

ASTR *American Society for Theatre Research*

Minutes of the Fall 2012 ASTR Executive Committee Meeting Sheraton Downtown, Nashville, TN November 1, 2012

Present: Rhonda Blair (President), Stacy Wolf (Vice President), Marla Carlson (Secretary), Nancy Erickson (Administrator, *ex officio*), Susan Bennett, Soyica Colbert, Brian Herrera, Kirsten Pullen, Mike Sell, Leigh Woods, David Calder (GSC Representative), Patrick Anderson (Vice President-elect), Shane Vogel (EC member-elect), Kellyn Johnson (GSC representative-elect). Heather Nathans arrived at 9:11, Gay Gibson Cima at 10:27, and Cindy Brizzell-Bates (Treasurer) by Skype from 9:30-9:50.

Absent: Cindy Brizzell-Bates (Treasurer), Dorothy Chansky, Suk-Young Kim, Laura Edmondson, Elinor Fuchs.

The President called the meeting to order at **8:20** am.

Introductions were made. There were 9 voting members present, plus the President as Committee Chair.

1. Approval of the March 2012 EC minutes and addendum noting subsequent e-votes

MOTION: to approve the Minutes of the Spring 2012 EC Meeting. Moved by Pullen, seconded by Calder. Vote: 10 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions. **The motion carried unanimously.**

2. Adoption of the agenda.

MOTION: to adopt the agenda prepared by the President for the Fall 2012 Meeting. Moved by Sell, seconded by Herrera. Vote: 10 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions. **The motion carried unanimously.**

3. President's report (Rhonda Blair)

The President welcomed Heather Nathans, incoming President; Patrick Anderson, incoming Vice President; incoming Executive Committee members Robin Bernstein, Jill Stevenson, Shane Vogel, and E.J. Westlake, and incoming GSC representative Kellyn Johnson.

Necrology: The President noted the passing of Glenda Dickerson.

Fundraising: Mike Sell must step down as but will remain on this committee. The raffle will be discontinued in favor of focused fundraising. Sell reported that the committee recommends increasing the number of travel grants to bring people to the conference, citing the results of the New Paradigms survey and the number of applications this year as reflected in the Awards report. The committee's suggestions included a line item on the registration form to donate for

this purpose; click to donate button on website; expanding international representation and integrating the ASTR conference experience and mentoring into their graduate experience, which could additionally bring more funds to the Society from their home countries who are funding their graduate education.

Kirsten Pullen volunteered to chair the Fundraising Committee as of January 15, wants to develop sponsored career sessions and supports the click-to-donate button.

Committees: The President reviewed current committee appointments

MOTION: to approve the President's 2012 committee appointments and memberships as amended. Moved by Woods, seconded by Bennett. Vote: 10 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions. **The motion carried unanimously.**

4. Secretary's report (Marla Carlson)

The Secretary asked members to review handbook and inform her about changes that should be copied in.

5. Vice President's report (Stacy Wolf)

The Vice President thanked Patrick Anderson and Patricia Ybarra for their work as co-chairs of the Program Committee and noted that Koritha Mitchell had done a lot of work on the career sessions.

The advertisement for applications to be Program Chair for the 2014 conference is out, and the Vice President asked members of the Executive Committee to solicit applicants for this position and to pass their names to the incoming Vice President. The Committee on Conferences has suggested people, none of whom have stepped up for 2014 although some have indicated that a later date may be possible. *Discussion: The application includes a statement of experience and a proposed conference theme. Suggested that providing Graduate Assistants for Program Chairs might be desirable. This year's co-chairs work at institutions that were able to provide assistants, who proved crucial to planning the conference, but this situation could result in limiting the ability to take on this task to individuals at relatively wealthy Research I institutions. The Administrator suggested that we need to look at what can be done through the website.*

This year, some graduate students who won travel awards were not accepted as either plenary speakers or working group participants. We need to address this, either by providing a way for them to participate in the conference or by making it clear to them that winning a travel award does not guarantee presenting in any way.

The Vice President asked the Executive Committee to advise the Committee on Conferences about the desirability of investigating possibilities of co-conferences with another organization, noting that the Committee on Conferences was split on this issue and had strong feelings on both sides.

