

NeMLA Board Meeting, November 19, 2016
Online
1:00 PM – 4:00 PM (approximately)

Board Members Present:

Hilda Chacon, Nazareth College, President; Maria DiFrancesco, Ithaca College, First Vice President; Laurence Roth, Susquehanna University, Editor of *Modern Language Studies*; Lynn Marie Kutch, Kutztown University, German Languages and Literatures Director; John Casey, University of Illinois at Chicago, American/Anglophone Literatures Director; Emily Lauer, Suffolk County Community College, CAITY; Richard Schumaker, University of Maryland University College, Comparative Languages and Theory Director; Christina Milletti, University at Buffalo, Creative Writing, Publishing, & Editing Director; Gloria Pastorino, Farleigh Dickinson University, Italian Languages and Literatures Director; Angela Fulk, Buffalo State College, Pedagogy and Professional Director; Susmita Roye, Delaware State University, Anglophone/British Area; Rachel Spear, Francis Marion University; Women's and Gender Studies Caucus Representative; Nicole Lowman, Graduate Caucus President; Lisa Perdigao, Florida Institute of Technology, Cultural Studies and Media Studies Director;

Board Members Absent:

Ben Railton, Fitchburg State University, Past President; Diversity, Vetri Nathan.

Non-Board Members Present:

Carine Mardorossian, University at Buffalo, Executive Director; Brandi So, Stony Brook University, Associate Executive Director; Sarah Goldbort, Graduate Assistant;

- I. **Introductions;** Thanking Hilda for writing post-election note about violence
- II. **Call to Order:** The Meeting was called to order at 1:08 by Executive Director Carine Mardorossian
- III. **Approval of Fall 2016 minutes:** ED Mardorossian made a motion to approve the minutes for Fall 2016 minutes at 1:10. Approved by unanimous vote with no adjustments
- IV. **Executive Director's Report, Carine Mardorossian**
 - A. **Financial Review:** ED Mardorossian stated that NeMLA is maintaining a sound financial profile with a \$100,000 cushion in the Wells Fargo savings account. She explained that due to the absence of a Wells Fargo branch in Buffalo, NY, the funds will be moved to Bank of America. With the f&b minimum at \$80,000 in Baltimore, Mardorossian emphasized the importance of proceeding with caution with expenses associated with the 2017 convention so as to ensure extra funds are available for NeMLA's 50th anniversary in D.C. The special event budget was raised from \$500 to \$1000 for all special events and this is a trend NeMLA will want to see continue.
 - B. ED Mardorossian explained that the database programmers were retained with a new contract to add functionalities that will make registration and scheduling even more user friendly.
 - **Staff and Fellows:** ED Mardorossian welcomed **Derek McGrath**, NeMLA's new Administrative Coordinator! Derek will be continuing as marketing coordinator of NeMLA alongside his assistant duties. **Sarah Goldbort** is NeMLA's new Graduate Assistant and will be coordinating the fellows and the local reps for Baltimore.
 - The position of chair coordinator at NeMLA was done away with because the database functionality has made that post redundant.

- The number of graduate fellows this year is 3 but another offer was extended to additional fellows as needs arose.

C. **Future convention sites for 2019-2021:** NeMLA signed a 3-year booking contract with Marriott. This includes the luxurious Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center for our 50th Anniversary in the nation's capital.

- 2018, Pittsburgh, PA, (local host: University of Pittsburgh)
- 2019, Washington D.C. (local host TBD: Simona is working on Georgetown)
- 2020, Boston, MA
- 2021, Philadelphia, PA (local host TBD) at the Marriott Downtown

ED Mardorossian explained that this resulted in a lot of concessions and better rates by virtue of signing a multi-year contract. NeMLA is in the process of trying to secure tax-exemption for Baltimore, which is by far the most expensive site NeMLA has had in a while. She discussed the potential local and cultural events available to the membership and those NeMLA will probably sponsor once the results of the survey are in.

