

**NEMLA Board of Directors' Meeting, Harrisburg  
Saturday, October 19, 2013  
Hilton, Harrisburg – Leland Room, 11:00am**

**Board Members Present:** President, Ellen Dolgin, Dominican College; Daniela Antonucci, Princeton University, First Vice President; Ben Railton, Fitchburg State University, Second Vice President;; Suha Kudsieh, College of Staten Island CUNY, British and Anglophone Literatures Director; Astrid Weigert, Georgetown University, German Language and Literature Director; Giovanni Spani, College of the Holy Cross, Italian Language and Literature Director; Gillian Pierce, Boston University, Comparative Languages and Literatures/ World Literatures Director; Margarita Vargas, University at Buffalo, Cultural Studies and Film Director; Rita Bode, Trent University, Women's and Gender Caucus; Barry Spence, University of Massachusetts, Graduate Caucus Representative; Donovan Ramon, Rutgers University, Member at Large: Diversity; Laurence Roth, Susquehanna University, *Modern Language Studies* editor.

**Non-Board Members Present:** Elizabeth Abele, Executive Director, SUNY Nassau Community College; Carine Mardorossian, Assoc. Executive Director, University at Buffalo; Amanda Chase and Sara-Jane Abate, Local Student Representatives from Susquehanna University

**Not Present:** Maria Matz, Spanish and Portuguese Director (on sabbatical abroad- report in Dropbox)

### **Introductions**

#### **I. Local Representatives Report: Amanda Chase and Sarah-Jane Abate, Susquehanna Univ.**

The local representatives are researching the following local activities: Appalachian Brewing Company, Whitaker Center, National Civil War Museum, Walking/Bus Tours, Midtown Scholars Bookstore, Hershey Story, Hershey Park (Open or not?), Zoo America, Indian Echo Caverns, Joseph Presley House. Ben Railton mentions City Island and the Senators Baseball Team. In Lancaster there's the Lancaster Historic Walking Tours, Kettle Village and Heritage Center Museum. In Gettysburg there's the National Military Park, Walking Tours and Ghost of Gettysburg Candle Light Tours. In Carlisle there's the LGBT Community Center of PA and Sports Emporium. Donovan Ramon asked about activities for members of color. They recommend the Underground Railroad. For music there's a folk music/bluegrass performance at Appalachian Brewing Company. Rita Bode asked about the State Library of Pennsylvania. It is open on Thursday.

#### **II. Approval of Spring 2013 Board minutes**

Moved by Laurence Roth and seconded by Rita Bode. Passed unanimously.

#### **III. Executive Director's Report, Elizabeth Abele**

##### **-Finances**

The transition to *Reg Online* went smoothly (formally with *Acteva*). The \$100,000 surplus remains sturdy moving over to the University at Buffalo. Budgets should continue to run at a break-even, without raising membership fees with the administrative support of University at Buffalo and journal support of Susquehanna University. Based on the accounting firm's recommendation, NeMLA is in the process of switching its reporting year with the IRS to a July-June calendar year, better reflecting our activity. The banking account has been shifted to Wells Fargo from USAA. NeMLA was rejected for a tax exempt status in Pennsylvania, largely because there is not a wide enough constituency for Pennsylvania to consider NeMLA as a charity. For Connecticut, NeMLA will need to apply for multiple tax-exempts (food, service, etc.).

### **-CAITY Caucus/continuing our support for them**

CAITY Caucus unofficially disappeared. For the past three years since Elizabeth Anderman completed her board-sponsored appointment, CAITY has failed to hold a certifiable election or sponsor an event with more than 12 in attendance. They did not submit a final report for 2012-13 as required.

Ben Railton is sponsoring a roundtable to talk about the needs of Contingent faculty. Since NeMLA staff is now administering the travel grants the question was raised who among CAITY's constituencies should be eligible for travel grants. Rita Bode proposed it should go to just part-time faculty. Barry Spence agreed. Ellen Dolgin suggested we should help these members strategize better and set up sessions. Elizabeth Abele noted these sessions are rarely well attended. Ben Railton suggested they could try making specific days for specific topics.