6. Administrator's report (Nancy Erickson)

The Administrator noted a new phenomenon this year: approximately 70 people who are listed in the conference program have not registered. The Program Chairs checked earlier with working group conveners about participants who had not registered, after which 30-40 people withdrew. She suggested setting an earlier registration date. *Discussion: This practice is common for other academic organizations, some of which require membership prior to submitting proposal and registration very shortly after acceptance. There were many worthy submissions this year that had to be turned down, and it would be desirable to replace panelists who decide not to attend. A date immediately following ATHE would be appropriate, given that the two organizations share an administrator and have a significant overlap in constituency.* The Administrator can be responsible for implementing and enforcing the deadline and develop a *process for notifying replacements. We could provide working group conveners with a standard paragraph to remind participants to register and need to make sure that the Webmaster gets the registration system up early, preferably as soon as the working group notifications are sent out.*

MOTION: anyone accepted for participation in the conference must register by August 15. Moved by Blair, seconded by Pullen. Vote: 10 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Membership numbers are fairly consistent. The Administrator noted a need to increase budgeted attendance: Plenary rooms need to accommodate 500 rather than 400, and we need to increase room nights as well. Approximately 50 people had to be accommodated outside the conference hotel this year. All conference location planning is complete through 2014, and we are looking at West Coast sites for 2015.

Considering how robust we want the website to be, the Administrator has asked the Webmaster to investigate an alternative platform.

7. Archivist's report (Heather Nathans)

The Archivist thanked those people who are sending their records to the archives.

8. Standing Committee: Report of the Graduate Student Caucus (David Calder)

Thanks to GSC Vice President Kellen Hoxworth for the work on Nashville resources and to Nancy Erickson for getting it into the registration packets. GSC Vice President Eero Laine has done good work on the GSC handbook and changes to election procedures. The GSC has dropped the notion of developing bylaws and is using the handbook instead.

GSC elections will make a transition to the same election calendar as ASTR, which will make it easier for the Executive Committee to make committee assignments. There may be more than two nominees for President/EC representative but will always be at least two.

This year's raffle will be the last. The current and incoming chairs of the Fundraising committee and current and incoming GSC Presidents will discuss who should represent the GSC on this committee and will work to take action on this.

Incoming GSC President Kellyn Johnson has been working on the GSC's web presence and will work with the Webmaster on issues such as making the graduate student resources that they've compiled accessible on the ASTR site.

9. Special Committee: Report of American Theatre Archive Project / Ad Hoc Committee on Archive Preservation (Brian Herrera)

As a member of the steering committee, Herrera gave an overview of the tremendous, busy, and successful work of this committee. They just complete a working session in New Mexico that provides a strong model for regions that are not stereotypically considered to be important theatrically. The New Plays Network provides a model for organization as a national network with regional and local implementation by a three-person team comprising a researcher, a representative of a theatre company in the area, and an archivist. ASTR can be vital in providing support for this initiative and keeping it vital. *Discussion: Advocacy for archive preservation in performing arts is connected to the proposed initiative on archives in university libraries. These projects can be started by anyone who wishes to do so.*

10. Treasurer's report (Cindy Bates via Skype)

The Society is in good financial shape overall. The Treasurer especially noted the receipt of \$10,000 from Grace Hill; an award from the Lucille Lortel Foundation of \$4000 for ATAP; and \$17,000 royalties, which were budgeted for only \$7000. The numbers from the 2011 conference in Montreal were very good, and our investments have recovered to the extent that we are above our previous high point.

The Treasurer and Finance committee will be looking at membership dues and conference fees, which have not been increased for many years, and also considering an increase in reimbursement for Executive Committee travel to the spring meeting given the drastic reduction in funding available from institutions to help cover this expense. *Discussion: Considered whether the existing budget would allow us to increase the number of travel grants. This money comes from our investments, and an appropriate source for this funding might be a targeted fundraising initiative. The Administrator pointed out that the YTD budget does not include either income from or expenses for this conference. The question of registration refunds for hurricane cancellations will be assessed based upon the number of requests and our financial position after this conference.*

11. Report of Committee on New Paradigms in Graduate Education (Heather Nathans)

This committee has been growing rapidly and now includes a nice cross-section of the membership: international scholars, members of the GSC, PhDs who have not found academic jobs, and people at every level of academic employment. The committee thank the Program Committee for giving them so much visibility, which enables them to reach as many groups across ASTR as possible. Their ninth monthly mailing to the membership went out recently.

