

MAASA Board Meeting Minutes
February 8, 2008
University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS

In attendance:

Jasmine Kar-Tang (Minn. Grad rep), Mary Ann Wynkoop, (UM-KC, Asst. Exec. Director) Sherrie Tucker (*American Studies*), Tony Clark (Illinois, at large), Rich Schuur (Drury, at large) , Cheryl Lester (Kansas), Kathryn Kuhn (SLU), Michael Sweeney (Kansas grad rep), Jane Simonsen (Augustana, at large)

The meeting came gradually to order.

Fall Meeting Minutes:

Minutes discussed and approved

Fall 2008 Meeting:

Is necessary. Will be September 21 in Kansas City. Mary Ann Wynkoop most generously agreed to host the meeting again. Agenda will include determining the “winning” conference proposal and planning for 2010 conference.

Board and Nominations:

The Nominating Committee nominated Ben Chappell as the new KU rep; Michael Krysko from K-State for an at-large position; and Laura Belmonte from Oklahoma State for an at-large position. All were approved. Discussion ensued about when at-large members would begin; with Krysko and Belmonte we have one “extra.” Jane’s and Tony’s terms as at-large members will expire in spring 2009; that spring we will need only one new at-large member.

SLU, Minnesota, and Iowa are all in need of a faculty representative.

Funding for Travel:

The board discussed funding travel for board members and for grad students in particular. All agreed that grad students need to be funded 1) in the interest of professional development and 2) in the interest of continuing the vitality of the board.

Tony proposed asking Kathleen what the “bottom line” on funds is, then funding travel for grad students for the fall and spring meetings and divvying up the rest for board members.

Jasmine suggested asking grad programs to chip in as well, to show their support for MAASA. We discussed a matching funds program: that MAASA will match (or double?) the amount that grad programs offer to their students.

Jane will contact Kathleen for information on funding amounts and will contact grad programs to ask whether they can commit to fund grad students if we have a sense of how much can be spent.

Officers and Committees:

Cheryl volunteered to chair the **Nominations Committee** again next year. She will contact Jeffrey Miller to see if he will be willing to continue as well.

Tony Clark will continue as chair of the **Awards Committee**.

Jane Simonsen will be **President** for 2008-2009.

Tony Clark self-nominated as **Secretary** 2008-2009.

The Board placed considerable pressure upon Rich Schuur to be Vice-President; he was unable to commit at this time. The board will now place pressure upon Jeffrey Miller to be Vice-President in order to ensure an all-Augie executive branch of MAASA.

Awards:

Tony reported that the Kolmer Award is still being worked on.

Sherrie noted the amazing turnout for submissions for the Katzman-Yetman Award in conjunction with the Nuestra America conference. She also noted that there was some confusion about the terms of the award and that we may be missing opportunities for recruiting new members. The awards committee for the Nuestra America conference didn't know that the award-winning essay would be sent to *American Studies*. We suggested that for future joint conferences, a MAASA board member should be on the Katzman-Yetman award committee and possibly the conference planning committee as well. It was also only due to Sherrie's diligence that MAASA was noted on the conference website; the Nuestra America conference was posted on the ASA website. This conference led to discussion of the...

2009 Joint Conference

Board members reviewed the call for proposals for the 2009 joint conference. We discussed additional stipulations:

- The conference organizers will need to provide a space for the MAASA board meeting

- MAASA will host a reception at the conference (why did we not this year? Alas!)

- someone from the MAASA board should be on the conference planning committee (the Vice-Prez?)

- grad students will host a panel

- plans should be made for the Katzman-Yetman award, possibly with a person from the board on the committee

Jasmine noted the benefits of nontraditional forms of presentation, and conversation ensued about different possibilities for formats (ie symposiums, precirculated papers, etc.) We discussed the possibility of a symposium for board members to drum up support, cohesiveness, etc. We reiterated that we need to circulate this information, invite people

and organizations we know to submit: word of mouth will be our most important tool. We discussed how this conference could be used to foster alternative presentation forms, to open up the possibility of hosting a conference to undergraduate institutions (thus fostering interest in graduate study in AS), for grad students to propose conferences, and to make MAASA distinctive in experimenting with conference formats.

Jane will add these things to the call and send it out to board members to circulate, post, etc. Jane will also ask Marta if she can get a list of participants to send the information to, and will see about drafting a cover letter that we all could use.

- Jane: send Marta note about ASA site (conference noted there)
- ask Marta for list of participants in this conference

American Studies

Sherrie declared that the journal wants the same thing as last year, but she isn't quite sure what that is, as David had the exact data. She reported that international mailing costs are rising. The journal is still slightly behind (on the 2007 volume) but is catching up.

The journal is on track with digitizing, but it is a lot of work to do 40 years of back issues, including keywords. Cheryl asked if AS was already indexed by America: History and Life, and if keywords could be used from there. Sherrie was most excited by this suggestion.

ASA 2008

Jane will get on the stick and reserve a room for the MAASA reception in Albuquerque. We decided to host the reception on Thursday night at about 7:30 p.m.

We discussed inviting the grad institutions in the region to co-host the reception. Jane will do this.