The Board discussed appointing someone until there could be an election for a Member-at-Large: Professional Development. Suha Kudsieh, who will be rotating off the Board in April, has the experience for this role. Jennifer Harris argued that the last time we elected someone brand new they didn't know how the board worked, wasting the opportunity. *Motion made by Jennifer Harris for the person to be appointed by the board. Daniela Antonucci nominated Suha Kudsieh. Seconded by Rita Bode. All in favor.*

### **-Board Positions: area and evolving needs**

Member at Large: Diversity is being renewed. This position needs to continue to create things that reflect the diversity of the membership and the panels. Currently there is no director for the Professional, Composition or Pedagogy. Creative Writing in recent years been curated by the *MLS* editor.

M. Vargas suggested that there could be more cross-listing. E. Abele said there could be potentially an additional cross listing for the call for papers but not in the printed program. There could be more tagging in the electronic version—however, the current Search function allows potential attendees to find sessions of interest across Areas. G. Pierce said that if there is a Pedagogy director then it should be clear what will be discussed and stated that “film” should be removed as a separate category because it just goes into different language areas. R. Bode argued for a specific film designation. D. Antonucci asked if it would be possible to have a person on the board to oversee all the proposals to see if some could be placed in a different area. E. Abele said that she does that and had specifically asked the Executive Board to do that. J. Harris argued that participants should do their “homework,” and that it's unwieldy to completely start breaking everything up. B. Spence partially agreed but suggested a survey to see just how many people use the hard copy compared to the electronic copy.

There was a discussion about the difficulty of having only one candidate for the second vice president. R. Bode stated that we should be thinking two or three years ahead for who the president could be. NEMLA Board involvement is very important for the identification and vetting of all Board nominees, she said.

Staffing –There is currently no UB administrative assistant in place, while NeMLA is facing 1700 people who need to be registered. There's a good candidate at UB that's going to come onboard. In addition, the limited staff will need to see how many people are on multiple panels in violation of NeMLA's policies. E. Abele asked Johanna Wagner, Grace Wetzel, and Rachel Sphere to assist with the convention. They'll be handling some of the prescheduling. They'll still have the chair coordinator help.

### **-The 2013 Convention**

It went smoothly. It was very large and very active, though the evening events had small attendance, possibly due to the number of overflow hotels. The keynote had no larger attendance than Rochester. Sunday workshop ran overtime and there was overflow attendance.

The translation speaker and the men's study panel were the only sessions that received complaints. People thought that the translation studies session was too basic and too far ranged. J. Harris heard the complaints: they felt he wasn't actually someone that did translation studies; there's a difference between a translator and person that does translator studies. G. Pierce mentioned the disconnect between the audience and the speaker. B. Spence said he's a fantastic translator but the audience just didn't relate to him.

M. Vargas asked about the American Walking Tour that was supposed to happen but the person didn't show up. E. Abele said participants were refunded.

### **-2014 Convention**

You can get a lower rate at the Crowne Plaza if you prepay. Self-parking is \$10 or \$22 for valet. The Radisson Penn Harris is across the bridge and can park for free there then take the shuttle over.

Currently 357 sessions have been finalized, with 27 pending. There are now 33 officially withdrawn sessions, a lower rate than Rochester that had more than 10%. The bad news is that there are no second session slots because NeMLA is at capacity. R. Bode suggested that they could increase breakout rooms. E. Abele will see what the cost is at the Crown Plaza to add more breakout rooms. B. Railton made a motion to add additional rooms at the Crown Plaza. Seconded by S. Kudsieh. All in favor.

Second session approvals: a session must have a minimum of 10 abstracts to be considered for a second session. Area Directors should also consider the original sessions: sometimes a session receives 30+ abstracts because it was too broad. Area Directors should review second session requests and prioritize them. D. Antonucci stated that some second sessions would be better as a seminar. For media, there will only be projectors available. There will be no DVDs/VCRs.

**MLA Convention-** last year was the first official NeMLA presence at this convention. Grad students worked the tables. There will be flyers at the Harrisburg and Toronto conventions, also pens and tablecloths. Still don't know if they can have a cash bar. J. Harris and G. Pierce said they would like to go.

### **-Future Conventions**

The 2015 Convention in Toronto is the first week of May; we don't know how this will impact people's schedules. The Fairmont should be able to accommodate all NeMLA members, but NeMLA may block a second hotel that's less expensive for graduate students. B. Spence confirmed the importance of this block since graduate students don't know their funding until the last minute. J. Harris asked B. Spence to remind the students they need their passports (and/or I20) to get across the border.

