

ASTR American Society for Theatre Research

Minutes of the Spring 2014 ASTR Executive Committee Meeting Distler Hall, Tufts University 5-6 April 2014

Present: Robin Bernstein, Cynthia Brizzell-Bates (Treasurer), Marla Carlson (Secretary), Catherine Cole (Vice President for Publications), Joshua Chambers-Letson, Soyica Colbert, Michelle Cowin-Mensah (GSC Representative), Nancy Erickson (Administrator, *ex officio*), Suk-Young Kim, Heather Nathans (President), Jill Stevenson, Adam Versényi, Shane Vogel, E.J. Westlake, Leigh Woods.

Absent: Patrick Anderson (Vice President for Conferences), Kirsten Pullen, Analola Santana.

The President called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Introductions were made. There were 14 voting members present, including the President as Committee Chair. Kirsten Pullen sent some votes via proxy.

1. Adoption of the agenda.

MOTION: To adopt the agenda prepared by the President for the Spring 2014 Meeting. Moved by Woods, seconded by Versényi. Vote: 14 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions. **The motion carried unanimously.**

2. Approval of the consent agenda.

The consent agenda includes the following items, available for review online prior to the meeting:

- Fall 2013 EC minutes with addendum recording online votes
- Committees members and appointments
- Proposal for 2015 Conference

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda prepared by the President for the Spring 2014 Meeting. Moved by Westlake, seconded by Stevenson. Vote: 14 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions. **The motion carried unanimously.**

3. President's report (Heather Nathans)

The President announced that a long-term donor who has in the past made multiple unrestricted gifts expressed the wish to make a restricted gift to develop an online guide to the Digital Humanities. The officers discussed and approved this proposal prior to the meeting.

4. Report of Vice President for Conferences (Heather Nathans on behalf of Patrick Anderson)

The new conference proposal procedure has been successful enough that multiple lines of inquiry were open to members interested in planning future conferences, multiple lines of enthusiastic response, and thus multiple proposals in development for the same year. The

Committee on Conferences suggested that establishing a formal deadline, perhaps January 1, for the submission of conference proposals for the following year's conference would allow the Vice President and the Committee to fine-tune proposals and consider them on equal ground prior to the spring Executive Committee meeting. *Discussion: It was suggested that we articulate criteria for judging the proposals we receive and noted that tying the conference into local resources is important, as is a sense of currency. A good conference theme has potential for generating ideas but also leaves room for the breadth of the members' interests. The theme is important in ensuring that intellectual work drives the conference. The organizational capacity of the person or team submitting the proposal is also important. A mentoring system such as ATHE's shadowing system could be useful. Given the minimal funds available in the conference budget, serving on the Conference Planning Committee prior to chairing that committee would help planners develop a realistic proposal. The Administrator noted that that the Committee on Conferences is responsible with developing recommendations on matters such as these. Both the Committee on Conferences and the Conference Planning Committee were urged to make use of information available in the Handbook.*

5. Report of Vice President for Publications (Catherine Cole)

The Publications Committee has selected Dr. April Sizemore Barber as the new ASTR Online Associate Editor and will be conducting a search for a new *Theatre Survey* Associate Editor. Cambridge University Press has reported a 25% increase in journal royalties.

6. Treasurer's report (Cynthia Brizzell-Bates)

a. Update on FY14 budget status

Both conference fees and membership dues exceeded the amounts budgeted, putting us ahead in revenue. Expenses still to come include costs associated with the EC meeting, *Theatre Survey*, administrative costs, and insurance. Investments have far exceeded the previous peak in 2007. *Discussion: The income from royalties was significantly more (\$19,000) than the amount budgeted (\$7000).*

b. Percentage of investment withdrawal

Monies transferred from investments provide an important part of our operating budget, and we increased the withdrawal amount from 4% to 4.5% in FY14. The EC authorized withdrawals up to 5%, but neither the investment counselor nor the Treasurer wish to increase beyond 4.5%. No change in fees or conference dues are proposed this year.

c. Updates on new budget items

ATAP has been given a \$5000 budget line in response to their request. They are applying for grants that, if successful, will bring back \$3000 of these funds to ASTR. The GSC's request for funds to provide food and beverage for networking sessions can be wrapped into the general food and beverage budget, and the Treasurer needs to be aware of the GSC's needs for supplies.