Nathans thanked the Webmaster for implementing the committee's survey, to which there were fewer responses than last year although many were from new respondents. Survey results indicate significant and faculty-initiated change graduate programs. Reliance on networking for job placement highlights the need for networking outside academe. Respondents who teach in BA, BFA, and two-year college programs indicated a need for training in leadership skills such

as grant writing, mentorship, curriculum design, and budgeting. The Society might well wish to address this issue, which we discussed at the Spring 2012 EC meeting. Retired colleagues appear to be remaining in touch with their former graduate students, and for many their advice has changed in recent years. They expressed a desire for ASTR to use them as a brain trust.

Discussion: Women have difficulty advancing to Full Professor status due to administrative and other types of service; that PhDs are the only people eligible to perform certain administrative tasks in university departments staffed primarily by MFAs also limits scholarship. Suggested that we explore structures that ASTR could provide to sustain ongoing mentorship after the PhD (including still-employed faculty as well as those who have retired). People working outside of academe who are still members are not certain how long they will remain. We might inquire about other organizations—in other words, are there others that meet their needs more adequately than ASTR does? When asking about structured workshops for non-academic job searches, it would be helpful to distinguish between those that are sustained throughout the year and short-term or one-off workshops, and ASTR might provide more resources of this type. Recent job announcements have specified explicit PhD vintages (i.e., only ABD or very recent PhDs). MLA took a strong stance against such requirements by Harvard and Colorado, and we could do so as well. It was suggested that we make the material provided at the conference available on the website for those who cannot attend.

12. Report of 2012 Program Committee (Patrick Anderson)

The Program Committee co-chair reported that in spite of the storm, many east coast members have in fact been able to get to Nashville or will be arriving. An additional one-hour reception has been scheduled on Friday night after the end of the working group sessions to accommodate those who were prevented from arriving in time for the opening reception. Scheduling the Long Table on the State of the Fields as the only event on Sunday morning has perhaps backfired to some extent, being interpreted as a reason to leave earlier.

That Tennessee is a right to work state has been a cause for concern and something that we should consider in future, but the Administrator and Conference Direct have been very helpful.

The conference has more than 500 registrants, significantly more than expected. The Program Committee turned many applicants this year and support the notion of rectifying this situation as discussed in response to the Administrator's report.

The committee received 10-12 double submission and one triple, and half of these were from long-term ASTR members. This year's Program Co-Chairs contacted the conveners of the working sessions who were involved, and they also made the decisions about these conflicts rather than leaving it up to the submitter. *Discussion: It was noted that most of these duplicate submissions come from very junior scholars who may not realize. Suggested solutions included: all working session calls for submission need to clearly indicate the single-submission policy; Program Committee chairs review the list of submitter names before the conveners of working sessions make acceptance decisions; using software to implement a central submission with checkbox for all working sessions for which the submission would be appropriate, enabling conveners to evaluate all applicants interested in their session.*

In further discussion of ways to avoid turning away so many applicants, members of the EC suggested: having a longer conference; expanding the number of concurrent working sessions

rather than having a longer conference, which would increase the expense; scheduling fewer plenary sessions or changing the conference structure in other ways; convening an unthemed working session by invitation to the most promising applicants nominated by working session conveners who could not accommodate them for one reason or another; other formats such as poster sessions; having a more diverse set of working sessions, given that the supply and demand model does not apply (i.e., more sessions does not necessary mean more seats). The Administrator advised the EC that it is not more expensive to have more session rooms available, and that the cost of the hotel is her problem. The Program Co-Chair suggested that the Committee on Conferences can advise the Program Committee next year.

