

NeMLA Fall 2021 Board of Directors' Meeting

Saturday, November 6, 2021 11am EST
Zoom/web conference

Executive Board In Attendance

Past President, Brandi So
Second Vice President, Modhumita Roy

Board of Directors In Attendance

British and Global Anglophone Director, Thomas Lynn
Comparative Literature Director, Julia Titus
Creative Writing, Publishing, and Editing Director, Abby Bardi
Cultural Studies and Media Studies Director, Kathleen Kasten-Mutkus
French and Francophone Studies Director, Olivier Le Blond
Italian Studies Director, Tiziano Cherubini
Professionalization, Composition, and Pedagogy Director, Jina Lee
Hispanophone and Lusophone Studies Director, Victoria Ketz
US and Transnational/Diaspora Studies Director, Donovan Ramon
CAITY Caucus President and Representative, Francisco Delgado
Diversity Caucus President, Jennifer Mdurvwa
Graduate Student Caucus Representative, Dana Gavin
Women's and Gender Studies Caucus Representative, Justine Dymond
Editor of *Modern Language Studies*, Laurence Roth

Non-Board Members Present

Executive Director, Carine Mardorossian
Associate Director, Ashley Byczkowski
Graduate Coordinator, Callie Ingram

Board Members Absent

President, Bernadette Wegenstein
Vice President, Joseph Valente
German Studies Director, Charles Vannette

Call to Order: Meeting begins at 11:02am EST

I. Executive Director's Report

a. Approval of Spring 2021 Board Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve made by Olivier Le Blond and seconded by Julia Titus. Approved unanimously with no corrections.

b. ED Mardorossian listed and thanked this year's NeMLA staff

c. 2022 Baltimore Convention

ED Mardorossian discussed the initial uncertainty around the convention format and the factors behind the decision to run an in-person convention while making exceptions for some remote presenters (e.g. international scholars and immune-compromised members) and very rare exceptions for virtual sessions. She reviewed the # of session and abstract submissions compared to previous years:

- She shared the Flight/Hotel Discounts available for 2022 and revealed that our official partner is Delta Air Lines. She requested that board members make their own hotel reservations, and then forward their confirmation and room information to support@nemla.org.
- A/V Arrangements: ED Mardorossian discussed her goal of finding an outside A/V company for a long-term partnership.
- COVID-19: NeMLA's COVID Health & Safety guidelines are available online, and members can sign as they register. Vaccination is required, and we will be following CDC and local Baltimore guidance.

Second VP Professor Roy inquired whether the booster shot will be required.

Answer: This will be decided closer to the conference as more guidance from CDC is available.

- Special Events: ED Mardorossian thanked all board members for their work in securing speakers and included a reminder to provide the necessary information (high-quality picture, short bio, talk title & blurb) to support@nemla.org.
- Schedule: a preliminary one will be available by November 15.
- Spring board meeting: scheduled for Thursday, March 10, 2022, at 7:30am in the Boardroom though ED Mardorossian encouraged board members to arrive on Wednesday to help with bag stuffing and conference preparation, if possible.
- Undergraduate Forum: ED Mardorossian encouraged everyone to advertise the Undergraduate Forum, which has a deadline of November 15, and is considering a hybrid/virtual component for this event.
- Awards: ED Mardorossian thanked Abby Bardi for working on our new creative writing awards and encouraged all board members to advertise them ([book awards](#) / [essay awards](#)).
- Workshops: 8 workshops have been approved, including one in French and one in Spanish. Registration for workshops is open and continues to include a \$10 fee to ensure attendance.
- Job Clinic & Mentoring: ED Mardorossian encouraged everyone to sign up for slots.
- Seminars: 59 seminars this year, increased from last year.

d. Financial Review ED Mardorossian discussed that NeMLA, like many higher ed institutions, was paradoxically able to make money during the virtual convention year—which is a relief given the possibility of attrition and having to pay the hotel out if circumstances turn. There is a “force majeure”

clause in the contract and ED Mardorossian anticipates that the hotel will be understanding ED Mardorossian then reviewed the budget in detail.

Finances

1. Checking: \$69,553
2. Savings: \$98,000
3. Projected: \$345,600
4. See attached budget for more details.

e. Other Business

1. 2022 Unpredictability

1. It is difficult to estimate attendance due to the exceptions being made for some remote presenters. As the conference gets closer, others may also choose not to attend in person depending on their circumstances and the evolving situation with Delta Variant. ED Mardorossian thanked Ashley Byczkowski for her brilliant idea to create Zoom links for every single session on Whova despite being in-person—to allow for chairs to manage remote presenters if needed and to create the infrastructure for a virtual experience if necessary.

2. 2024 Boston Hotel Contract

ED Mardorossian explained that she was about to finalize the contract with Marriott when approached by a local union, who asked her not to sign because Copley had laid off 230 workers in 2020 (due to pandemic). In response, the hotel representative shared that the hotel was not unionized and that they were slowly hiring people back (about 39 so far). ED Mardorossian put the concern to the board: how should we proceed?

After much discussion, a motion was made to empower an ad hoc committee (2024 President Modhumita Roy, Anglophone/British area director Thomas Lynn, WSGC director Justine Dymond) to look into this situation and make a more informed decision (as soon as possible). Motion passed unanimously.