D. **Baltimore Convention:**

- i. **Sessions:** 517 session proposals and 396 were accepted; 2570 abstracts were submitted and 1664 were accepted.
- ii. **ABSTRACT SUBMISSION:** Discussion ensued about whether NeMLA will want to put a cap on the # of abstracts that can be submitted per convention. One person submitted 11 altogether, 1 submitted 8, 3 people 7 abstracts, and 6 did 6, 5 people 6 and many more 4. The board surveyed best practices at the regionals and MLA, and the board voted to keep the submission maximum to 4 per person
- iii. **SESSION PROPOSAL VETTING BY Area directors:** The board discussed guidelines for better vetting of session proposals. ED Mardorossian emphasized the importance of helping chairs improve on session proposals that are too broad or too narrow.
 - There are 34 Second sessions this year.
- iv. **Poster session:** this is the first year summer fellows were asked to submit a poster for the poster session in the exhibit room.
- v. **Workshops:** 5 great workshops this year still offered for free. Times have been changed so NeMLA does not have to offer lunches that end up costing an arm and a leg.
- vi. **Local events:** Make sure to vote for your top local attractions by 5 December <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XPQ88LN>
- vii. **Exhibitors:** New initiative to ensure more exhibitors for a better quality convention. NeMLA will be approaching exhibitors and publishers asking them for input on our special events speaker. What authors do they have who may be touring or releasing a book in the location in which the convention is to take place. Now that the next 4 years are booked, such networking for NeMLA becomes possible. This will ensure that Area Directors have a list of potential speakers to choose from.
- viii. **New institutional membership** open for institutions to become NeMLA members for the ridiculous price of \$500 (includes mention in newsletter and MLS subscription) or \$800 (with spread in program). Spread the word at your institutions.
- ix. **Other new initiative:** "Meet the Author" will include "Meet the critic" sessions.
- x. **Activities** Scavenger Hunt and more photo contests will be added to the convention. Also, tables in the exhibit hall will be designated as gathering spaces for members in

particular fields. The same will happen at the membership brunch and at the Saturday reception. Thank you Claire Sommers for these great promotion ideas.

- xi. **Caucuses:** ED Mardorossian thanked Nicole Lowman, GSC interim president, who volunteered to step in when Marie-Eve Monette resigned from the post. She also expressed her gratitude to Emily Lauer for all the work she did on behalf of CAITY.
- xii. **Board Elections:** Quite a few positions are opening up. ED Mardorossian encouraged everyone to vote. Second Vice President; Anglophone/British Literatures Director; CAITY Caucus Representative; German Language and Literature Director; Graduate Student Caucus Representative; Italian Language and Literature Director; Member at Large; Diversity Representative

V. Associate Executive Director's Report, Brandi So

- Brandi So made a presentation about NeMLA's projected budget for 2017. The budget projects a loss for this year but Brandi So explained that this is based on extremely conservative figures.
- Expenses:
 - Lower costs this year because fewer fellows
 - Attrition: new item in the budget to account for it although don't expect to go into attrition.
 - Shuttles: just to the Peabody Library as opposed to the many shuttles needed in Hartford.
 - Food and beverage: we expect to meet the \$80,000 f&b minimum although that is a very high expenditure (usually NeMLA books contracts with half that amount as a f&b minimum)
 - Printing: for flyers and CFPS is expected to be lower this year
 - Funding for name badges and folders: expected to be the same as last year
 - More money will need to be spent on signage—to make people more aware of special events, etc.
 - Buffalo archive and NY Public library—upcoming opportunities for members so they can apply and do research there
 - Change in accountants is saving \$5,000 a year
 - Long term: NeMLA is making a lot of budgeting decisions that will save money in the long term (database vs regonline)
 - We're going to be investing more in SWAG for board members
 - Operations: standard expenses—always having to replace or update projectors, computers, etc.
 - Overall: \$16,000 loss projected; \$5,000 of this is the attrition

Officer's Reports:

VI. President, Hilda Chacon

- The president shared the information about the two keynote speakers for the conference whose work on the topic of multiculturalism and multilingualism embody the conference theme for 2017
 - Marjorie Agosín (Chilean-born writer and scholar) for Friday opening speech,
 - and Illán Stavans (Mexican-born writer and scholar) for Saturday evening.
- ED Mardorossian interjected that some local JHU speakers may be scheduled for a presentation at the Peabody Library as well to showcase our local institution

VII. First Vice President, Maria DiFrancesco

- Fellows have been reminded to hand in their posters in order to be reimbursed; most are going to be presenting in Baltimore
- Vice President DiFrancesco discussed the steps she took to ensure great speakers for the 2018 convention: Rob Nixon will be the keynote and she contacted Pittsburgh City of Asylum group to be able to take advantage of their Writer in residence program.
- The Vice president also highlighted the Board Member Elections and the need to recruit board members. ED Mardorossian underlined that the current board members should help with recruitment because they know the ins and outs of the positions