13. Report of Ad Hoc Committee on Providing Graduate Assistants for Officers (Brian Herrera)

The committee's recommendations developed from concerns expressed at the Spring 2012 EC meeting. Graduate students' service to ASTR has often borne no relation to professional development, and this arrangement would offers an opportunity for an officer to provide a title for a graduate student at the home institution or at another. *Discussion: Support was voiced for including Program Chairs in addition to officers. Although the recommendation does not stipulate that the student must be a member at the time of service, this could be desirable. The amount of service required could be quite large in comparison to the payback. This is a service position that makes a good CV line. Officers might find the opportunity for mentorship and visibility as attractive as having the assistance with their work, yet it's also very important to be transparent with respect to access to power. The people involved might be asked to articulate their needs and develop application based on this. The application procedure needs to be simple. The Administrator suggested that we might consider financial compensation and thus a contract, and that the officers and Program Committee chairs should consider delegating certain tasks to the administrative staff. An electronic discussion would allow us to take action at the Spring 2013 EC meeting.*

No consensus was reached, and no action was taken.

14. Report of Ad Hoc Committee on ASTROnline (Susan Bennett)

a. Website design: The Webmaster has done a great job. Provided that we clearly inform him of our needs, he can do almost everything that we want with the current platform. If people have specific requests for the website, then this is a good time to inform the committee chair and the Administrator. *Discussion: Requests included better design of the membership directory, including multi-name display and more effective search function; historical information going back at least five years to provide a record of officers, committee chairs, and award winners; more careful proofreading; that member news should not be entirely alphabetical.*

b. Copyright and licensing of material published online:

MOTION: That ASTR adopt the "CC BY-NC-ND" license to cover publications of *ASTROnline*. Moved by Blair. Second by Calder. Vote: 10 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions. **The motion carried unanimously.**

MOTION: That ASTR make an annual donation of \$100 to CreativeCommons. Moved by Blair. Second by Pullen. Friendly amended to begin in fiscal year 2014. Vote: 10 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions. **The motion carried unanimously.**

- c. **Purpose of ASTROOnline and roles and responsibilities of editors:** Recruiting procedures are in place for the major roles (that is, the editors for each platform); however, the *ASTROOnline* editor is currently working with four assistant editors, and the Society (through the Publications Committee) has no oversight of this recruitment process and what the assistant editors do. This structure was developed by the first editor of *ASTROOnline*, and we have not previously reviewed this structure. Because the Publications Committee will need to recruit a new editor in Spring 2013, we need to provide clear guidelines about our expectations for the person in this position.

MOTION: that *ASTROOnline* be part of the portfolio of the Publications Committee and that the editor reports to the Chair of the Publications Committee. Moved by Cima. Second by Woods.

Discussion: By friendly amendment, "reports to" was changed to "is answerable to."
Vote: 9 yes, 0 no, 1 abstentions. **The motion carried as amended.**

The committee asked for guidance in developing a mission statement for *ASTROOnline*, which the Publications Committee can draft. *Suggestions included: think about how ASTROOnline can take up the work of advocacy that Theatre Survey's publication schedule makes impossible; advocate for all of the activities that ASTR is involved in; change of focus to providing information rather Op-Ed, themed issues, and solicited articles has been good; we might consider having some Op-Ed content, following the model of HigherEd Online; we might wish to have an e-journal in the future, but that this is not the purpose of this website; ASTROOnline needs to be real time so that it can respond to current situations; the editor should be a person who understands the specific requirements of website publication, and that this could be included in the mission statement; some things (such as the New Paradigms report) that are only available in the Leadership section of the website should be available to the membership at large; ASTROOnline should be a mechanism for disseminating what comes out of the EC conversations to the membership; we could also share some of what comes out of the annual conference; as a fundraising tool, the website needs to make as many people and activities visible as possible.*

With respect to the appointment of an editor for the two-year term beginning after the 2013 conference and the structure of the editorial team, the following were noted: the position requires someone savvy about the digital platform for presentation and dissemination of information; a co-editor could serve as a pipeline, parallel to the structure of Theatre Survey.

