

NEASA Council Meeting—January 21, 2006—Simmons College, Rm. 303

Present: Bergland, Raimon, Davé, Hoberman, Morrison, Stoker, Sweeney, Frank, Antonucci, Johnston, Cassidy, Sikes, Battenfeld, Luria, Klimasmith, Costa, Dean, Martin, Iannucci, Kauanui, Isaac.

Minutes from Sept. 25, 2005, approved.

Bergland welcomed old and new members. Each member briefly introduced themselves and their interests while a new address list circulated for approval.

Treasurer's Report Klimasmith passed out hard copies of the "NEASA Treasurer's Report, January 1–Dec. 31, 2005," pointing out that it had already been submitted to ASA. She said NEASA had a fiscally fabulous year, noting a credit balance on the account of over \$4,000. She attributed part of this to "excellent sponsorship" for the conference, both from Holy Cross and from everyone who asked their departments for funds. She urged council members to make similar funding requests from their departments for future conferences. She suggested lowering the conference fee in order to increase participation, and noted that waiving the fee for some participants was a good idea as it allowed for broader participation.

Johnston pointed out the rule that fees could only be waived for first-time participants. Bergland said she thought the number of waived-fee entrants was higher than 10 and recalled the number 23 from previous minutes. Klimasmith pointed out that 13 additional fees were waived for invited panelists.

On expenses, Klimasmith recommended that *tech support*—"at all moments of the day"—is the best place to spend conference funds. Although it is a big budget item, she believes it is worth the money spent. She also noted other expenses, including the \$500 put toward a reception co-sponsored with UPNE at the ASA conference.

On income, she said conference fees are hard to break down as they are lumped with other conference income. She said the budget does not reflect the regional fellowships. She concluded saying the conference had gone very well and that Luria had done a great job.

Davé asked if the sessions with invited panelists had met expectations of generating greater attendance. Klimasmith responded that the fee had been waived for the scientists, who may not have normally responded to a NEASA CFP but had been sought after by the program committee. Klimasmith pointed out that being able to waive the fee allowed the committee to shape the conference program and have some control over the types of proposals received. She recommended this approach for future conferences.

Bergland said the conference attendance of 130 was awesome, doubling NEASA's base.

Election Report Luria said committee chair Dean got a great slate together, but, expressing sympathy with those involved in the Florida ballot fiasco, noted that, of 469 NEASA ballots sent out, we only received 39 responses. She attributed this problem to

the need for a better mailing list. The list received from the ASA of their New England members was apparently up-to-date in January '05 but not Fall '05.

Dean said the big problem was that the ballot mailing list did not include "Sightlines" participants. Ninety percent of the conference participants are not on the ASA list, she said, noting that perhaps their ASA memberships had lapsed. She suggested integrating the conference list and the ASA list. She thought the ASA list was not a problem since LeBlanc's ballot mailing had only a 10% bounce-back.

Raimon cited the anomalous category of long-term NEASA members who are no longer part of ASA as problematic.

Klimasmith pointed out that if people want to maintain their NEASA membership they are required to pay the \$15 fee. There are only 3 to 5 people in that group now in the budget.

In the past, said Bergland, NEASA memberships never expired, but she thought it was reasonable to contact these people even though it had never been done.

Hoberman asked if someone from California could be on the board, and Bergland responded, Yes, if they come to the council meetings.

Luria asked who should take responsibility for maintaining an updated list of NEASA members. Bergland said the job was officially the board secretary's, but historically the treasurer had first access to this information. Klimasmith suggested that a couple of people work together to update the list. Bergland said she would get the latest member list from the ASA.

Davé asked why NEASA voting is done snail mail rather than online. Dean said that in the past finding a fair way to do it was a problem, but with changing technology it should now be possible to vote online. However NEASA by-laws require that ballots be mailed. Bergland said the board could, if everyone present wished, vote to change the by-laws at the next meeting.

Sweeney said that, as webmaster, he did not have the capability to insure anonymous voting or protect against double voting. Bergland said she would inquire about that software with a Simmons tech person and work with Sweeney on electronic voting.

Klimasmith noted that one reason NEASA had a healthy balance was due to eliminating mailings for the president's letter and conference news.