VIII. **Second Vice President**, Simona Wright

- Summer fellowship: we have put everything online and we also have advertised in the newsletter
 - Called for volunteers to vet the proposals: Susmita Roye, Richard Schumaker, John Casey and Hilda Chacon volunteered.
 - Budget: \$15,000 –\$1500 per winner; so that means up to ten winners
 - Last year over 70 applications were submitted for the summer fellowship. One year it was 20 applications.
 - A different application process for grad student applications was discussed
- With Carine Mardorossian, Executive Director, the site for the 2019 convention was identified, keeping in mind also that in 2019 NeMLA will celebrate its 50th anniversary. Plans for the convention are underway and a possible sponsor, Georgetown University, has been contacted. Georgetown is sponsoring another conference occurring at the same time, but steps were taken to reassure them we don't need classroom space, just their sponsorship.
- The second vice president urged the Area Directors to contact embassies and cultural institutes in DC for co-sponsorship of their events.
- Workshops:
 - Five very interesting workshops—they are relevant and we are excited
- **NeMLA Italian Studies**
 - Roberta Ricci (co-editor) and I are happy to announce that volume XXXVIII, *The Renaissance Dialogue*, is almost ready for publication.
 - The next volume, XXXIX, *The Italian Digital Classroom. Italian Culture and Literature through digital tools and social media* (co-editor Tania Convertini), is also underway with expected publication in 2017.

IX. **German Area Director**, Lynn Maria Kutch

- Special Events:
 - Uljana Wolf reading from her published work
 - Sophie Seita will also present on the translations of Wolf's work
- ED Mardorossian explained that NeMLA is to have a banner listing the special events so that's why the information about the events is needed earlier

X. **American/Anglophone**, John Casey

- We have a lot of panels about pedagogy which is great; a lot of great local topics which is great (Poe, The Wire)
- We're excited to have Brian Norman come speak on topics of Women's Studies and African American studies

- Issues: people proposing multiple abstracts—maybe we should extend the deadline for session proposals so that we have a wider variety in topics etc. and can bring in more members
 - Brandi So explained that we can't extend it later because of the timeline and the summer break, but we could make it earlier
 - Maybe board-sponsored sessions should fill the thematic gaps
 - A suggestion was made that gifts/incentives be offered at this year's conference to encourage session proposals in the future?

XI. **Anglophone/British**, Susmita Roye

- Panels: Received 47 proposals; 34 in British and 13 in Anglophone. One short in each of the target numbers for each area.
 - Some panels got cancelled because they didn't fill
- Had problems seeing the abstracts for each session. ED Mardorossian said that she would ask the NeMLA programmers to add that functionality.
- Special Events:
 - Two priorities: 1) Black experience (given the uproar in Baltimore and Freddie Grey/ Police brutality) 2) Modernism in literature (to give a boost since this area is in decline for NeMLA)
 - Invited Dr. Douglas Mao, a professor in English and modernism at JHU

XII. **Cultural Studies and Media Studies**, Lisa Perdigao

- Down this year from last year, but up from 2015
- Growing in certain areas, such as comics
- Would love to work with NEH to maybe do a grant-writing workshop
- SAMLA: they started an initiative to start an undergraduate research forum to get them to present and apply to panels or have their own sessions
- Special Event Speaker: The Cultural Studies and Media Studies area is teaming up with the American Literature area to co-sponsor a special event, a talk by Dr. Brian Norman titled "The Posthumous Autobiography and Civil Rights Memory." John Casey and I thought that the talk was a great fit for both of our areas, and it builds on 2016 conference themes.

XIII. **Comparative Languages and Theory**, Richard Schumaker

- Target number of panels was 38. Actual number is 41.
- Sponsored/coordinated/co-wrote a few submissions using the following criteria:
 - There were areas in world literature that were being neglected (examples: Turkish Literature, Indian literature) & interdisciplinary panels
 - Worked with Claire Summers at CUNY and her colleagues to create successful proposals

XIV. **Spanish and Portuguese**, Margarita Vargas

- Wide range of presentations—most of them are on Iberian or Latin American literature (Latinx literature is also present)
- Dr. Stock is the area special event speaker and was recruited after seeking member input

XV. **Italian**, Glora Pastorino

- 42 sessions (29 panels, 3 seminars, 10 roundtables, plus a special event and 3 panels whose secondary area is Italian). 41 proposals, and an intended target of 38

- Special Event: ANTHONY JULIAN TAMBURRI (John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, Queen's College, CUNY): "Re-appropriating the Forget-me-nots: Italian Cultural Hegemonic Privilege and the Disregard for Diasporic Cultural Production"
- Need help advertising the graduate student travel award (in the name of Antonia Cao, longstanding NeMLA member and supporter)

