

MAASA Board Meeting Minutes

September 9, 2007

UMKC, Kansas City, MO

In attendance:

Tony Clark (at large), David Katzman (AS editor), Kathryn Kuhn (President, at large), Michael Sweeney (Kansas grad rep), Kathleen Wells-Morgan (Exec. Director), Mary Ann Wynkoop (Asst Exec. Director and all-purpose individual), Cheryl Lester (Kansas), Ashley Gill (Iowa grad rep), Jane Simonsen (Vice Pres., at large), Jeffrey Miller (at large)

Board and Nominations:

Who is on the board? Why? Who is an officer? What are the terms?.

- Current officers are Kathryn Kuhn (Pres), Jane Simonsen (VP), and Nelson Hathcock (Secretary). Matt Mancini (Nominations Committee—probably already expired). Terms expire in spring '08, at which point Jane will proceed gloriously to the presidency.
- Set to “expire” in spring '08: Matt Mancini, Cheryl Lester,
- Set to expire in spring '09: Jane, Tony, Michael
- Set to expire in spring '10: Richard Schuur (at large), Jeffrey, Jasmin (Minn grad rep), Ashley, Kathryn, and Nick Yablon (Iowa)

This was followed by a discussion of the **formal procedures for nominating:** the graduate institutions nominate board members (pro forma) and these are approved by the board in the spring. At large members are selected by the Nominations Committee and approved by the board in the spring. Members and their terms will, in the future, be posted on the website. Outstanding business: We need to fill the following openings in the spring: faculty rep from Minnesota, new faculty reps from Kansas and SLU, SLU grad student rep, and one at large position.

David suggested a **change to the constitution** to create an alternate way of electing that would not have to occur at a spring conference in case we don't have one. An amendment to the Constitution was discussed and will be voted on in the spring, per the Constitution:

Amendment to Article IV, Section 2:

The section that formerly read

“The six elected members of the Executive Board shall be chosen by the membership at large at the annual meeting”

will now read

“The six elected members of the Executive Board shall be chosen by the membership in the spring.”

Committees:

The group sought to resolve the question of what **committees** are part of the organization and who is on them. The recognized committees are the Nominating Committee, the Awards Committee (the Stone-Suderman, the Katzman-Yetman [see below], and the

Kolmer mentoring award). A motion followed to name the grad student conference paper award the Katzman-Yetman prize. Motion passed! Huzzah! Jane ponders whether this award name could be used retroactively on one's CV.

Committees for the coming year:

- Nominating Committee: Cheryl Lester (Chair), Sue Zschocke, Jeffrey Miller
- Program: Jane Simonsen, Kathryn Kuhn, host representative (all this may become moot)
- Awards: Tony Clark (Chair), Jane Simonsen.
 - Others to be asked to serve on this committee: Richard Schuur, Ann Scofield

There was a discussion of how to use these committees to bring in new members/board members, especially from unrepresented states in the regional, including Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. Dan Littlefield was suggested as a possible committee member. The **Stone-Suderman prize** should be for vol. 46 (2006). It was unclear whether the 2007 volume (47) would be published in time for these essays to be considered. If it is, a prize will be awarded for each volume.

Financial Report:

Kathleen reported that we are in good financial standing. She confesses that where the money comes from is a mystery, but it's all good.

Website:

Tony Clark showed the progress on the new MAASA website; members were warned not to freak out, because it isn't done yet. Ryan Redcloud will do one more update to set it up for us, then we need to keep it up ourselves.

We discussed a domain name appropriate to the group and to go with the journal. MAASA.net is available, consistent with ASA, and identifiable.

There was a discussion of using Paypal for membership and journal subscriptions. It was suggested that memberships should be done through ASA, and that journal subscriptions could be done through the new MAASA.net site, using Paypal. **David would like to run these ideas past Sherrie Tucker before we act on this.** At present, we will just provide a link to the journal site.

