

## NEASA COUNCIL MEETING

January 20, 2007  
Simmons College  
11AM-1:30PM

**Present:** Raimon, Cassidy, Johnston, Railton, Battenfeld, Flynn, Sikes, Frank, Antonucci, Delevante, Davé, Romano, Dean, Dunson, Kauanui, Bergland.

Eve Raimon, incoming president, welcomes new members, and everyone introduces themselves.

### **Minutes approved.**

Johnston makes the motion, Flynn seconds.

### **Treasurer Report**

Cassidy distributes the "Treasurer Report, Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2006," along with the "Conference Breakdown." Cassidy reports that the ending balance is in good shape. Once the \$1000 rebate check from ASA is received, ending balance will be \$12,158.40. The beginning balance was \$8015.96. Cassidy points out that NEASA has gained equity since the 2004 Salem conference. Moving more business online is less of a budgetary drain.

The '06 conference made \$1000. Conference sponsorships and grants helped. The breakdown of the \$3000 ASA grant: \$500 to Regional Fellows, \$500 to K-12 research and initiatives, \$1500 to conference keynotes (mostly travel).

### **Regional Rep Report**

Davé substitutes for Klimasmith. Reports that the Oakland ASA conference was exciting, with a visit from Angela Davis and fieldtrips to Port of Oakland and Chinatown. Emory Elliott, ASA president, and Vicki Ruiz, incoming president, spoke about what they are looking for in the regions:

- ASA funds are available to encourage greater interaction with communities.
- NEASA and all regional associations should send ASA the names of museums and other cultural institutions in their respective regions so a plan to link ASA membership to benefits for those institutions can be put in place.
- ASA seeks to foster greater community involvement in the areas of its conferences. Regional associations are the "touch stones" for promoting conversations between conference attendees and people on the ground in those areas.
- Regions should suggest "standards of accreditation" for secondary teachers teaching American Studies in their regions, so national-level standards can be connected to regional standards.
- NEASA regional work and conference is viewed as a successful model for other regions. In order to overcome weak conference participation, the Mid-Atlantic

and Chesapeake regions teamed up for the “Belief & America” conference. Asked what other groups NEASA might partner with during its conferences.

Davé suggested NEASA consider creating a honoraria (award or grant) for undergrads doing exceptional work in American Studies. This could be especially important to undergrads working at institutions without an Am. Studies department. Delevante pointed out the value to grad students of attending conferences with known scholars in their fields. Dean and Frank liked the idea of acknowledging undergrad work at the conference with a prize, and Raimon suggested running a pilot session of undergrad papers at the upcoming conference. Davé suggested that 3 undergrad papers might be moderated by an important scholar. Battenfeld notes the difficulty of timing, with honors thesis students graduated by the time of the fall conference. Raimon suggests putting an announcement about NEASA undergrad prizes to professors not students, and added that we are always looking for increased attendance at the conferences; an undergrad prize would expand awareness of NEASA conferences within institutions.

Johnston made a motion to have the Prize Committee consider wording for and structure of an undergrad prize. Dean seconds. Motion approved.

The 2007 prize committee is Davé, Bergland, and Railton. Cassidy asked that the Program Committee and the Prize Committee remain in contact about the undergrad prize.

### **Election Report**

Bergland reports that 400 ballots were sent out snail mail with the President’s Letter; 30-40 returned undeliverable. There were 80 bouncebacks to her email alert about the election. In total 50 people returned ballots. Seven new council members were seated, to give a council size of 23 people. The new members are Al Flynn, secondary school rep; Patrice Delevante, grad rep; Ben Railton, Stephanie Dunson, Renee Romano, Dayo Gore, and Mike Millner.

Bergland notes that although NEASA has a slightly larger council now, that can be remediated by electing only 7 new members for the 9 seats being vacated next year.

Simmons donated paper and labor for the ballot mailing and postage cost about \$200. She recommends that the President’s Letter be mailed but the election balloting go online. Survey Monkey costs \$75. Discussion followed about the pros and cons of paper versus electronic ballots.

Flynn moved for a hybrid ballot, both sent to members on the back of the Pres. Letter and online using available technology. Bergland seconded. Motion for hybrid ballot approved.

