of literature such as his experience with cancer and psychology.
- H. Italian Studies Report, Emanuela Pecchioli**
- a. 34 sessions running, of which 6 panels and 1 seminar became second sessions
 - b. An under-represented area in Italian Studies at NeMLA is Renaissance and Medieval Literature; this year there is only one panel on Dante.
 - c. Special Event Millicent Marcus: Films and Cognitive Science.
- I. Past President report, Simona Wright**
- a. Woman Representing Women- was granted a second session of 8-10 participants.
 - b. Three more call for papers for *NeMLA Italian Studies*
 - c. Volunteers to read for the Book Award: Deadline 6 February
 - i. **Volunteers:**
 - ii. Katherine Sugg
 - iii. Maria Plochocki
 - iv. **Other options:**
 - v. Victoria Ketz
 - vi. Elaine Savory
 - vii. Benjamin Railton
 - viii. Alexander Pichugin
- J. German Studies Report, Alexander Pichugin**
- a. German studies had 11 sessions, 8 panels, a round table, seminar and special area event speaker.
 - b. People weren't happy with an early March date.
- K. Women and Genders Caucus Representative Report, Sarah Goldbort**
- a. 36 submissions for panels and roundtable.
 - b. 46 paper proposals submitted to second sessions
 - c. Encourage members to make their WGSC supported sessions broader in scope.
 - d. Breakfast and business meeting will be 2 hours on Saturday morning.
 - e. Special Event will take place on Friday around noon.
- L. Pedagogy and Professionalism Report, Maria Plochocki**
- a. Far above the target for accepted proposals, many of which address cultural literacy and sensitivity and speak to the section's diversity.
 - b. Rhetoric and Composition had fewer submissions than last year; which is still above the target; but only by one.
 - c. Lots of potential to make Rhetoric and Composition its own section, but there is competition from other conferences that happen at the same time.

- d. Special Area Event speaker will actually be a workshop with Dr. Melanie Holms. Talking about publishing in a less than supportive environment. Francisco and the CAITY caucus helped developed the event.
- e. Always looking for more opportunities for collaboration between areas.

M. CAITY Caucus President and Representative, Francisco Delgado

- a. Co-sponsoring the workshop with Dr. Holms.
- b. Promoting upcoming award deadlines January 6th for Award Travel, January 10th for the Essay Award.
- c. They sent out a survey and vote to change the caucus name and to turn away from an identity-based name to an action-based name, in the end the CAITY name remained the same. It was thus at the same time an initiative to mobilize the membership and gauge active involvement.

N. Graduate Student Caucus Representative, Christian Ylagan

- a. Nicole Lowman had to resign her position as President and Christian has taken over.
- b. Elections are underway for new president and communications advisor.
- c. The two GSC supported sessions received enough abstracts.
- d. Post-convention surveys showed interest in intersectionality roundtables.
- e. There were many volunteers from the caucus to co-chair sessions.
- f. Travel Awards, November 4th possible deadline extension, maybe even a week.
- g. Updating the Room & Ride share forum format, it's been completely overhauled, it can go live soon.
- h. The GSC is working on updating the travel award guideline verbiage to avoid any confusion.
- i. Working on the budget since there has an uptick in the participants in our meet and greats and business meetings.
- j. The GSC meet and great will be on Friday.

O. First Vice-President Report, Brandi So

- a. Exploring some service opportunities in the local communities for the conventions; charity and service work in the community for future conventions is a conversation to be had in the Spring.
- b. Did secure the host institution for the convention; the Department of Romance Languages & Literatures in Philadelphia.
- c. Location is centralized and close to museums and shops.
- d. Theme: "Tradition and Innovation: Changing Worlds through the Humanities"
- e. Plenty of board nominations, a great profile for the elections coming up.
- f. Joseph Valente for the future Second-Vice President position.

P. President Report, Carole Salmon

- a. New initiatives; going greener and the new app is exciting!
- b. The My NeMLA Photo Contest; the upcoming *MLS* issue will display the photographers as well as on the website.
- c. Considering the option of an edited volume for the Boston Convention.
- d. The Spring Meeting will be on Thursday, March 5th at 7am.

IV. Motion to adjourn at 2:15pm