

**NeMLA Board
Spring 2021 Meeting Minutes
April 9, 2021**

11:00 AM Eastern, Zoom/Web conference

Board Members Present:

Executive Board

President, Brandi So

Vice President, Bernadette Wegenstein

Second Vice President, Joseph Valente

Board of Directors

British and Global Anglophone Studies Director, Thomas Lynn

Comparative Literature Director, Katherine Sugg

Creative Writing, Publishing, and Editing Director, Abby Bardi

French and Francophone Studies Director, Olivier Le Blond

German Studies Director, Charles Vannette

Italian Studies Director, Tiziano Cherubini

Professionalization, Composition, and Pedagogy Director, Maria Plochocki

Spanish and Portuguese Studies Director, Victoria Ketz

American and Translational Director, Benjamin Railton

CAITY Caucus President and Representative, Francisco Delgado

Diversity Caucus President, Jennifer Mdurwa

Graduate Student Caucus Representative, Dana Gavin

Women's and Gender Studies Caucus Representative, Justine Dymond

In-coming Comparative Literature Director, Julia Titus

In-coming Professionalization, Composition and Pedagogy Director, Jina Lee

In-coming Cultural Studies and Media Studies Director, Kate Kasten

Absent:

Past President, Carole Salmon

Cultural Studies and Media Studies Director, Maria Matz

Editor of *Modern Language Studies*, Laurence Roth

Exhibitors and Promotion Coordinator, Claire Sommers

Non-Board Members Present:

Executive Director, Carine Mardorossian

Graduate Assistant, Ashley Byczkowski

I. Executive Director's Report, Carine Mardorossian

A. Approval of Fall 2021 Board Minutes

- a.** Motion to approve from Maria, seconded by Brandi, unanimously approved.

- b. Dr. Railton made a motion to approve the minutes for Spring 2020 at 11:15 AM. Approved with no corrections. Maria Plochocki seconded the motion and Justine Dymond abstained since she was not present at the Spring 2020 Board Meeting.
- c. ED Mardorossian listed and thanked the **NeMLA Staff and Fellows**
 - i. Derek McGrath: Administrative Coordinator
 - ii. Ashley Byczkowski: Graduate assistant
 - iii. Claire Sommers: Professionalization and Exhibits
 - iv. Solon Morse: Graphic Designer
- d. Fellows
 1. Macy McDonald, Whova
 2. Cassandra Scherr, Whova
 3. Dana Venerable, Social Media Fellow
 4. Jiwon Ohm, Whova Fellow; Graphic Design
 5. Dipanjan Maitra, Special Events Fellow
 6. Callie Ingram, Exhibits Fellow
 7. Joelle Carota, Undergraduate Forum Fellow
- e. Local Representatives from UPenn
 - i. Pauline Carbonnel
 - ii. Lauriane Guihard
 - iii. Professor Andrea Goulet from Romance Languages, UPenn

B. 2021 Virtual Convention

- a. **ATTENDANCE- 2644**
- b. **ED Mardorossian** shared a powerpoint with data regarding the statistics of the use of Whova.
- c. **ED Mardorossian shared that there were 614 sessions;** numbers were steady. Fewer abstracts, but the same number of sessions: 2039 accepted abstracts.
- d. Exhibitors loved Whova.
- e. Jennifer Mdurvwa requests additional suggestions for prizes in the Undergraduate Forum.

C. 2022 Johns Hopkins Baltimore Convention

- a. **Opening Speaker-** NeMLA Reads Together “Valeria Luiselli”
- b. **Keynote Speaker-** Judith Butler
- c. **Searching for Special Area Speakers:**
 - i. Professor Le Blond recommended reaching out to local Embassies and cultural equivalents of Alliance française.
 - ii. ED Mardorossian encouraged area directors to reach out to graduate students for introductions months ahead of time.
 - iii. Professor Sugg recommended collaborating with other Area directors to introduce speakers.
- d. **ED Mardorossian** will be visiting the site in mid-May.

D. Staff for 2022

- a. **ED Mardorossian** shared that some graduate students like Ashley Byczkowski, Pauline Carbonnel, and Lauriane Guihard will all be returning.

E. Guaranteed Sessions

- a. ED Mardorossian explained how other regional MLAs have guaranteed and standing sessions that are repeated year after year. Professor Plochocki explained that the sessions should be dynamic, and asked if this ran the risk of making them ossified. ED Mardorossian suggested only offering board-sponsored standing sessions in certain underrepresented areas if topics were not covered by members already.
- b. Professor Delgado added that the Caucus-sponsored sessions could also be a part of this initiative
- c. Unanimous vote to approve these standing sessions.

F. AV Concerns

- a. Our VGA projectors are obsolete. This will affect the NeMLA budget for the future. The 2023 Convention at Niagara Falls AV is the only convention for which the A/V is included. ED Mardorossian will collaborate with the other regional EDs to explore options about AV contracts with external companies.

G. Summer Fellowships

- a. Last year everyone postponed their trips. Mardorossian granted the extension. However no poster presentations will be required at the convention since we have the undergraduate poster presentations.

H. NeMLA Journals and Essay Awards

- a. Vote on a Fictional Essay Award- Abby Bardi volunteered for this year, but discussion ensues, could be a joint award housed in the Creative Writing Area.
- b. ED Mardorossian asked that board members reach out directly to the Executive Director about new essay award ideas.

I. Future Conventions

- a. **UB and Niagara Falls for 2023**
- b. **Tufts University for 2024**, just waiting to have the contract signed by the new dean.
- c. **Philadelphia (UPenn?) for 2025**

J. 2023 Transition at the end of the MOU with the University at Buffalo?

- a. Mardorossian suggested setting up an ad hoc committee for long-term planning.

K. Second sessions

- a. The bylaws say that people can't chair more than one session, member Tommy Mayberry requested that this be changed. Ed Mardorossian suggested making an exception for second sessions. Vote occurred- Katherine Sugg moved and a motion was seconded by Tiziano Cherubini.
- b. Additional conversation regarding limiting the number of people from the same institution occurred and exceptions were discussed.

L. Splitting Pedagogy and Professional from Composition and Rhetoric.

- a. Professor Plochocki explained that there are timing conflicts with other conferences on Composition and Rhetoric.
- b. ED Mardorossian explained that this would only be a change made on the website to distinguish between these fields so as to reflect the scholarly significance of Composition studies

M. Changing the Fees Structure

- a. Professor Delgado continued the conversation from the Fall 2020 board meeting to discuss the changing of fees for Independent Scholars, Adjunct and faculty and two-year institutions.
- b. Professor Plochocki recommended that we have an easy system in place to update our status at NeMLA.
- c. Professor Delgado will do a survey of the constituency to see why they attend NeMLA and what their professional status is. How significant is NeMLA to your professional development?

II. President's Report

- A. Requests for help on the book award. Dana Gavin, Kate Kasten and Julia Titus all volunteered.

III. New Business and Additions from Board Members

- A. Dana Gavin added that the graduate students really enjoyed the virtual convention. She added that graduate students generally felt out of their depth at conferences and proposed a graduate student workshop and requested volunteers. Graduate Assistant Ashley Byczkowski volunteered.
- B. Julia Titus requested that information be added to the website regarding the working language of the convention: English unless otherwise decided upon. ED Mardorossian responded that this information will be added to emails to chairs while vetting abstracts.

IV. Meeting adjourned at 12:40pm by Carine, seconded by Brandi So.