The Election Committee will research the technology options. The 2007 Election Committee is Railton, Delevante, and Battenfeld.

Bergland noted that the NEASA website looks fantastic and commends webmaster Sweeney for his work on it.

### **Secondary Ed Report**

Sikes reports that, with the help of a UMass student, she has put together a comprehensive resource package that includes a database of secondary schools in New England with programs in American Studies as well as syllabi and course descriptions. This resource is contained in two notebooks, which Sikes passed around. NEASA has proposed that Crossroads include this research as well as links provided by Sikes. Beginning with the ASA web database, Sikes was able to eliminate about a third of the programs (as discontinued) and then add many more new programs. The hardest part was getting updated email addresses for contact people, Sikes said.

Teachers responded that their 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>-grade courses typically combined literary and historical material from the Revolution to the Civil War; some teachers used this approach up to the present. Most of the courses were geared to AP and Honors-level students, but one or two programs existed for “at-risk” students, such as the ASK program in West Hartford.

Teachers reported that there is a general lack of awareness of American Studies, and that it is sometimes viewed as a lighter work load by administrators, who are suspicious of interdisciplinary work. Sikes passed around a good example of an American Studies text for high school: *American Identities* by Lois Rudnick.

How can we support teachers: First choice) afternoon and evening workshops. Secondly) course-planning consultation. It was noted that private schools had a higher response rate for previous workshops. Rudnick used electronic ads to reach out to a broader base of schools.

Johnston commended Sikes’ work and suggested working with the American Antiquarian Society, who invited sec. ed. history teachers to past conferences on Historical & Visual Culture. Jim Moran at AAS does outreach.

Davé suggested an October workshop, but Flynn noted that history teachers go to a regional meeting in the fall and it has been hard to get the disciplines to work together. MATs require future teacher to focus on a particular discipline. Moreover, schools do not have the budgetary resources for interdisciplinary professional development. Raimon wondered if there are any efforts to resist impact of No Child Left Behind. Romano noted that there is a huge amount of money to teach issues raised by 9/11, and that working with public organizations or using interdisciplinary methods, such as music in history classes, doesn’t have to be labeled American Studies. Cassidy suggested actually going into schools to do more focused interactions with teachers that might also engage the physical setting.

Sikes and Bergland noted it is much easier to support sec. ed. initiatives from a higher ed institution than an association, so what can NEASA do? Suggestions:

- Delevante: offer Sikes resource material to sec. ed. teachers.
- Romano: we can put together a two-hour grant-writing workshop and offer teachers a fellowship to attend. Delevante suggests actually writing the grants at the workshop.
- Cassidy: We offer a focused workshop on developing lesson plans and course structures.
- Bergland: Offer a fellowship to a teacher to run such a workshop.
- Flynn: Recommends UMass 1992 initiative of offering \$1500 to teachers to run a community activity, such as historic home tours.

Raimon asks that we continue the discussion online and come up with a concrete plan. Sikes is the point person.

Bergland noted that March 15 is the deadline for the ASA regional grant.

### **Book Prize**

Johnston, Martin, and Railton are this year's book prize committee. Submissions are due by April 1. Correspondence and submissions should go to [neasacouncil@gmail.com](mailto:neasacouncil@gmail.com).

Frank said she would update the NEASA member list by the end of the week.

### **Program Committee '07**

Program chairs, Grant-Costa and Isaac, were absent. Delevante, and Battenfeld volunteered for the program committee.

Frank reported that the conference will be held at Brown Nov. 2-3, and she is working with the university conference services on space and catering. Brown will handle registration, but they cannot do online registration.

Raimon requested that everyone on the council distribute the "Sex/Changes" CFP.

Johnston suggested putting the CFP on H-Amstdy.

Bergland noted that if anyone wants to put together a panel, a call can be posted on the Penn CFP list.

Initial suggestions for keynotes were tossed out, including Jonathan Katz, Judith Halberstam, Herman Grey, Imani Perry, Helen Horowitz.

Frank suggested continuing the keynote conversation online.

The committee will meet on March 31 at Brown University at the (Center for Public Humanities) at 10AM. Frank will send out directions.

### **Next Council Meeting**

April 21 at Brandeis, 1-3PM.

**Meeting adjourned at 1:30PM.**