Website

Tony reported that it is ready to go and our business with Ryan Red Hand has been wrapped up, though he is available to be a paid consultant. The site is ready to go but just needs a domain. This might be linked with the journal so Tony needs to discuss this with David. Tony and Kathryn will meet to figure out how to transfer content. Something was muttered about flash drives, etc.

We agreed that the new site should include

- the Constitution (MAASA's, not the US)
- a list of board members and their terms
- a list of committee members
- a list of board vacancies

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 to resume at 8 a.m. the next morning for breakfast at Wheatfield's.

2010 Conference

(In attendance: Jasmine Kar-Tang, Ben Chappell, Tony Clark, Rich Schuur, Jane Simonsen.)

An ad hoc, preliminary conference planning “committee” met on Saturday, Feb. 9 to discuss planning for the 2010 conference. (Most of us ordered the traditional breakfast of eggs, meat, hash browns, and toast. Rich had a waffle.) Topics addressed included themes for the conference, issues it could address, how to go about generating interest, etc). A summary of our conclusions follows.

- Working title for the conference: “American Studies/*American Studies* as Paradigm for the Future”
- Themes: We hope to use this conference both to look to the history of American Studies as reflected in the journal and to look to the future, in which American Studies-style interdisciplinarity becomes more of a paradigm for academics at all kinds of institutions. We see interdisciplinarity and American Studies methodology reflected in 1) joint hiring practices, 2) undergraduate education 3) disciplines outside American Studies. We are interested in looking at ways that *American Studies* has helped shaped the field in the last 50 years, and the ways that American Studies as theory and practice may have failed to capitalize on some of the promises of the past. How does AS function as a tool of diplomacy rather than as an agent of change? Has it followed through on the promises of new perspectives of the last 50 years (gender studies, indigenous studies, ethnic studies, class studies) by creating places/voices for these scholars within the academy? Has it helped to create places, especially in graduate programs, for teachers and students to think about how to practice critical pedagogy? Has American Studies taken opportunities to reflect on the ethics of the discipline, as represented by editorial practice, employment practice, equality of institutional representation? What/Who do American Studies empower, and how has this been represented in the journal? What have been some of the generative/regenerative moments in American Studies and *American Studies*, and what ideas/theories/bodies/populations/practices have fallen away at these historical crossroads?
- We considered possible panels that might speak to these themes.
 - A panel of American Studies faculty representing historical range to speak to changes in hiring, departmental emphases, institutional support: “old-timer,” mid-level faculty, new hires, grad students
 - A panel that speaks to ethics in editorial practices
 - A panel on teaching AS at undergraduate institutions (especially in 1st year interdisciplinary programs)
 - A panel on teaching as activism/ critical pedagogy
 - A panel of past and present editors of *AS*
 - A “storytelling” session (MAASA in historical context?)
- We talked about the possibility of doing some research on *AS* itself: what are some of the ways the journal has reflected/begun trends in American Studies research? Who is publishing in the journal? How does it reflect the history of the field? What have been some generative moments?

- It would be fabulous to have a special issue of *AS* dedicated to the conference theme/emerging from the conference. This would be a good moment for the journal to reflect on its history and might also serve the purpose of generating interest in the conference for grad students and for those outside the region. Tony will talk to Sherrie about this.
- Logistics: It would be swell if this conference could be held in Lawrence or Kansas City. We recognized that we will thus need a point person at the host institution to head up conference planning. We noted that whoever is the next President of MAASA will likely be at a place with no grad students to help out, so perhaps the next VP could be from a possible host institution. Ben Chappell will bring up this information to the dept. in Lawrence.
- Funding: We may need a larger budget than usual. Depending on the host institution, we may be able to appeal to other departments/ groups for funding. We discussed whether NEH funding would apply. Jane will check into this and into the ASA Chapters grant, because if we're ahead of the game we might actually be able to apply.
- Ideas: The board members present are all game to be part of a conference planning committee. We would like to appeal to others (say, Katzman and Yetman) for other ideas and to include journal editors and other long-time MAASA members in generating ideas for the conference.
- Publicity/Networking: We plan to sketch out a description of the conference early so that it can be circulated. We agreed that word of mouth is important. We should invite individuals and groups to propose panels and roundtables. We should publicize it at the upcoming ASA. We should spread the word to other groups that might not be aware of MAASA (for example, Jasmine noted that Macalaster College was having an AS conference this very weekend). We should invite these folks to a) join MAASA b) propose panels for the conference. Finally, we agreed that our letter to grad institutions in the region should alert them to this conference and suggest that they might begin to prepare grad students to discuss these questions in their departments, as part of a class or other venue.
- Jane will send out a draft of the conference description ASAP and we will begin to work on it as a group so that it can be circulated by the beginning of March.

We all congratulated ourselves for our productivity and for finally planning ahead for a conference, and adjourned until the fall.

Addendum to minutes: Jane ran into Norm Yetman following the meeting and he noted that the 1996 retrospective volume of *American Studies* solicited essays and paid a stipend for them, and perhaps a similar model could be used for the 2010 conference.