g. Funds to cover the Administrator's transition contract

Transition costs of \$33,333 include the current Administrator fees through December 2014, the transition contract, the new Administrator's contract from January through June 2015, and the current Webmaster's fee through May 2015. The new administrator may wish to make changes, but the RFP specifies that we have a communications manager. The Treasurer recommends that

we transfer \$32,500 from our secondary checking account. The other option would be to withdraw from investments.

f. Conference fees

Conference fees haven't been raised in eight years although costs keep rising, and the Finance Committee plans to review them. The task force on Working Conditions proposed that we offer an underemployed category and perhaps a sliding scale. *Discussion: It was noted that any such arrangement needs to take care with the language used, since many people are overemployed but underpaid. Other options considered include financial assistance for those who need it or a fellowship fund, although we have not so far been successful in funding such things. If we set up a sliding scale, it would be necessary to know how much average ASTR member makes so that we don't lose money. In any case, we need to consider how much it actually costs per person to produce the conference.*

d. Redundant checking account

The Society's second checking account was used in the past for collecting IFTR dues, which ended in December 2013.

MOTION: To authorize moving the balance of ASTR's secondary checking account into the primary checking account to help cover the costs of our administration transition. Moved by Bates, seconded by Westlake. 13 yes, 0 no, 2 abstentions. **The motion carried.**

MOTION: To authorize the closing of ASTR's secondary checking account after the balance of this account has been moved to our primary account. Moved by Bates, seconded by Stevenson. 13 yes, 0 no, 2 abstentions. **The motion carried.**

e. FY2015 budget

MOTION: To approve the FY2015 ASTR budget. Moved by Bates, seconded by Versényi. 13 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention. **The motion carried.**

7. Secretary's report (Marla Carlson)

a. EC members and officers were urged to both consult the Handbook and to provide updates to the information that it contains.

b. The Secretary and the Webmaster have begun discussing plans for a Conference Program archive on website. The Administrator offered to provide PDF files for the last ten years' programs, and we can request materials prior to that from the Archives at the University of Maryland.

8. Administrator's report (Nancy Erickson)

a. Membership numbers look great. We are now getting more than 400 conference attendees and booking a room for plenaries that can seat 500. The Conference Planning Committee needs to tell the EC what they want the conference to look like, because right now we plan to have 9 breakout rooms available for simultaneous sessions of any sort—this includes working groups and anything else that could be happening, such as performances. In planning ahead, it is more cost-effective to get rid of rooms that we don't need than to book overflow rooms.

b. The Search Committee is handling the search for a new Administrator, and the current Administrator is handling the transition. The Committee has received seventeen inquiries and will work with the Administrator to select five for further consideration. Applicants are being asked them to write separate bids for ASTR and ATHE. Although it is possible that both organizations will once again select the same Administrator, this is not a joint search.

Discussion: The fee will likely increase significantly from what we're paying Erickson and Associates, but a larger administrative organization may offer advantages that will help us meet our goals, such as helping with the onboarding process so that volunteer leaders can lead rather than doing so much transactional work.

9. Report of the Graduate Student Caucus (Michelle Cowan-Mensah)

a. The GSC would like to organize a Career Session for the 2014 conference. Members will be invited to read *So What Are You Going To Do With That?* and participate in a virtual book club prior to the conference. The two Baltimore authors of this book would then be invited to attend a Career Session, and the GSC would like to offer them an honorarium in addition to a day pass.

Discussion: It was noted that the Career Session coordinators have the ultimate authority to approve and schedule any session. There is no formal proposal process, and we may wish to develop one. The authors can be offered a day pass and hotel parking, but as an alternative to a fee it was recommended that the GSC approach this as an opportunity to help students, and we could offer the book for sale through Scholars Choice if their publisher is not present at the conference. It was suggested that mentors be encouraged to attend the session, which could perhaps be scheduled right before or after the mentorship activity. If the Consortium of Doctoral Programs in Theatre were involved in this, it might help that group to sustain the momentum since organizing meetings proves difficult.

b. ASTR has a reasonably-priced service for conference calls, which must be scheduled in advance, that the GSC could use for virtual book club meetings. The Strategic Planning Metacommittee and the task force on Working Conditions used it successfully.

c. The GSC has offered to help coordinate both room sharing for conference attendees as well as local people willing to provide housing during the conference. Because both of these could present liability issues, the Administrator will consult the attorney to find out what the implications would be.

