

NeMLA Board Meeting- Spring 2014

NeMLA Board of Directors' Meeting, Harrisburg

Thursday, April 3, 2013

Hilton, Harrisburg – Leland Room, 7:30am

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 (outgoing); **Marie-Eve Monette**, McGill University, Graduate Caucus Representative (incoming) **Donavan Ramon**, Rutgers University, Member at Large: Diversity; **Jennifer Harris**, University of Waterloo, American/British Literatures Director; 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; **Renata Towne**, Administrative Coordinator, University at Buffalo

Introductions: Introductions were made of all in attendance

I. Approval of Fall 2013 Board minutes

Jennifer Harris requested the change from “translator studies” be made to “translation studies”

Moved by Ben Railton and seconded by Laurence Roth. Passed unanimously.

II. Executive Director's Report, Elizabeth Abele

-Finances

The surplus is inching up to approximately \$95,000-\$100,000. As it is the member's money, it should be spent on the membership.

Our IRS reporting was changed to a June 30 end of fiscal year vs. the previous December 31 end of fiscal year.

-Media

Our expenses were low this year due to media projectors
Only 1 or 2 dvd/vcr were requested

-Hotel Attrition

We wound up with not enough rooms. Both the Crowne and Hilton increased our block size with them. We paid extra to have a shuttle service between the hotels. We are not anticipating any surprises on the hotel bills.

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-CAITY caucus/our support for them

Despite not being strong or active in the previous year, Maria Plochocki pursued having CAITY represented at this convention. The bylaws state that a caucus must be actively serving its members and that the caucus must be certified. They need to hold a meeting and use a democratic process and have at least two candidates to serve on the board. This is why we created the “member at large for professional development” position.

-Rita Bode suggested that there needs to be a dedicated adjunct on the board to represent that constituency and have a voice in decisions made for NeMLA.

-Barry Spence stated his opinion that the issue with CAITY is that perhaps people don't want to identify with that group.

-Ben Railton will be discussing this issue as part of his roundtable on contingent faculty. He agreed that we should move in the direction of having a designated board member in charge of adjunct faculty.

-Elizabeth Abele stated that her issue was with their ability to meet the requirements set forth through the bylaws and indicated that WGS and GSC have had no issues in complying with these requirements.

-MLA presence

Kristin LeVeness was our delegate for the MLA in 2014. We had a hard time getting them to secure a table for us. We held a social at the MLA but the only people who attended were board members (Suha and Laurence) and current NeMLA volunteers for a total of about 15 attendees

Harrisburg convention notes

Roundtables have been an issue. WE need to address roundtable vs. panel and do a better job of explaining how they work.

- Ben Railton indicated that the roundtable format was more informal and not just a “read your paper” session
- Ellen Dolgin- institutions do not recognize roundtables as a presentation. The roundtable description should be included in the call for papers.
- Elizabeth Abele-Possibly create a different deadline for roundtables. There were many roundtables this year that were withdrawn and the ones which remained had low participation numbers. With 90 minutes for a roundtable we need a good chair to moderate the session. Chairs should be prepared to make replacements for dropouts. We need better chair education to make these work.

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- Astrid Weigert requested that Ellen make roundtable guidelines available
- Rita Bode- suggested increasing the number we accept for a roundtable

Seminar numbers have been down this year. Chairs have to agree to at least 6 to get 2 hours. Those who did not meet that were moved to track 2 or track 18.

-Elizabeth recommended limiting 2nd sessions next year.

Media Policy

- Elizabeth felt that requiring chairs to pay a media fee made them more aware to request media.
- No vcr/dvd were run
- We were charged \$800/day for a room with a media projector but that cost is down from previous years.
- We cannot guarantee internet hookup for sessions even if the hotel claims to have it.
- Suha Kudsieh- Having no guarantee on internet is a standard policy
- Jennifer Harris- As far as she is aware there were no complaints regarding our media policies

Poster Session

- This was scheduled for the time right before the keynote speaker
- There needs to be a chairperson to coordinate this session
- Participants in the poster session paid an auditor rate

Staffing

- Elizabeth felt that things “did not go well” this year
- Kristin had surgery a few weeks ago and therefore was unable to attend the convention
- Elizabeth cancelled her January vacation to ensure that things were running smoothly
- Elizabeth will be done with the Executive Director position on Sunday and will finish up the last few financial pieces.

