

NEASA council meeting—September 25, 2005—Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Present: Luria, Saltz, Bergland, Klimasmith, Johnston, Cassidy, Raimon, Dean, Frank, Kauanui, Hill, Le Blanc, Boehm.

**Website** Luria began with thanks to Augusta Rohrbach and Brian Sweeney for their work on the new website design, then asked council to weigh in on renewal options for domain name; council opted for 3 year renewal.

Discussion of how best to maintain webmaster position. Bergland recommended an uncontested webmaster seat on the council; all agreed. After some discussion, Bergland moved to add designated seat to ballot called “webmaster.” Seconded by several voices.

**Elections** Discussion of elections opened with a desire to note that the attendees at this meeting were all women; implication noted. Dean proceeded to report her tally of 14 candidates running for 04-05 [*this is what I wrote down, but I must have meant 05-06, right? oel*]. She noted especially the high interest among conference attendees.

Based on some responses, Saltz asked if nonregional members can run for council.

General agreement stated that any member who has paid NEASA cross-regional fee can run—but expectations about attending council meetings *must be clear*.

Dean reminded council of Oct. 15 for biographical statements. Council agreed that new bio guidelines should appear on the website.

Regarding the high level of interest in the upcoming election, Johnston asked if it possibly be too many potential candidates. Council generally felt that it would not be a problem with this many open seats. Johnston wondered further if it would be constructive to save some of the current recruits for rebalancing in the future. Bergland reminded all that council “rebalanced” several years ago but that it has not saved us from the imbalance today.

Other members expressed some concern about loss of experience when there is such high turn over, tho’ most agreed that retaining experienced members as officers will help.

Luria announced members leaving board this winter: Hill, Boehm, Le Blanc.

Council moved on to discuss possibility of asking members who consistently miss meetings, do not reply to queries, and do not actively contribute to council work about resigning. All agreed this would be useful but came to no conclusions.

Klimasmith offered commendations to the nominating committee for their work and great results.

Next step: specific seats on upcoming ballot.

Council decided not to list slots for grad student reps on ballot but to assign that role to highest vote-getter among grad students running. Moved on to nominating officers from among current council. Dean nominated Frank for secretary, and Le Blanc provided a thumbnail sketch of secretary’s duties at present. Cassidy nominated herself for treasurer. Klimasmith reviewed related duties, noting that the biggest difficulty for treasurer is conference registration. She encouraged council to consider farming this out online vendor in future. (Typical cost of \$1.50 per registration; probably worth it.)

Council has some questions but mostly embraces idea. For more research and future

consideration. The rest of the treasurer's duties comprise paying bills and adding members.

Raimon nominated for president elect.

Dean then distributed a letter from Furer addressed to the council. The letter stressed, primarily, that NEASA has not quite succeeded at getting out of "academia." Johnston similarly reported that efforts to recruit teachers for conference produced only four. Most could not take time away from school and other responsibilities.

Dean asked if low teacher turn-out could be a result of program per se, but Johnston thought not. Stoker volunteered that this speaks to the original reason for creating the one-day teacher workshops. For those to continue, however, NEASA will need principal sponsorship. She emphasized that, in general, NEASA has done a good job for this group.

Dean recommended trying harder to create panels specifically for these groups—teachers and public historians.

Council discussed recruiting new museum person.

**Conference 2005** Hill expressed her thanks to Luria and Klimasmith, and Luria extended gratitude to the program committee.

Saltz asked for some discussion of how NEASA could better balance the overloaded format with the expense that a longer conference imposes on attendees.

Hill suggested also that it would be worth discussing timing of conference, particularly since fall can be difficult for some people. She proposed moving 2006 conference to October. Friday in particular, she noted, was difficult—low attendance—then loss of audience on Saturday night too. Do we need to spread it back out?

Cassidy cautioned waiting until after 2006, when it would be easier to analyze and learn from patterns. She also noted complaints about costs.

Luria recommended sending these topics to program committee for more in-depth brainstorming and discussion.

Bergland noted that the two-day programming is still fairly novel for NEASA—people still adjusting having to anticipate and budget. Luria reminded all that running more panels creates more attendees, which is good. Hill suggested changing to keynote on Friday only or noon on Saturday. This was too many keynotes.