Johnston asked if we could do electronic voting through ASA, which uses this method. Dean was worried about the holes in ASA's member list.

Webmaster's Report Following remarks that the old NEASA web page was hard on the eyes, Sweeney said he gave it a cleaner look with more space. He also added a navigation bar. He said he generally updates the page on Friday so anyone who sends him news will see it posted in a week. Sweeney sought suggestions on: 1) a user-friendly way to archive past NEASA conferences and pointed out that "Sightlines" is currently floating in limbo; and 2) needs regarding a search capability. Bergland suggest posting the council minutes. Klimasmith would like to add news about NEASA prizes and prize winners to demonstrate NEASA's role in recognizing excellent work in American Studies. Sweeney said people need to email him news in order for the

website to have fresh content. Johnston suggested that council members send news about their published work, and Kauanui suggested setting up bio links for council members as a way to generate interest in NEASA membership. Dean objected that NEASA should not be about the board members but the broader membership. But Kauanui responded that the first question she is asked about NEASA is who is on the board, and council bios could be a recruitment tool. After further discussion, most agreed, and Sweeney said he would create the bio links to a separate page.

Bergland moved to post bio links, Kauanui seconded, and all voted in favor.

Bergland moved to post council meeting minutes, Klimasmith seconded, all voted in favor.

A Feb. 1st deadline was set to get latest news and bios to Sweeney.

Secondary Education Report Hoberman reports that the day-long conference planned for Dec. 9 at Fitchburg State College fell through due to late advertising and snow.

Despite administrative turnover at Fitchburg, the conference is set to go on April 7 and is still worth pushing for. The target date for sending several hundred flyers to teachers in the northeast is Feb. 24. Cassidy asked that the flyer be emailed to council members as well.

Stoker noted how successful the one-day conference at UNH Manchester was a few years ago. Bergland suggested trying UNH again if the conference doesn't come together at Fitchburg. Hoberman pointed out that Fitchburg is centrally located and conference planners could use its list of teachers. The topic, "The History behind our Everyday Life," has drawn speakers from material culture, folklore, visual arts and literature, he pointed out.

Stoker said there is a caucus of 6 educators interested in following up a secondary education initiative with NEASA, to work to close the gap between high school and college. Bergland suggested the secondary ed group might form a shadow council with a rep that reports to NEASA. Johnston pointed out that not everyone cares for the idea of "K-16" education, and that to some suggesting that college is just a continuation of high school could be offensive. Stoker raised the question of whether a high school teacher is a teacher or a scholar. Raimon noted that the term "K-16" can indicate that public institutions bear the brunt of the "teacher" connotation and less of the "scholar," which is reserved for private institutions. She would like to see NEASA promote collaborations between both kinds of teacher-scholars at the secondary and college levels.

Johnston suggested creating a database for elementary and secondary teachers. Stoker said she posts with NCSS (Nat. Council for Social Studies) and NCTE (Nat. Council for Teaching English). Sikes recommended including historical societies and other non-school institutions.

Regional Rep's Report Bergland reports that we get \$4 for every New England member. Klimasmith said that amounted to \$2,400/ year, and a region can only get the money by filing a treasurer's report.

Klimasmith reported that 3 years ago NEASA requested that ASA put aside funds for regionals, which resulted in a pool of \$10,000-15,000 available to functioning regional associations. She said, with a strong grant proposal, NEASA could get up to \$3000 to do exciting programs. She suggested not putting the money toward the conference but something different and something ASA would/ could not do—local public history, secondary education, grass roots initiatives. *Resisting* any lower status connotations attached to being a regional, Klimasmith asked for a reiteration of NEASA's mission.

Johnston suggested hiring an educational consultant to set up a regional database. Bergland passed out a handout on "ASA Regional Grant Program," and she highlighted the paragraph that calls for regions to engage local and community groups as "a fertile ground for intellectual exploration."

Morrison, Frank, and Hoberman supported promoting links with historical societies and museums.