CAITY

- Elizabeth referred to them as the “caucus that will not die”
- They are neither strong nor active.
- The bylaws state that you need to be actively serving
- This caucus is member generated. Therefore, if they don’t want it then we should not have it.
- They often struggle to get more than 10 people to a meeting.
- The bylaws require certification.
- They need a democratic process for a minimum of 2 candidates
- The weakness of this caucus was the reason why we developed the “Member-at-Large Professional Development” position
- Rita Bode- There should be a dedicated adjunct on the board to represent that constituency and have a voice re: decisions.
- Barry Spence- The issue with CAITY may be that people don’t want to identify with that
- Ben stated that this will be discussed as part of the roundtable on contingents. We should move in the direction of having a designated board member in charge of adjunct faculty.
- Elizabeth stated that the other caucuses (WGS and GCS) have had no issues with requirements.

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MLA Convention

- Kristin was our delegate
- We had to fight to get a table for this convention
- NeMLA held a social gathering
 - o Suha and Lawrence were in attendance.
 - o The event drew approximately 15 people most of whom were either board members or volunteers
- Lawrence stated that our table was in a very poor spot
- MMLA was not there at all
- Some expense was incurred (flyers and pens)
- Elizabeth said that MLA is indifferent to how NeMLA operates. As per the bylaws, if NeMLA folds they will get whatever money is left.
- Rita Bode said that it may be helpful if we let our members know that we will be represented at MLA
- The board decided that it was worthwhile to keep the table at the MLA convention.
- Elizabeth stated that we do have an option to apply for a professional session at MLA because we are affiliated.
- We have missed our opportunity for planning a regional session at MLA for next year
- We could combine with other regional MLAs.
- Per Elizabeth our relationship with the other regional MLAs has been good.

Associate Director –Carine Mardorossian

- Carine stated that NeMLA is in a stage of transition
- The University at Buffalo is excited to sponsor us
- Carine discussed office space with UB to discuss possible upgrade. Nothing is available at this time
- We have access to supplies through the English department
- UB has supplied us with a part time administrative person and a graduate assistant
 - o Renata Towne is the administrative coordinator
 - o Jesse Miller will be our 20 hr./week grad assistant starting Fall 2014
 - Jesse was previously our exhibitor fellow.
- We have secured key staff who will return next year
- RegOnline has had some issues. We are looking at our options

Caribbean Essay Prize

- Carine thanked Laurence for his assistance with selecting the winning essay.

Workshops

- These were opened to the membership this year.
- Trying to determine if they were successful
- Each workshop with a fee drew approximately 10 participants
- The Poetry workshop drew 5 participants
- MOOC did not draw much interest and we were prepared to cancel it.
- NEH drew 50 participants with several on a waitlist. This workshop was offered for free.
- Barry Spence felt that the fee of \$25 was too high.
- The free workshops were more of a presentation than a workshop

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- Barry felt that a fee of \$15 was less formidable
- We had to provide lunch for the Thursday workshops since they were offered from 11-2:30.
 - o Elizabeth felt that if we didn't charge anything to people for the workshops that they would not show up.

Special Events

- Area directors felt that our offering was very good
- Fellows were sent in to make sure that everything was running on track

Local Events

- Our local reps this year have been great (Sarah Jane Abate and Amanda Chase)
- If it rains for the Capitol District Walk tour we have a room reserved at the Hilton and a video will be shown.