10. Webmaster's report (Shaun Franklin-Sewall)

a. The Webmaster's one-year contract can now be signed and sent out, following approval of the FY15 budget. The Administrator will provide information to the Secretary for the section of the Handbook that details his duties.

b. We need to make sure that same reporting mechanism carries forward to the relationship between the Webmaster and the new Administrator. This might be renegotiated, and we might also revisit the level of oversight that the VP for Publications exercises over the Webmaster.

c. The EC could think of no reason that the reports prepared for our semiannual meetings should not be visible to the membership. It was suggested that we might develop a template for reports and a mechanism for posting them directly to the website rather than by email to the Secretary.

11. Discussion of TLA/ASTR collaborations

The ASTR/TLA *ad hoc* Library Committee was created in response to a crisis but without a clear charge. The Presidents of ASTR and TLA drafted the following charge:

DRAFT description for Ad Hoc Committee on Libraries

The Ad Hoc Committee on Libraries will function as a joint committee of ASTR and TLA members with focus on identifying and discussing topics related to libraries and research. Topics can be as wide-ranging as digital humanities and digital scholarship, collections, open access, institutional repositories, changes in publishing, copyright, and licensing of digital content for research and curricular support.

Membership: Minimum 3 members from ASTR and 3 members from TLA each serving a 2 year term with option to renew. Both ASTR and TLA will encourage graduate student participation. The Committee will be co-chaired by a member from ASTR and a member from TLA.

Charge:

- The committee will identify a single topic each year for discussion.
- The topic should be identified in time for the ASTR conference planning call for submissions. Discussions will take shape with either a submission for a working session, career session or exhibit at the ASTR Conference.
- Committee members can either plan and organize the event or put out a call for volunteers from ASTR and TLA general membership.
- The committee will submit a report and/or news feature for submission to ASTR and TLA websites and annual report.
- The committee co-chairs will report respectively to the executive board of their respective associations.

Review:

The executive committees from ASTR and TLA will evaluate the effectiveness of the work of this committee.

In reconstituting this committee, which will remain *ad hoc*, the Presidents will invite those who served initially. *Discussion: There is no plan to allocate a conference session to this committee; rather, its work might be better directed to other activities. The President suggested that a report or news feature would accomplish the goals of providing visibility, accountability, and deadlines for the committee's work. do this. A change to the language of the third bullet point under "Charge" was suggested, with a conference-related proposal as one option along with others such as a white paper or a reading group. It was further suggested that the committee seek input from the membership via Survey Monkey.*

12. Discussion of ASTR website

The EC discussed ways to maximize the impact of the new ASTR website by identifying the types of content for which the website is the natural home and other content appropriate for dissemination via Twitter and other media channels, as well as deciding what the website should

foreground. *Discussion: Questions raised include how priorities should be established and reviewed on a regular basis; the logic behind having separate buttons for Members and for GSC, both of which link to the same location; and a possible mechanism for providing feedback to the Webmaster.*

The President formed an ad hoc committee to review the site for user friendliness, gather info and consult with the Webmaster. E.J. Westlake will chair.

13. Report of the Awards and Fellowships Committee (Heather Nathans)

a. Co-Sponsored Events Award: We extended one award of \$500 to the Centre for Dance Research (C-DaRE), Coventry University, for the conference “Performing Process: Sharing Practice,” proposal submitted by Emma Meehan.

b. Possible Digital Scholarship Award: Scott Magelssen initiated (on behalf of ATHE) discussion of an award to provide concrete support for the position taken in the joint ATHE/ASTR white paper on digital scholarship. TLA is also considering this. *Discussion: The award has tremendous value beyond the monetary award, so that even a modest award would be useful in providing recognition. It was suggested that we might be able to take other steps to recognize digital scholarship in collaboration with all three organizations rather than funding an award. It was noted that any such award would require a careful definition of what constitutes digital scholarship.*

The President will indicate our interest in this award and share our comments in further discussions with ATHE and TLA.

14. Discussion of next steps in “Charting the Course”

The President proposed discussion of the following issues in breakout sessions:

- If the most important strategic goals to emerge from our work this past year focus on professional support and mentorship and sustaining an intellectual home for our members, what are the most visible and most effective ways to approach those goals?
- Based on the information compiled from the reports and circulated in February, what are our priorities for this year?
- What can be done from the Administrator’s office on behalf of the Task Force groups or sub-committees?
- How can we implement a vision and structure that is sustainable?

a. Goals

The EC decided to remain together as a full group to discuss the following goals, drafted by the President and circulated in advance of the meeting:

- ASTR will take an active, visionary, and supportive role in the work of its members.
- ASTR will initiate and support programs that facilitate scholarly and professional exchanges among its membership.
- ASTR will promote activities that offer opportunities for year-round scholarly and professional engagement among the members.
- ASTR will seek opportunities to expand its role as an advocate for the arts and humanities within the academy and beyond.