XVI. **Pedagogy and Professional**, Angela Fulk

- Panels: Offering 37 sessions in pedagogy and professional development. Target was 40, up from last year when we offered 34
 - The majority are pedagogical; only 5 are professional development sessions
 - Last years the numbers were much more equal
 - Of the 5 sessions, 2 of them were proposed by the Grad Caucus
 - In Rhet/Comp, offering 7. The target was 8. This is down from 10 last year
- No special event this year—originally the roundtable on academic bias—but although the roundtable is still going forward, there is only one person affiliated with the original project and it didn't seem like it should be a special event anymore.
- Our sessions seem to be very popular but no one really wants to present in them—they want to attend them instead (professional development in particular?)
 - Nicole Lowman explained that grad students are particularly interested but aren't prepared to present on the panels (hence the difference in presenting versus attending)
 - A suggestion was made that it is best to approach senior scholars who are already presenting to get them to agree to participate in these professional panels (since people perhaps aren't likely to go to NeMLA just to present on this type of panel)

XVII. **CAITY**, Emily Lauer

- Nothing to report on prizes because we haven't met the deadlines for the essay prize or travel prize yet
- Emphasized the success she has encountered in handing out the travel checks during the business meeting because this boosts attendance
- Whoever is the next president of CAITY will need to be aware of the kind of support they can get from the NeMLA business office, etc.
 - The VP and Secretary positions were not funded (no hotel waivers, etc.) and the representatives did not fulfill the roles they were asked to fill anyway so a discussion ensued about not having those roles anymore, but instead pursuing ways of having work that CAITY constituents do be reimbursed with registration fees covered (along the lines of being a fellow on a much smaller scale)
- Need help with making the travel award applications readable –the essays were too long? Or we need help reading these applications (for the essay contest as well)—maybe from fellows or board members

XVIII. **Creative Writing, Publishing, & Editing**, Christina Milletti

- This year, the sessions target for Creative Writing, Editing, & Publishing was 12 proposals and we received 16. Of these, I accepted 14 sessions—6 panels, 6 creative sessions, 1 roundtable, and 1 seminar. (Last year, target was 5 and we got 10 proposals)
- Speaker: Susan Howe who canceled last year is slated to come this year.
- Trying to get people who are writers to present their work –the flash readings in the reception hall were too unwieldy so a better way is being developed such as connecting with the host institution to bring in their writers

- This year we have two writers from Johns Hopkins—one is a poet and one is a scholar (both award winning) who may present at the Peabody library (to have an interaction between the city, the institution, and NeMLA all in one)

XIX. **Women's and Gender Studies**, Rachel Spear

- We had 15 instead of our projected 18 panels
- Special event peaker is Bernadette Weggenstein, JHU
- Shakespeare Mentor program will continue—will have it after the breakfast and combine it with the business meeting to encourage attendance at the business meeting. The board was asked to volunteer to be mentors
- The WGSC roundtable is linked to the topic of Special Event: “Teaching the Gendered Body in Literature and Film”
- Extended deadline for essay award because only two submissions so far

XX. **Graduate Caucus**, Nicole Lowman

- Took on both the Interim President position and the Communications Director position
 - The GC decided to get rid of the secretary position and replaced it with the communications director—better for the CV and there was overlap in the position duties anyway
 - All positions are up for vote in February
- Doing the CV clinic again—with Indigo Erikson in charge again who wants to try to match mentors with mentees in whatever field they work in because it will be more helpful to evaluate the CV
- The travel award & budget issue that Brandi mentioned from last year
 - We only had around 55 submissions last year—very low; we realized that many applications were not received through the application system so this year the caucus is having submissions via email
 - So far 32 applications and 2 weeks left to receive applications
 - The application deadline was changed so that should help more to apply and attend, and it will help us make decisions and let participants know in a timely manner
- No submissions for the paper prize yet so need to advertise it more
- Our sessions—we decided that we would send out a survey what types of things they would find useful at the convention
 - So we have two roundtables about collaboration and pedagogy
 - Another one on teaching your own research in the classroom
 - Panel on the job market
- We're also doing the annual meet & greet at Dinosaur BBQ
 - We might do drink tickets, or pre-order appetizers
- Creating a grad-friendly food list
 - CAITY Caucus would like this list as well
 - Derek: we can also link this to the main NeMLA website (as we've done in previous years)
- And room and ride forum

XXI. **Modern Language Studies**, Laurence Roth

- MLS report—asking for nominations for the associate editor for pedagogy—send him an email & forward him the likely people who would fit in that position (no promises, just looking for names and relevant qualifications)

- no compensation for this position
- Email address for Lawrence to send in your suggestions for editors is roth@susqu.edu

Additional Business/ Announcements: Reminder to vote and publicize

Motion to Adjourn: at 3:52, approved unanimously.