Kauanui cites the backlash of the Connecticut state government against Native American tribes, and tribal recognition in particular, as a local case in point. Bergland suggests inviting tribal leaders to a plenary session on this topic at the '06 NEASA conference. Kauanui supported idea of pulling in Native American activists for a 4-person plenary. Klimasmith said NEASA's financial profile was good enough to support the plenary as a trial, and then submit for ASA support next time. Discussion followed on pros and cons of applying now or later for ASA grant for this idea. Johnston said we should envision this sort of grass roots plenary as a multi-year part of NEASA conference. Bergland said NEASA should put in a grant request to ASA, due April 15, that supports audience building, and requests the council give her authority to put together the proposal. She also said that NEASA would support a plenary on indignaity in '06.

Bergland suggested gay marriage as another complex local issue, and Davé mentioned adoption. Antonucci suggested focusing on a hot topic for secondary school teachers. Cassidy pointed out that Native American issues are a great topic for outreach to middle-school teachers. Kauanui suggested contacting Trudy Lamb, cultural resource head at the Pequot Museum and a tribal elder, for better informing the board about working with Native American communities.

Appointment of Regional Rep

Battenfeld nominates Klimasmith. Luria seconds. All voted in favor.

Book Prize Committee Raimon cited problem of small number of submissions. Hoberman said there had been 16 in past years. Johnston said there were 7 this year. Raimon asked secretary to advertise the prize. Bergland reiterated that the Rudnik prize is awarded every other year—so again in 2007 for books published in 2005-06—for exemplary models of American Studies. Bergland said the board has always preferred this "wide-open language." A spirited discussion followed on the merits of edited collections of essays versus monographs, and Raimon said the wording on the web needed to be clear that the *editor* of a collected volume gets the award. A discussion followed on whether council members should be allowed to submit books, and most agreed, in Morrison's words, that "we want to avoid any impression of impropriety."

Bergland moved to keep council members off book prize. Cassidy seconded. All approved.

The next Rudnik prize book committee is: Johnston, Hoberman (chair), Morrison, and Martin. The chair will coordinate distribution of books and forward language to secretary, webmaster, and regional rep. May 1st 2007 is the deadline for submissions.

2006 Conference The conference program committee is Iannucci, Bergland, Raimon, Cassidy, Johnston, Isaac, Morrison (chair), and Kauanui.

Cassidy said the University of Southern Maine conference office will provide registration services, but they charge a whopping \$10 min. per person with a minimum of \$1000, so at least 100 participants are needed. They will also reserve hotel rooms, which range from \$70 to \$150. There is no charge for the conference space. Cassidy is going to inquire about possible hands-on programs at the Maine Historical Society and the Portland Museum, as well as a museum of African culture at USM.

Raimon was concerned that the CFP got only two submissions. Cassidy and Bergland asked everyone to actively solicit submissions. The deadline was moved to March 15th. Since Sweeney does not have Adobe Editor to change the date on the pdf, Cassidy offered to do it. Secretary should mail updated CFP to NEASA members, changing contact from "Raimon" to "Morrison."

Cassidy and Raimon asked for keynote suggestions. Raimon suggested Susan Willis (*Portents of the Real*). Martin will inquire about a filmmaker who made a movie on Abu Ghraib. Kauanui suggested Matthew Frye Jacobson. Battenfeld suggested Tram Nguyen (*We Are All Suspects Now*). Johnston suggested Maureen Elgersman Lee (*Black Bangor*), and Cassidy said the exhibit may be up in Maine at time of conference. Davé suggested Vijay Prashad. Klimasmith suggested Pricilla Wald. Cassidy asked that as much info as possible be sent to the committee on these recommendations.

The program committee meeting is April 1st at Simmons.

2007 Conference Bergland noted that the theme is gender and sexuality. Frank reported that Salve Regina university in Newport is willing to partner with us on this conference, and she will look into arrangements and other institutional participants, such as the Newport Art Museum or one of the historic "mansions."
Prgm Committee is Frank, Dean, Klimasmith, Davé, Isaac

New Business Davé asked if NEASA had a speaker board. Johnston responded that \$1000 would be too much money for NEASA. Luria said sometimes people do it as a favor, and suggested that council members ask their departments for facilitating funds.

The next council meeting is April 8th at Simmons