b. Needs

Associated with these goals, the President proposed that ASTR needs to:

- Establish a sustainable method of compiling and assessing membership and field-related data.
- Review and refine ASTR's current structures for interaction with other professional organizations.
- Review and refine of financial policies and practices connected to the organization's proposed initiatives and member support
- Review and refine networks that provide professional and scholarly support for ASTR membership

c. Discussion concerning the role of liaisons with other organizations

The task force on Collaborations was charged with finding ways to take joint action with other organizations on issues, and they identified a need to formalize the liaison role so that the individuals in these positions have a clear understanding of their function. Many of the suggestions raised in discussion were put on hold until after the completion of steps set out in section 16a, *infra*. *Discussion: It was suggested that we begin with self-reports from current liaisons, after which the EC might recommend either continuing with a clearly articulated charge or eliminating some of these positions. It was noted that in the past, the liaison to the National Research Council did important work to make sure that we were represented. Liaisons could help bring intellectual concerns of other fields to us, could actively recruit members, help generate conference collaborations. It was suggested that the liaisons need a more public role in the organization and that our members could be made more aware of those liaisons. The task force could also ask each liaison what ASTR could do to be more visible and helpful to their organization.*

The sorts of collaboration that we seek to develop with 4 or 5 other organizations may in fact be quite different from what is expected of the existing liaisons, who are important point people in their respective organizations for us to contact about issues of common concern. In contrast, the task force is discussing people to represent ASTR in doing outreach to other organizations on our behalf. This is similar to the arrangement we have with TLA; that is, there is a liaison from ASTR to TLA and another liaison from TLA to ASTR.

The task force on Collaborations identified the following organizations with which we might wish to develop a formal relationship: ASA; CORD; CUR; ASSITEJ; MLA; and other national theatre research associations, such as STR (The Society for Theatre Research, Great Britain), TaPRA (Theatre and Performance Research Association, Great Britain and Ireland), Canadian Association for Theatre Research, ISTR (Irish Society for Theatre Research), Indian Society for Theatre Research, Japanese Society for Theatre Research, AfTA (African Theatre Association), IATR (Israeli Association for Theatre Research), AITEA (Argentine Theatre Research Association). It was suggested that we poll the membership about other organizations.

d. Discussion concerning the need to compile data related to the state of the profession

The task force on Working Conditions was charged with compiling data related the undergraduate and graduate education and to the current state of the profession. Concrete steps

are set out in section 16b, *infra*. *Discussion: Because so many ideas are circulating about the job market, creating is a world of rumor and anxiety that can best be confronted with data, this will be valuable to all people in the organizations. The NAST HEADS reports (made available by Erin Muscony, Accreditation Coordinator for NAST) include such data as full-time and part-time faculty salaries, gender breakdowns, departmental budgets, enrollments, student-to-faculty ratios.*

It was noted that not all theatre programs are NAST members and that ATHE also does a lot of data collection. The ATHE Presidents' reports are all available on ATHE website, and they include information about all the data collection that organization has done. MLA has also done a lot of this work. It was suggested that if ATHE and ASTR want to collaborate in gathering this information, which would be a huge project that will take 2-3 years, it would be wise to seek funding for it. This would represent a concrete action resulting from the task force's work. As a first research phase, the President recommended pulling together all the data that's already available and making it accessible in one place through links from the ASTR website.

e. Discussion concerning Career Sessions

Various changes or additions to the Career Sessions were discussed:

- *We might post summaries or handouts from each year's Career Sessions on the ASTR website as a resource for directors of graduate programs as well as for colleagues unable to attend the sessions and/or the conference. Career Session coordinators could solicit volunteers willing to take notes and write session summaries, and this could be implemented for the 2014 conference; clarified that these might take the form of highlights and best advice. EC members who have led Career Sessions expressed reluctance to put their handouts online. It was suggested that we Issue an invitation rather than a mandate.*
- *It was recommended that we ask the session leaders to encourage people to tweet; tweets can be archived and posted on the website. It was noted that people are already tweeting. Recommended that we ask the session leaders to do that.*
- *New Career Sessions were suggested: "Negotiating your first job"; "Asking the Right Questions on the Road to Tenure"; "Strategies for Integrating Theatre Production into Curricula,"; "Administration—What is It?"; "What Any New Professor Should Know"; "How to Participate Effectively in Organizations Like the ACC/AAC &U"; "Developing your own voice as a scholar"; "How to Mentor Within Your Own Institution."*