Toronto Convention 2015

- Planning is underway
- Thanks to Elizabeth for all of her help in securing the Fairmont and contract negotiations
- Planning a site visit for late May
 - o Obtaining an overview of the hotel, meeting with local reps, etc.
- We will qualify for an HST rebate. The Fairmont will handle this for us
- The Fall board meeting will take place **October 24th and 25th**

Website

- Carine met with the communications department at UB
- The English department is a good example of a site that functions well
- Our website is our "window to the world"
- Rita Bode stated that the Women's caucus is interested in their visibility on the website

Board President- Ellen Dolgin

- Considers that she has been "Co-Presidents" with Laurence
- Ellen stated that everyone had a vision for this conference and she is thrilled with what we have
- She thanked Elizabeth for all of her hard work

Keynote Speaker

- David Staller is very delighted to be a part of this and may participate in the Shaw roundtables

Book Award

- We received two submissions for the book award
- The manuscript read by James Reitter will be at the brunch on Sunday
- Elizabeth stated that we need to think about how a book award can better serve the membership

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Board 1st Vice-President-Daniela Antonucci

- We have 7 new people on the board next year
- The member-at-large diversity resigned so we have someone to replace them
 - o They will be here at brunch on Sunday.

Toronto 2015

- Ryerson has been very good to work with thus far
- We have a host institution liaison team
 - o Andrea and Alison will be the local reps with Kinga Zawada serving as liaison
- We have had difficulty in finding a keynote speaker
 - o Ryerson would like to suggest some possibilities with the hope that we can come to a mutual agreement
 - o Rohinton Mistry was invited but he does not do speaking engagements
 - o Ryerson would like to find a scholar and has given us a list of people
 - o Looking for someone with a wider perspective
 - o Several board members made suggestions on possibilities for Canadian keynote speakers
 - o Laurence Roth suggested the possibility of using an agency to pursue the keynote

Board 2nd Vice President- Ben Railton

- Summer fellowship decisions are all set
- They will discuss their projects at the brunch

2016 convention-Hartford, CT

- UConn is the local host
- UHartford and Trinity College are also interested in being involved
- Working with UConn to pursue student and faculty reps
- The vision for this convention is public service
- We want this convention to connect to the rest of Hartford
- Considering the possible use of local news center

Modern Language Studies-Laurence Roth, Editor

- MLS issue is out
- There is a cluster on teaching creative writing
 - o June 1, 2014 is the deadline for submissions
 - o Please let the areas and caucuses know that we are looking for submissions
 - o We have a strong need for pieces on pedagogy as well as more articles relating to the profession
- We are also publishing poetry and fiction and are open to “anything”

Anglophone Literatures Director-American-Jennifer Harris

- American Lit is healthy at this convention and has an increased representation
- Wants to have a panel in honor of Dan Walden

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- When he died we lost some proposals and never contacted them
- This area doesn't require a lot of special events
- Jennifer stated that she lives an hour outside of Toronto and has already pre-distributed a number of flyers

Anglophone Literatures Director-British-Suha Kudsieh

- This area has been growing in number of panels and she feels that the area is well represented at this convention
- Next year hoping for an increase in Canadian panels
- The medieval and renaissance area has suffered.
- She has offered assistance to her successor and thanks the board president and executive director for all of their assistance

Italian Languages and Literatures Director-Giovanni Spani

- There are 36 Italian panels including opera at this convention
- He has also seen a decline in the middle ages and renaissance area
- *Italian Studies* will be published in December
- Carine stated that there will be a fellow at UB in Italian Studies
- Gloria Pastorino will be the new director

Spanish and Portuguese Languages and Literature Director- Maria Matz

- This area has 40 sessions at the convention and a lot of diversity
- 5 sessions are lusophone
- As with other areas, middle ages are not well represented
 - Elizabeth stated that many medievalists go to the conference in Kalamazoo in the spring so there is a conflict with our conference.
- Carmen Boulosa is bringing her film and we are lucky to have her.