E. Abele asked the Board to review current Areas to see if there were any changes needed for the 2015 call for Session Proposals. *L. Roth motioned to combine Professional and Pedagogy to one new area. Seconded by D. Antonucci. All in favor. R. Bode motioned to replace the category of composition with Rhetoric & Composition. C. Mardorossian seconded it. All in favor. L. Roth motioned to change Culture Studies and Film to Culture and Media Studies. E. Dolgin seconded. All in favor.*

## **-Professional Development Colloquiums @ UBuff in summers**

There's the possibility of professional development colloquiums in other major cities such as New York, working in conjunctions with Regional ASAs. At the University at Buffalo Research Library, there's the potential to do summer seminars on site – James Joyce, Mark Twain and poetry.

## **-Poster Sessions update**

This is the second year of NeMLA's Poster Session. This year, there will also be a Call for Poster Proposals. Bill Sizemore has volunteered to chair the poster session. J. Harris will advise if required.

## **IV. Assoc. Executive Director's Report, Carine Mardorossian -Workshops spreadsheet**

This was the first year that NeMLA accepted proposals directly from members for Workshops. C. Mardorossian recommended six workshops, asking the Board about any concerns about overlap. She has recruited fellows from UB to work on the NeMLA Convention. She has been serving on the Search Committee for the NeMLA assistant: 54 applicants, with 5 interviewed. An offer will be going out to the top candidate.

## **V. Officer and Committee Reports**

### **1. President's Report, Ellen Dolgin**

Ellen Dolgin reviewed the major events for the Convention and the successful relationship with Susquehanna University. Her focus with the Convention has been on performing, with David Staller as the keynote from Project Shaw, as well as events sponsored by Suha Kudsieh and Daniela Antonucci.

There were questions about the Book Award and who will run this without a Past President. E. Dolgin will seek advice and information from Bill Waddell. Ohio University Press is tied to publishing the Anglophone award. Farleigh Dickenson Press is tied to the modern language award, and would be interested in working more with NeMLA

### **2. First Vice President's Report, Daniela Antonucci**

- **Nominating Committee and Elections:** 11 nominations were received for multiple candidates for the openings in Diversity, Italian, German, British-Anglophone. But only one candidate has been confirmed for the Second Vice President. This is the first time that NeMLA ran an election without multiple candidates for each position. E. Abele expressed her concern because of the importance of Second Vice President, and the candidate was someone that was not familiar to the Committee. The Committee would finalize the bios and statements, so that the ballot could be sent to the membership by the end of the month.

- **Summer Fellowship Reports:** The Committee enforced the new criteria that applicants be active members of NeMLA. Nine people received it and only four sent a report. R. Bode said that there should be specific dates that the reports should be sent in so that they can get their money.

## **-2015 Convention, Toronto**

D. Antonucci suggested that session proposals should be able to have more than one cross listing. E. Abele presented that the Board is asked to review sessions across Areas at the time of review, expressing a concern that offering a third Area to all chairs would create an unmanageable CFP. *J. Harris makes a motion that if chairs want to have a third category that language be introduced. B. Railton seconded the*

motion. J. Harris tabled the motion. Referred back to at the end of the meeting. J. Harris withdrew the motion.

### **3. Second Vice President's Report, Ben Railton**

**-Fellowship Committee-** B. Railton called for committee members J. Harris, B. Spence, E. Dolgin, B. Railton volunteer to help.

- 2016 Convention – University of Connecticut is solidly online as the host institution. B. Railton is also working to involve other local institutions.

### **4. Modern Language Studies, Laurence Roth, editor**

They have a new website ([modernlanguagestudies.org](http://modernlanguagestudies.org)), created through Wordpress. Susquehanna University will have student staff to keep it updated. Any information for NeMLA Notes should be sent to him by December 1<sup>st</sup> and should include items that convention attendees will be interested in seeing (about 250-1000 words/short newsletter style)

#### **0 Language Director & Caucus Reports**

- **American – Jennifer Harris**

For the American event this year, American will again screen a film: *Alice Walker – Beauty in Truth*. The filmmakers are enthusiastic about screening at the conference.

- **British/Anglophone- Suha Kudsieh**

- **A summary of Cristina Santos' report of area directors meeting in Spring, 2013**
- Special event – The Gamut Theatre will present a workshop on *Macbeth* by the Gamut Theater, followed by question and answer period. It'll be at the theatre in the adjacent Strawberry Square. Cost \$500 for the workshop. There is a question about whether to have the reception in their space or at the Hilton

- **Italian – Giovanna Spani**

- In addition to the featured speaker, G. Spani will sponsor a roundtable on the state of Italian Studies in North America. NeMLA has emerged as a central location for these conversations. Volume 35 of *NeMLA Italian Studies* will be coming out in November. #36 & 37 is getting papers. #38 is almost there. *NIS* looks forward to partnering with the University of Buffalo Romance Languages Dept. in the further development of the journal.