3. VOTE: Motion to change the area name from Spanish/Portuguese to Hispanophone/Lusophone. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Board nominations:

- a) 2nd VP for 2025 Philadelphia still needed—please contact ED Mardorossian with suggestions
- b) Creative Writing: 2 nominees, previous board members, Maria Matz and Maria Plochocki
- c) Hispanophone/Lusophone: 4 candidates, one in Germany, all long-time members
- d) French/Francophone: 2 candidates, one in Morocco

5. VOTE: Motion to establish an ad hoc long-range planning committee:

ED Mardorossian invited volunteers. Board members, both old and current, who volunteered include: Laurence Roth, Simona Wright, Katherine Sugg, Thomas Lynn, Victoria Ketz, and Julia Titus. The motion passed unanimously.

6. VOTE: Motion to grant the ability to create 2 or 3 dissertation completion fellowships as promotion and recruitment tools for NeMLA. Motion passed via chat.

II. Officers' Reports

1. Editor of *Modern Language Studies*, Laurence Roth

- i. Budget review—a good trajectory!
- ii. Our new Creative Director is working on our new Print Plus platform— both the digital location of new journal issues behind a paywall and new material/interactive features

2. British and Global Anglophone Director, Thomas Lynn

- i. A healthy number of submissions with a fairly wide variety of topics, though would like to see more diversity in terms of representation of Anglophone literature
- ii. ED Mardorossian reminded everyone about board-sponsored sessions as well as the process of rerouting high-quality papers that were not accepted to their initial sessions

3. Comparative Literature Director, Julia Titus

A notable increase from last year in general, with special attention to the four sessions in Russian literature, an area which we hope to continue growing

4. Creative Writing, Publishing, and Editing Director, Abby Bardi

- i. A strange year in terms of interest—a small drop but holding its own in terms of numbers; many sessions are large and potentially should be split into two
- ii. Excited to co-sponsor Catherine Adoyo's talk, and also hope to continue having a publication table at the conference
- iii. Announcements:
 1. New this year: creative writing book award! Judge will be Jean McGarry from JHU, and the deadline to apply is December 1st, 2021.
 2. Creative writing pedagogy cluster that developed from NeMLA session soon to come out!

5. Cultural Studies and Media Studies Director, Kathleen Kasten-Mutkus

- i. Very good year! All but four sessions received at least three abstracts, and a wide variety of topics and disciplines represented
- ii. Happy to co-sponsor Lauren Berlant plenary event
- iii. Hope to continue to grow sessions around topics of race, class, and disability studies during tenure

6. French and Francophone Studies Director, Olivier Le Blond

- i. Surpassed original goal of 32 sessions—now at 34
- ii. Also a strange year in terms of interest—usually popular topics were not popular sessions
- iii. Excited to sponsor Tristan Cabello’s talk from JHU
- iv. Hope to pursue a workshop with the French embassy in the future

7. Italian Studies Director, Tiziano Cherubini

- i. The number of sessions remains stable—31 like last year, with special attention to six sessions dedicated to medieval and early modern Italy
- ii. Excited to sponsor Jacqueline Reich’s talk

8. Professionalization, Composition, and Pedagogy Director, Jina Lee

- i. Lots of proposals—especially pandemic-related or on mental health awareness—but not as many on CVs and other career paths as expected, so potentially an area to grow
- ii. No special event but working with CAITY on a social get together

9. Hispanophone and Lusophone Studies Director, Victoria Ketz

- i. A good variety, but some of our medieval and golden age sessions fell through at the last minute unfortunately—the papers were rerouted but somewhat disappointed by lack of dedicated sessions to those topics
- ii. Two books coming out that developed from NeMLA sessions! We should promote this information
- iii. Happy to sponsor Benita Sampedro Vizcaya’s talk

10. US and Transnational/Diaspora Studies Director, Donovan Ramon

- i. While the quantity of session proposals has somewhat diminished from last year, the quality and breadth has improved—very pleased with the diversity and range of sessions
- ii. Happy to co-sponsor both Catherine Adoyo’s and Tristan Cabello’s talks

11. CAITY Caucus President and Representative, Francisco Delgado

- i. Happy to offer CAITY travel awards once again as we return to in-person; the deadline is January 7.
- ii. Our sponsored roundtable is on remote teaching that emphasizes part-time/contingent faculty perspectives
- iii. Plan to host a coffee social event at nearby Daily Grind on Saturday morning (7-9am) as well as co-hosting the Room & Ride Forum with the GSC on their website

12. Graduate Student Caucus Representative, Dana Gavin

- i. Unfortunately our sponsored sessions did not make, and we’re also getting a lot of concerned feedback from graduate students about traveling and lack of financial support

- ii. Will offer GSC travel awards again as we return to in-person; the deadline is December 1 (with goal of announcing results by January 7)
- iii. Currently brainstorming social event possibilities
- iv. Ashley Byczkowski brings up that, despite the GSC-sponsored sessions not making, the bulk of attendees will be graduate students so participation remains high

13. Women's and Gender Studies Caucus Representative, Justine Dymond

- i. Excited to sponsor Emily Parker's talk, and happy to be back in person for 2022

IV. Meeting adjourned at 1:12pm EST