German and Russian Languages and Literatures Director-Astrid Weigert

- The Russian area is a problem
 - We have 2 sessions only because she worked with her colleagues to create them
- Recommends her successor get the help of the board with their colleagues in Slavic departments
- Elizabeth said that Russian should be its own separate area
- Rita Bode stated that for the Toronto convention that the University of Toronto has a strong Slavic department and so does York University
- There are two sessions on Germans in Pennsylvania at the Harrisburg convention
- 23 sessions was a lot of work for her
- There are many competing conferences in this area at the same time (Kalamazoo and the Austrian conference)
- This is the end of her term
- Will be meeting with Lynn Kutch to go over everything

French/Francophone Director- Anna Rocca

- This area had 20 sessions at the convention
- She would like to see more than 25
- Anna requested the board suggest ways to attract more participants
- Many conferences conflict with NeMLA
- The quality and variety of the proposals was good but 10 had no sponsorship and had to be cut

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- She would like more special events to make contacts
- This area would like to work with Caribbean /South African
- A panel around the research of the NeMLA past president who passed away was discussed.

Comparative Languages and Theory-Gillian Pierce

- This area was represented by 38 sessions including 5 World Lit
- She is trying to encourage more Arabic (there were 5 this year)
- the area will be sponsoring Professor Thomas Beebee of Pennsylvania State University

Cultural Studies and Film Director-Margarita Vargas

- She raised a concern about the status of the position as there was no replacement named
- Thanked all for their support of her in the position

Women's and Gender Studies Caucus Representative-Rita Bode

- Thanks to all caucus officers
- This area is represented by over 40 panels this year
- Her flyer advertises even those which are in other areas
- Thanks to all working on Shakespeare sister mentoring
- This year's essay winner is present at the convention
 - o There were 8 submissions all of which were high quality
- After the convention they will be holding elections
- This is her last year on the board. Thanks to all who supported this caucus

Member-at-Large: Diversity- Donovan Ramon

- The diversity event will be held at Ceolta's pub
 - o The event will take place on the 46th anniversary of the MLK assassination.
 - o Angelique Nixon will read from her poetry collection
- This area is hoping for more events in Toronto we can promote that fall under the category of diversity
- He will be meeting with the board member who will be replacing him
 - o Stressing work on Jewish, Asian and LGBTQ representation
- This is his last year and he was thankful for everyone's support
- Jennifer Harris offered her assistance for the new board member in this area
- Barry Spence commented that there were no Asian sessions this year.
- The ASA and MELUS conferences were close to the same date as NeMLA
- Ecocriticism was brought back this year
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Graduate Student Caucus Representative-Barry Spence

- Caucus activity should not prevent students from attending events
- Marie-Eve is successor
- There were a record number of travel award submissions this year
- He is very happy with our level of funding for graduate students
- There were 12 submissions for the paper prize
 - o Casey Hayman was the winner

Graduate Student Caucus (continued)

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- The big initiative for this year is the CV clinic
 - o Indigo Eriksen has been wonderful in setting it up
 - o There are approximately 70 CV clinic sessions
 - o It was organized ahead of time and CV's were sent to advisors prior to the clinic
- Barry thought that the CV clinic was a good way for NeMLA to be a rival to other conferences including MLA because it is a friendlier environment
- There were also two professionalization roundtables
- This is his last time on the board in this position. Thanks to all for their support

Bylaw Reviews

- Ellen wondered if we should put off the review of the bylaws
- Jennifer Harris would like the fees to be updated to the current rates and terms for the awards should all be updated prior to the fall board meeting.
- It was suggested that with so many new board members next year that it may be better to discuss the bylaw changes at the fall board meeting
- Carine reminded the board that any changes to the bylaws have to be voted on by the membership
- Carine also suggested that it would not make sense to list specific fee amounts in the bylaws as they would need to be changed every time there was a rate change.

Ben Railton suggested that a committee should be formed to review the bylaws

The motion was seconded by Daniela Antonucci

- Ellen, Ben and Daniela volunteered to serve on the committee
- Carine asked that everyone who has looked over the bylaws make suggestions for changes to the committee

New board member direction

- We need new contracts for new directors/board members
- There should be clearer guidelines for incoming area directors
- The contract should be signed by the area director and the first vice president

Meeting adjourned at approximately 12:00pm

Minutes submitted by Renata Towne, Administrative Coordinator