- **Spanish/Portuguese – Maria Matz (in absentia)**

- **German – Astrid Weigert**

- The sponsored event will be a film about an East German space mission that never was. Connects to East Germany (25 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall). There is the possibility of screening it at the Whitaker Center. The Russian sub-Area remains a challenge, with only three sessions this year. It is a consideration whether it would be more useful to rename the German Area to incorporate Eastern European languages.

- **French – Anna Rocca**

- Initial proposals for the French Area were light, but with extra effort, A. Rocca was able to bring it up to a field of 23
- For their special event, there are two people coming: Rhea Côté Robbins, founder and director of The Franco-American Women's Institute, together with Franco-American poet Jeri Theriault who will read excerpts from their new works. Women in French remain involved with NeMLA and will offer sponsorship.
- **Comparative Literatures & Theory – Gillian Pierce**
  - With the new Area title, there was a both good quality and quantity of proposals, including Arabic proposals. There will be a workshop with Laurence Venutti from Temple University. Thomas Beebee from Penn State has just confirmed as the featured speaker. He just finished a book *Citation and Precedent: Conjunctions and Disjunctions of German Law and Literature*.
- **Cultural Studies & Film – Margarita Vargas**
  - No problems with this Area, with 37 proposals representing a good diversity.
- **Women's and Gender Studies Caucus – Rita Bode**

The Caucus special event is a talk by Ann Jurecic of Rutgers, whose research interests are at the intersections of literary studies, composition studies, and the medical humanities. In addition to continuing Shakespeare's Sisters, they will be adding a separate breakfast event. The Caucus is still looking for mentors. The Caucus would like to update the website, but it takes a while to get answers. E. Abele reported that work to get support for the current webmaster from UB has not yet materialized, but that efforts are going forward to improve the situation.

#### **Diversity – Donavon Ramon**

- Don Ramon would like to see more diversity in panels in the areas of Jewish, Asian, and LGBTQ. He is planning a Meet & Greet for the NeMLA members of the Diversity Area. With Diversity, it is key to promote diversity both with sessions and with membership. Caribbean author and scholar Angelique Nixon from Susquehanna University will be the speaker.
- **Graduate Student Caucus – Barry Spence**
  - Instead of organizing a Workshop this year, the Caucus has put their energy into the development of a C.V. Clinic. E. Abele approved a Fellow to support this new effort, to match graduate students with a faculty mentor for 30-minute session. The Caucus will also sponsor a Meet and Greet on Thursday and two roundtables. The Caucus continues to administer its Room and Rideshare Board and the competitive Travel Grant program.

#### **Other Business**

1. **Interdisciplinary sessions:** Daniela Antonucci re-introduced the question of allowing additional cross-listing. The current website does allow for full search by keyword, which actually allows more accessibility than additional cross-listing Areas, serving topics like “medieval” and “ecocriticism” and “Caribbean.”

2. **Toronto Publishing roundtables, workshops:**

Suha Kudsieh reiterated her commitment to organizing Publishing sessions, which dovetails with her 2014-15 position as Member-at-Large: Professional Development. She stated that she would like to invite editors from area academic publishers to discuss the proposal.

The other roundtable she is considering would be publication in journals. Most people who respond to these sessions are associate professors or higher, but it’s difficult to get grad students or assistant professors. She would like to see more fresh experience on the session. L. Roth commented that every article is like your first article; sometimes it becomes even harder after the first. C. Mardorossian said she could give names of some published grad students. The question of online journals vs. print journals was discussed.

3. **Area Directors**

At their breakfast meeting, Area Directors mentioned that they would like the option to serve for a fourth year – to carry on with the projects they initiated at the start of their service. E. Abele thanked Directors for their interest, but explained that an extension of their term would be against NEMLA’s bylaws. The second suggestion was to have clearer deadlines. There was some discussion that these deadlines are all in the newsletter, and do not change from year to year. The Area Directors will finalize the draft for the Area Director contract (initiated by C. Santos), as well as review the Guidelines for Session Chairs.

**Meeting Adjourned at 5:15pm**