f. Discussion concerning mentorship

The task force on Engagement suggested renaming the Career Sessions to acknowledge the work that they do around mentorship. Concrete steps are set out in section 16d, *infra*. *Discussion: The chair of this task force stressed that the system is working really well, and these sessions do provide mentorship, but that they are not identified as mentorship. The task force wished to connect the dots, partly due to responses from the membership: in saying that they receive no mentorship at the conference, people mean one-on-one mentoring. In fact, mentorship does happen within the Career Sessions and the Working Sessions and we should look for ways to increase its visibility. It was suggested that either the President or the Ad Hoc Committee on Mentorship could direct a letter to the working session organizers, who increasingly are younger scholars.*

The mentorship breakfast was crowded this year, and the GSC initiatives have been really important. Much of the current mentoring program is working well, but sometimes either the mentor or the mentee does not show up. The dyadic model should continue to be supported, but other structures could be amplified and renamed as mentorship. The task force on Engagement reached out to about a hundred people and found no critique of the word “mentorship.” Response to the word was positive, and it was used spontaneously. Ways to move beyond hierarchical structures were discussed.

Looking the examples from other organizations, it was noted that the Association for Asian Studies has a one-day pre-conference solely devoted to dissertation development funded by grants from the NEH and Social Science Research. Great tool to recruit members and sustain activity. MATC has a similar model with article development. ATDS also did something like this, but it took five years to organize and could not repeat it. A Mellon grant might be an appropriate source of support. It was suggested that we create a Mentoring section under the Resources tab of the website and populate it with material gathered by the Ad Hoc Committee on Mentorship. Suggested sorts of material included quotations, and a video compilation such as the one used during a past fundraising presentation that featured people answering the question “Who mentored you?”

Other suggestions offered included webinars on topics related to professional development that would be available on ASTR website; at least one annual professional “boot camp” project to be run either at the ASTR conference or hosted by a supporting institution with topics, based on suggestions from the membership, such as digital humanities, publication, tenure and promotion, teaching, and administration; and a “Professional Toolkit” on the ASTR website with content such as key vocabulary related to assessment or signature pedagogies and best practices from institutions around the country.

g. Discussion concerning a proactive response to changes in the profession

The task force on Working Conditions addressed ways to continue the efforts that they initiated with the “Tell Me” project at the 2013 conference and ways to use the information gathered. Concrete steps are set out in section 16c, *infra*. *Discussion: This initiative will continue at ASTR 2014, re-named “Tell Me What’s Working” with prompt questions including: How have you foster effective cross-disciplinary collaborations? How have you successfully integrated theatre into your institution’s Gen Ed curriculum? What are strategies for making theatre productions curricular? How have you increased theatre’s visibility at your institution? It was noted that people are unlikely to respond positively unless we’ve done something with the information we gathered in 2013, and various formats for sharing were suggested including Wordls and methods being developed by the New Cartographies group at Duke and UNC. The task force has categorized the responses that they received and identified themes that emerged. The sharing of data is a preliminary step, with the further intention of bringing this data to the attention of those who might be able to take appropriate action such as New Paradigms in Graduate Education and the Consortium of Doctoral Programs.*

15. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn. **The motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Sunday, April 6

Present: Robin Bernstein, Cynthia Brizzell-Bates (Treasurer), Marla Carlson (Secretary), Catherine Cole (Vice President for Publications), Joshua Chambers-Letson, Soyica Colbert, Michelle Cowin-Mensah (GSC Representative), Nancy Erickson (Administrator, *ex officio*), Suk-Young Kim, Heather Nathans (President), Jill Stevenson, Adam Versényi, Shane Vogel, E.J. Westlake, Leigh Woods.

Absent: Patrick Anderson (Vice President for Conferences), Kirsten Pullen, Analola Santana.

The President called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

16. Review task force and committee assignments

The Task Force on Engagement has completed its work and is dissolved, with ad hoc committees formed to pursue specific projects.

a. Task Force on Collaborations

E.J. Westlake, co-chair (with a volunteer); Suk-Young Kim, member; volunteers will be invited to continue but may rotate off.

