

Spring 2023 Board Meeting Minutes

Call to begin meeting: 8:11

Thursday, March 23, 2023

7:30 AM Breakfast

8:00 AM Meeting

LOCATION: Cataract – Niagara Convention Center

Attendees

Executive Board

Vice President, Modhumita Roy

Second Vice President, Victoria Ketz

Board of Directors

British and Colonial/Postcolonial Studies Director, Thomas Lynn

Comparative Literature Director, Julia Titus

Creative Writing, Publishing, and Editing Director, Maria Matz

French and Francophone Studies Director, Yves-Antoine Clemmen

Italian Studies Director, Tiziano Cherubini

Professionalization, Composition, and Pedagogy Director, Jina Lee

Spanish and Portuguese Studies Director, Esther Alarcon

US and Transnational/Diaspora Studies Director, Donovan Ramon

CAITY Caucus President and Representative, Francisco Delgado

Diversity Caucus President, Jennifer Mdurwa

Graduate Student Caucus Representative, Christian Ylagan

Women's and Gender Studies Caucus Representative, Justine Dymond

Editor of *Modern Language Studies*, Laurence Roth

Absent: German Studies Director, Charles Vannette; Past President, Bernadette Wegenstein, President, Joseph Valente

Virtual: Cultural Studies and Media Studies Director, Kathleen Kasten-Mutkus

Non-Board Members

Executive Director, Carine Mardorossian

Associate Executive Director, Ashley Byczkowski

Upcoming Second Vice-President, Simona Wright

Managing Newsletter Editor, Derek DiMatteo

- I. Executive Director's Report, Carine Mardorossian
 - a. Approval of Fall 2022 Board Minutes
 - b. 2023 Convention Review
 - The Executive Director explained that this was a transition year to remind the membership that we are a fully in-person conference. In order to provide a high-quality hybrid conference, it's an incredible expense.
 - ED explained that despite the many cancellations, we had no fear for attrition because we booked a smaller block at the hotel. That said, we also had no fear for attendees not being able to book at the Sheraton because there are so many other hotels nearby.

- ED adds that we're in a convention center this year, rather than at a hotel, so the AV was included in the contract for booking the convention space, compared with purchasing an AV contract in addition to a hotel contract.
 - ED points to the flyers that have been created to highlight local discounts and places to visit.
 - ED shares that we've really maxed out the potential space here in Niagara working with the Culinary Institute as well as rooms in the Sheraton. 22 total concurrent sessions, whereas we normally have 30.
 - ED points to the two mid-day events that highlight the wonderful interdisciplinary work between the board members.
 - ED highlights the two main keynote events and points to the collaborations possible with local cultural institutes etc.
 - ED explains that the exhibitors this year we have a lot of brand-new exhibitors, could be due to the city.
 - Jennifer Mdwurva shares the numbers for the undergraduate forum, around 25, who will be in attendance this year.
 - Maria Metz shares that she has a student who is coming and who is so excited. Jen adds that this is a great recruitment opportunity.
 - ED discusses the arts management students learning experience at the conference and the trouble-shooting that will take place at the conference.
- c. Upcoming Conventions: 2024, 2025, 2026
- ED explains that next year we'll be at the Sheraton in Boston and thanks Modhumita for the two speakers invited at Tufts.
 - ED shares the new logo!
 - Votes: unanimous approval.
 - ED discusses the state of NeMLA with our MOU with the University at Buffalo.
 - ED reminds the exiting board members to get in touch with the incoming board members.
- d. New Business:
- + Attendance and Cancellation issues coming out of Covid
 - ED expresses concern about people purchasing registration with no intention of coming to the conference. One solution the ED offers is that we just update the online/PDF program so that there is no record of them actually attending.
 - Modhumita suggests that at every level we remind chairs to check in on their participants.
 - ED replies that this seems to be more common amongst international attendees who have the highest financial burden in attending NeMLA.
 - + Allied Organization: T.S Eliot International Society contacted us to become an allied organization. This would involve a guaranteed session.
 - ED suggests that if we accept T.S. Eliot International Society, she will insist that they do more a modernist, broader sessions.
 - Vote: unanimous approval.
 - + Susquahanna University Press (Laurence Roth and Jessica Masterton, Director of the press and Assistant Professor of Publishing and Media Entrepreneurship)

- Lawrence Roth explains that they've been discussing how to publish the Creative Writing Book Award. Susquahanna University Press is now an entirely student run press. We thought that this press would be a good match.
- Jessica Masterton explains the details of using the Susquahanna University Press, going into the information about printing, shipping, etc. Jessica explains there would be a website and that they would take orders online. They would also do point of service sales (in-person), so they plan to do this with Patrick Henry since he's from Susquahanna. They would go to conferences for in-person sales. Jess mentions the foremost conference in creative writing: AWP, and expresses intent in coming to NeMLA next year too.
- Lawrence chimes in that they're not in a position to absorb the entirety of the costs of this publishing venture.
- The ED suggests taking advantage of the opportunities at NeMLA like NeMLA reads together.
- Justine Dymond suggests we have a panel on publishing where the author could be featured and asks some questions about entry fees (Jess says that their standard in all creative writing book contests and says that your entry fee goes towards writing the book) and about distribution (Jess explains that a lot of presses are moving away from big distribution presses, the printer does distribution of pre-orders and then the press distributes after that, this is how literary magazines and small presses function).
- Modhumita asks what the ask is from NeMLA.
- Lawrence explains that they need funding for a year or so.
- ED adds that we've had an issue with the creative writing area sponsors the main area event that is a creative writer.
- Discussion between primarily Lawrence and Victoria Ketz about equity given the entry fee. Ashley supports
- Does the board support moving ahead with Susquahanna Press being the press to publish the creative writing award?
 - Vote: unanimous support