Klimasmith stressed the importance of considering the cost for grad students and some others: expense of staying over very high. NEASA needs to expect one-day attendees and recognize that this is not a bad thing. There was no failure to attract attendees. Plus beneficial to Worcester economy.

Klimasmith also reported the success of the regional fellows program, which garnered 15 attendees, plus the 8 Smith students: that is, 23 regional attendees. Bergland deemed this good for NEASA and for ASA, and Johnston considered it audience building for the future.

Luria and Dean both remarked the strong attendance even tho' publicity could have been better—esp seemed to be a good number of non-presenters. Klimasmith, comparing with last year's attendance of 65, reported this year 130 bodies counted, including regional fellows. She also endorsed the pursuit of small donations from institutions, which proved successful: they added up. Inviting panels also increased numbers—brought in presenters who may not have submitted anything.

The numbers from Klimasmith:

In:	\$7,510
Anticipating c.	\$5,000 in other income.
Expenses out	\$8,732.
Total:	\$3,460. in black

Major turnaround from previous years.

Luria noted the value of being able to reward people for efforts: honoraria and tips. Hill suggested that the leap in attendance from last year could be due the lack of regional restriction: maybe New England focus has a negative impact on attendance. Could remove NE focus from conference at large and use instead a NE caucus for sponsored panels or something along those lines. Bergland did remind council that some NE focus/studies is in charter. Cassidy also pointed out that NE focus helps engage teachers and museum folks.

**Conference 2006** Kauanui presented the call for papers.

General discussion of possible revisions ensued, including how to make sure presenters who are not “scholars” feel welcome to submit. Le Blanc recommended that the language of the call might invoke less the presenters (implicitly assumed to be scholars doing scholarly research) and stress more how we develop panels. Raimon and Hill recommended further using language that emphasizes the work the that panelists will address: ie, pedagogy, creating exhibitions, etc.

Johnston expressed her concern that the word “ambivalence” might be too prescriptive. Kauanui responded that they designed call to put emphasis on subject rather than on government; she would hope to retain that angle. Much discussion ensued until Cassidy recommended continuing the discussion in the program committee and via e-mail.

Cassidy requested a timeline from 2005 conference for new program committee, which led to an attempt to reconstruct schedule.

General discussion returned to whom the call addressed, asking if it did enough to encourage concrete work in history and especially literature and visual history concretely. Again, council agreed to pursue this line of thought further online.

Council returned to discussion of title, many wanting something “snappy,” others preferring to drop everything before the colon and have a more direct title. Klimasmith recommended the pragmatic route of treating title as something variable: it can go out in separate forms. Eg. e-mail call can drop snappy title, as can conference calls for specific listserves. Snappy title may work best on printed call.

Cassidy closed with a request for possible dates. After some discussion, council agreed that Sept 15, 2006 looked best so far.

**Conference 2007** Frank reported on arrangements for 2007. She reported that Salve Regina University is available, but that Sept is a bad month for inexpensive hotels in Newport. In August, however, the university could provide housing—much more affordable.

Council discussed possible reception venues (art museum [long walk], mansions and topics (gender styles?).

**Secondary School Committee** Stoker reported progress on plans for the December 9 Fitchburg teacher institute, which she thought would include four workshops. She also noted that ASA has been very encouraging; they would like to see more of this happening across regions. Bergland said it should become an item on the regional rep agenda.

Stoker recommended recruiting a group of secondary educators from each states, creating a secondary teachers caucus. It would function as a regional subcommittee, and foster cross-regional communication. Council responded with much enthusiasm. Cassidy suggested contacting state humanities councils for names and support, and Hill thought it could also function as an advisory board. After some discussion of size, council agreed it was best to start small—no more than six reps to start.

Stoker concluded by noting that NEASA-ASA communication has helped revive an AS class at her school.

**Rudnick prize** tabled till next mtg.

Next mtg: Jan 21 at Simmons. Snow date Jan 28.

Luria closed the meeting by thanking Hill for her considerable service to NEASA over the years, and the council heartily concurred.

Meeting adjourned 11:45.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ondine Le Blanc.