15. Report of the Awards and Fellowships Committee (Iris Smith Fischer, who joined the meeting at 1:00 p.m.)

- a. **Activities of the committee:** The chair thanked her eleven hard-working committees and noted that there will soon be a twelfth committee for the Cambridge University Press Prize. Many of these committees received a much higher number of applications this year. The Webmaster very helpful in coordinating the work of the committees, and the Administrator collaborated most helpfully.

The committee was heartened by the response to the announcements of Keller and Marshall awards, and individual award committees began looking for ways to streamline their process. The committee for the Grants to Researchers with Heavy Teaching Loads, with Leigh Clemons as chair, received no applications and will try advertising through ATHECast.

The enhanced Oscar G. Brockett Essay Award is in place for 2013 at \$1500, and we will invite a representative of the sponsor, if present, to participate in presenting the award. The University of Illinois agreed this week to increase the Barnard Hewitt Award to \$2000, which they will fund in its entirety. The new CUP Prize will be available for the first time. The President will make an announcement at Annual Business Meeting and the chair of the Publications Committee will contact plenary presenters after the conference to remind them that they are eligible.

For awards that require letters of support from ASTR members (such as the Keller), the committee would like to receive all letters in a single PDF file along with the application but still maintain confidentiality. *The Administrator agreed to work with the chair of the Awards and Fellowships Committee chair to investigate using an online service such as Interfolio for this purpose.*

The following were suggested as ways to ensure that graduate students who win awards but are not accepted to a working session or plenary have a good conference experience and feel welcome: have these people announce things (such as plenaries); put an Awards page in the program book, although the winners of the Distinguished Scholar and the Hewitt award are not revealed until the ceremony itself; revealing the identity of the Hewitt winner in advance would create better opportunities for the author and press to promote the winning book at the conference.

The committee chair raised the issue of parity in award amounts: Hill is only \$500, whereas Hewitt is \$2000.

b. Recommendations of the committee:

MOTION: that \$1,050 be added to the 2012 budget for awards and fellowships, in addition to the unused \$1,000 from the budget for Grants for Researchers with Heavy Teaching Loads; in order to add \$2,050, to be distributed as follows:

David Keller Travel Grant - \$800
Collaborative Research Award - \$750
Cohen Award - \$500

Moved by Pullen. Second by Calder.

Discussion: ambiguous wording of "up to three awards" creates flexibility for the EC but is confusing for both the selection committee involved and the membership who might wish to apply.

Vote: 12 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions. **The motion carried unanimously.**

MOTION: that the budget for these three awards be as follows, starting with the 2013 awards:

David Keller Travel Grant - \$2,400
Collaborative Research Award - \$1,750

Cohen Award - \$1,000

Moved by Nathan. Second by Calder. Vote: 12 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Further discussion: So much work is required to prepare the application for the Grants for Researchers with Heavy Teaching Load and also to participate in a working session. We might move to a nominations process, to include self-nomination. Because the March 16 deadline is very difficult to meet, a May 1 deadline was suggested. The website should include info about the persons in whose honor each award is named. The Administrator suggested that the committee should investigate whether people need to be members in order to apply for these awards or, at the very least, to receive them. It was suggested that award nominations should come from members; that the awards should go to the members and that, thus, membership should be required at time of application. This was requested as an agenda for the Spring 2013 EC meeting or perhaps an electronic meeting and vote. The chair of the Awards and Fellowships Committee is not currently a member of the Executive Committee but should perhaps be a guest for that meeting.

16. Report of the Publications Committee (Susan Bennett)

a. Recommendations of the committee

MOTION: that Executive Committee approve the appointment of Harvey Young as Associate Editor of *Theatre Survey*, effective January 1, 2013. Moved by Sell. Second by Nathans. Vote: 12 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions. **The motion carried unanimously.**

MOTION: that Executive Committee approve the inclusion of the above-described indemnity insurance as part of ASTR's insurance policy and ask the Administrator to arrange this amendment as soon as possible. Moved by Woods. Second by Sell.

Note: "Above described" refers to the Fall 2012 Report of the Publications Committee. Discussion: The Administrator has gotten one quote for this insurance which was quite high (\$2400) and will investigate further after the conclusion of this meeting. It was suggested that we seek legal advice.