+ Publication Ethics Statement (Simona Wright)

- Simona talks about a book published from the 50th anniversary of NeMLA, co-edited with Carine Mardorossian "Transnational Spaces: Celebrating Fifty Years of Literary and Cultural Intersections at NeMLA"
- Simone moves to talk about *Italian Studies* journal, which is published in Open Access, in Italy there is a different model of what types of publications qualify for promotion. The ethics statement needs to be approved by the board.
- Derek DiMatteo shares that this ethics statement is often necessary for journals from Italy, Africa. Lawrence adds that if we adopted this and then extended it to all NeMLA publications, *MLS* would be very happy to be included.
- Motion to vote by Modhumita seconded by Tiziano.
- Vote for approval to use Ethics Statement for *Italian Studies*.

+ Long-range planning: NeMLA's future and staffing

- ED explains that the Executive Board met yesterday to explore future options for NeMLA. They suggest more conversations with UB. NeMLA's MOU with UB is coming to an end. This is both an opportunity to extend or not. ED asks if there is interest from other institutions to take over NeMLA.

- Simona adds that we have to protect NeMLA and Carine. Simona offers to work with the Executive Committee over the summer to write a proposal that is competitive and represents the complexity of NeMLA because we need to find an institution who has our back. She also suggests that they come up with a list of institutions who would value NeMLA.

II. Officers' reports

- a. Cultural Studies and Media Studies Director, Kathleen Kasten-Mutkus
 - a. Organized the screening of the film *Niagara*
- b. Vice President, Modhumita Roy
 - a. Very excited for welcoming everyone to Boston next year.
- c. Editor of *Modern Language Studies*, Laurence Roth
- d. Second Vice President, Victoria Ketz
 - a. Chose a potential subject for the next conference: R/evolution
 - b. Gave out 8 Summer Fellowships
- d. British and Colonial/Postcolonial Studies Director, Thomas Lynn
 - a. British and Canadian are doing well.
 - b. Global Anglophone went from 26 to 37 panels!
 - c. Co-Sponsoring Dr. Walcott's on Saturday.
- e. Comparative Literature Director, Julia Titus
 - a. Took on building Slavic studies: went from 3 last year, this year we have 6 sessions.
 - b. 42 sessions in comparative literature.
 - c. Translation studies is also doing well.
 - d. Music in Literature also turned into a collected edition at Palgrave-MacMillan.
- f. Creative Writing, Publishing, and Editing Director, Maria Matz
 - a. Next year they plan to bring a speaker for the area so it will be a combined event: a Mexican poet.
- h. French and Francophone Studies Director, Yves-Antoine Clemmen
 - a. We have 28 sessions, which is normal.
 - b. French and German are becoming allies of the languages, looking into German theory (like Marxism) in a global environment including French topics, and French theory applied to German areas, therefore makes the proposal for combined sessions that are more open to a European environmental studies.
- i. Italian Studies Director, Tiziano Cherubini
 - a. There could be room for improvement in the early modern Italian studies.
- j. Professionalization, Composition, and Pedagogy Director, Jina Lee
 - a. 40+ sessions
 - b. The only area for improvement is composition and rhetoric, Jina suggests she'll do work to advertise the area on websites.
- k. Hispanophone and Lusophone Studies Director, Esther Alarcon
 - a. Latin American studies are most popular, but we see some Portuguese and Spanish blended sessions.
 - b. Missing some pedagogy and professionalism as secondary sessions.
- l. US and Transnational/Diaspora Studies Director, Donovan Ramon

- a. 37 sessions, with a few who had tons of submissions. Multiracial and Migration Identity sessions got 25 and 30 submissions.
- m. Diversity Caucus President, Jennifer Mdurvwa
 - a. Mentoring for Scholars of Color is a new initiative working to make members of color feel safe at NeMLA.
 - b. Makes the proposal that the Undergraduate Forum Coordinator should be a position on the board held by a faculty member who works with lots of undergraduate studies.
 - c. The ED makes the suggestion that the languages should consider essay awards.
- n. CAITY Caucus President and Representative, Francisco Delgado
 - a. Announces that the CAITY essay award was in the area of Italian Studies.
- o. Graduate Student Caucus Representative, Christian Ylagan
 - a. Modified the guidelines which resulted in a greater number of students receiving travel awards. Last year the recipient percentage was 34%, this year it is 55%.
- p. Women's and Gender Studies Caucus Representative, Justine Dymond
 - a. Continue to have a robust number of panels, they have 26. As a secondary area, there are 35 sessions.
 - b. Justine explains that members continue to want mentoring.
 - c. This year the WGSC mentoring program was successful. There were 18 mentorship pairings.
 - d. There were 9 essay submissions that were very strong.

ED makes a suggestion that board members send any suggestions or write ups for the summer newsletter. She closes the meeting thanking the University at Buffalo for the resources and the help over the years.

Motion to adjourn: Lawrence Roth and seconded by Francisco.