We discussed the design of the new site, and the following changes were proposed:

- Fewer exclamation points
- Different banner picture
- Keep appeal to younger crowd, photos that show action, activism, urban sites
- More historical coverage in photos (possibly FSA photos)
- Use images consistent with each page's content (journal covers on journal page)
- Larger font and less text on homepage (move MAASA description to "About us" page)

- Awards page could have photos of those for whom awards are named
- Less red-white-and-blue color scheme
- Defunct MAASA newsletter will be permanently retired and news will now be on “News” section of website

To complete the website, Tony needs all feedback/changes/suggestions by Oct. 1 to get it to Ryan. **Tony will send us info about how to access the site.**

Kathryn will coordinate updates on site texts, to be contributed by all of us.

We discussed **where and how the site will be updated**. Kathryn will maintain the site with the help of a grad student, to be selected by her, who may or may not be an American Studies grad student, since first concern should be for ability to do the work at this point. After initial set up, the site could likely be updated 4 times/year.

The board approved an honorarium for the student of **\$3500**, estimating at 10 hrs/week. The student’s duties will include gathering info, editorial work, and putting the information up on the site. Kathryn will supervise the student to make sure s/he is accountable.

The target date for the site to go up is **January 1, 2008**.

Annual Conference:

David suggested that the annual conferences held untapped potential:

- Election of officers, awarding of Awards
- Gives a sense of identity/community to American Studies people who are not at PhD institutions or teaching in A/S departments
- Serves growing movement towards interdisciplinarity in undergrad institutions
- Opportunity to engage as public intellectuals rather than perpetuating disciplines
- Alternate traditional conferences with paper presentations with conferences on teaching or other innovative themes

Cheryl introduced the problem of disconnect between the members and the board and wondered how conferences might create links between these populations and give board members more intellectual connections rather than “housekeeping” duties. We also noted that grad students may not go because of time and money problems, smaller conferences less valuable on Cvs, BUT grad students also value opportunities and personal connections small conferences offer.

It was suggested that the upcoming 50th anniversary of AS might be a time to discuss some of these issues at a conference. Themes might be: Redefining the academic conference, can liberal arts teaching models serve conferences, how have the structures of conferences changed (or not) due to changing populations they serve (childcare, etc), “Evolving to fit how we teach and who we are.”

Discussion continued over a tasty meal at the Rockhill Tennis Club, where, fueled by food, we made all kinds of decisions.

For the spring 2008 conference, MAASA will offer to cosponsor the Latino/a conference in February in Lawrence, KS, which Cheryl is helping to organize. We could contribute \$5000, host a reception, contribute a panel on the place of Latino/a Studies in American Studies, and offer the Katzman-Yetman prize to the best grad student paper at this conference. Mary Ann agreed to contact Cheryl about this. (Note: done and done.)

We would then have our **spring board meeting** at or after this conference (possibly at a KC airport hotel). The agenda for this meeting will be to plan conferences for 2009 and 2010 as well as to think about the review for *AS*.

2009 conference: we will put out a call for proposals for a joint conference with another organization, including civic organizations, museums, nonprofits, academic organizations, undergraduate institutions, or grad-student/faculty-organized thematic conferences. MAASA would contribute \$5000 to this group and let them do all the planning. Brilliant! Stipulation: we need a meeting space and panel at the conference. The call for proposals should include

- Time (limit to spring?)
- Region (limit to specific states?)
- Conference theme must deal with issues of American culture and society, be interdisciplinary, and have broad appeal
- Explanation of how the conference would serve our membership
- Information about the organization
- A budget proposal for how the \$5000 would be spent

Jane volunteered to write up a notice of call for proposals. The actual call will be placed on the website sometime after Jan. 1, 2008. The notice, along with information about the Latina/o conference if we co-sponsor, will be made available at ASA. **Jeffrey will call Jim Farrell**, who should be informed about such matters.

2010 conference:

This should be focused on the 50th anniversary of the journal and could have changes in American Studies or Am Studies conferences as its focus.

ASA:

Jane will bring information about the conference and proposal to the Regional Chapters table. We will look into where the meeting will be in 2010 and if ASA will ever return to the Midwest. **Jane will propose that regionals be given space on the conference program;** if this doesn't happen, we will propose a panel on the journal for 2010. There will be no MAASA reception in 2007, but we will have a HUGE BLOW-OUT in 2010. In the spring we will discuss who is to plan for the ASA receptions in the future.

For the good of the order: Everyone was good.