Vote: 11 yes, 0 no, 1 abstentions. **The motion carried unanimously.**

The committee chair noted the very encouraging info in the CUP report, which should be useful for fundraising.

It was noted that neither the incoming chair of the Publications Committee nor the current and ongoing Chair of Awards and Fellowships is a member of the Executive Committee and thus will not be present for the Spring 2013 EC meeting unless invited.

Discussion of regularizing the editorial appointment for sections such as "Critical Stages": Those involved in creating this section did not conceive of it as necessarily becoming an ongoing feature; could be dropped because not necessarily critical to the journal—should be up to the editor. After discussion of indemnity issues, changes his mind: since the section was conceived as being polemical, it should also be covered by the indemnity insurance; having an appointed editor for this section has the potential appearance of cronyism.

- b. **Theatre Survey editor's report:** Leo Cabranes-Grant was present from 2:09 until 2:16 and reported that the journal is well on its way to three issues. Esther Kim Lee has special issue on Asian theatre and performance coming out. The editors are looking for ways to keep the journal responsive to the present situation and also to bring the conference into the journal. *Theatre Survey* is for the first time at this conference sponsoring a working session for writers, this time focused on translation. This session increases visibility for the journal and also serves the needs of the membership.
- c. **Cambridge University Press report:** Sally Hoffmann was present at 2:30 and called our attention to the Meet-the-Editor session at the conference. She brought cards for us to distribute along with cards to advertise the move to three issues and a new performance studies mini-brochure. She noted that there is no advertisement for *Theatre Survey* in the conference program, and that we should make sure that this is in place for future conferences.

The President thanked Susan Bennett for her work, which has changed the face of publications for ASTR.

17. New business

- a. **Discussion of ways to integrate graduate student award winners into the conference:** *Suggestions included: include them in an un-themed working session for the top unaccepted papers; various forms of laurel leaves, such as emcee roles or a blue ribbon on the name tag; some kind of debut working session; requiring applicants for the Marshall award to have been accepted in to a working session or plenary or to be in some other way invested (such as being in a GSC role). The GSC representative urges us to involve the GSC in addressing this issue. The Vice President noted that the chairs of the Program Committee will be reluctant to give up a plenary slot for this purpose, and the working session conveners will not wish to have their freedom to put together sessions infringed upon.*
- b. **Discussion of co-sponsored conferences:** *Suggestions included having more of an ASTR presence at ASA, ATHE, MLA, SCMS or at least pursuing that idea; using sponsored panels at conferences such as these to get our name out in front of other scholarly organizations. It was noted that the collaboration with CORD was difficult and challenging but also very rewarding as well as being financially beneficial. Collaboration with SDHS might be beneficial but would need to happen on our calendar (not theirs).*
- c. **Incoming President's comments (Heather Nathans):** Thanked her mentors and heroes; noted helpful feedback about proposed strategic planning process; will do her best to alleviate planning fatigue so that we have some viable models, can adopt a useful model, and also have the energy to implement.
- d. **Thank you to outgoing EC members:** The President thanked Stacy Wolf, Susan Bennett, Dorothy Chansky, Laura Edmondson, Mike Sell, and David Calder for their service to the EC and the Society.

Sell moved for appreciation of the spirited, heartfelt, and loving leadership of Rhonda Blair, which carried by acclamation.

18. Adjournment

MOTION: to adjourn. Moved by Nathans. Second by Cima. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marla Carlson
ASTR Secretary
13 November 2012

ADDENDUM TO THE MINUTES

Record of Electronic Votes Taken, 5 November 2012 – March 2013

1) MOTION: to approve the budget for FY2013. Moved by Carlson, seconded by Pullen. Voting conducted between 21-22 November 2012. 16 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions. **The motion carried.**

2) MOTION: to renew ASTR's relationship with Hilliard Lyons as its investment advisor as stipulated in the board resolution attached as addendum to the minutes. Moved by Brizell-Bates, seconded by Pullen. Voting conducted between 12 and 13 January 2012. 16 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions. **The motion carried.**