- Contact current liaisons between ASTR and other organizations to find out what they think they do. After receiving feedback, reach out to other organizations and then possibly form an ad hoc committee. Further consideration of having designated collaborative panels at the conference will wait until after these steps are complete. Target date for initial outreach: May 1.
- Reach out to ATHE to propose revising the joint white paper on “Scholarship in the Discipline of Theatre.”
- Develop a proposal for a joint NEH Summer Institute—this is a future step, but Suk-Young Kim volunteered to begin investigating this potential; in particular, she will find out what other organizations are doing to attract funding and will report back at the November 2014 EC meeting.

b. Task Force on Working Conditions

Jill Stevenson, co-chair (with a volunteer). She requested participation by another EC member. A call for volunteers is needed to recruit four more members.

- Contact other organizations to find out what kind of data they have related to working conditions and compile a list of these resources for the ASTR website. *Discussion: We should be very careful about what we say to other organizations, because we don't have a complete plan.*
- Post references to websites that would show ASTR members how to deduct work-from-home expenses and/or travel expenses (particularly if they are unemployed or underemployed). Target date to have these postings available: September 2014.
- Gather data on contingent faculty pay scales (per course/institution size) and make this information available in a report posted on the ASTR website. *Discussion: Refer to the NAST*

Heads report for past information. Target date for preliminary report on information already gathered by others: June 1, 2014.

- Continue the “Tell Me” project for the 2014 conference.
- Provide input to the Ad Hoc Committee on Membership.

c. New Paradigms in Graduate Education

Amy Cook and Valleri Hohman, co-chairs.

- After reviewing data compiled by ATHE’s President, contact ATHE, the Consortium of Doctoral Programs, and NAST to review current data on training programs and identify areas where additional information is needed on graduate education, graduate programs, and placement.
- Ascertain who are the current directors of graduate study. *Discussion: The directory of graduate programs on the ASTR website is not up to date; however, this directory has been largely supplanted by the programs’ own websites, and a listing of programs is sufficient for the ASTR site.*
- Create a report on the state of the field in graduate education.

d. Ad Hoc Committee on Membership

Soyica Colbert, chair. Joshua Takano Chambers-Letson, member. Invitation to be extended to Scott Magelssen; call for volunteers to recruit five additional members.

- Design and conduct a membership survey, with support from the Administrator and Webmaster. Target date for draft to Executive Committee: June 1, 2014.
- Use the recent ATHE membership survey and the last ASTR survey as a foundation.
- Solicit input for the survey design from the task forces on Working Conditions and Collaborations, and from the Finance Committee, New Paradigms in Graduate Education, the ad hoc Committee on Mentorship, and the Committee on Conferences.
- Copy the Secretary on all email.

e. Ad Hoc Committee on Mentorship

Robin Bernstein, chair. Michelle Cowin-Mensah, member. Chair will solicit individuals with a demonstrated record of service to serve on this committee and will also invite people who served on the task force on Engagement who might wish to continue. The President and the chair will work together to draft the charge for this committee.

- Make recommendations to EC about coordination, consistency, and potential expansion of mentorship activities.
- Work with the Career Session Coordinators to clarify the procedures for scheduling these sessions. *Discussion: It seems desirable to continue having the coordinators drive this process rather than moving to a proposal structure, since the potential for harm is quite high. The President appoints the Coordinator(s) with an invitation to replicate past success and come up with some new things. The Program Chair should also be aware of any business related to the conference. The Secretary will send the chair the Career Session Coordinator guidelines, and they will work together on incorporating this material into the Handbook.*
- Provide support to the Mentorship Breakfast.
- Report to the EC on mentoring activities.
- Propose marketing ideas that foreground mentorship.

- Draft a letter to working session leaders.
- Draft a letter to Directors of Graduate Studies suggesting ASTR as a place for mentoring students (coordinate with GSC, who are contacting these folks);
- Figure out what constitutes success.
- Support the GSC in its mentorship activities. Chair and GSC will work on language of the charge in order to make sure that the GSC does not perceive it as an encroachment. Can consider whether webinars, professional boot camp, a Professional Toolkit” to live on the are a useful forum.

f. Finance Committee

Cindy Brizell-Bates, chair.

- Investigate methods of alleviating financial difficulties experienced in attending the conference such as allocating an additional amount of ASTR funding per year to support conference fellowships, developing a sliding scale conference fees based on annual income. *Discussion: In public universities, salary is public information but travel support is not. In some systems, though, there is a supplement called “off scale” that is not included in the public information. Clarified that the category we are most concerned to help are contingent faculty. ATHE changed their categories from unemployed/employed to part-time or full-time employed. Noted that having the categories more closely reflect the realities. Reminded that we need to consider what it costs to provide all aspects of the conference experience for an individual and how we can best allocate that cost across the attendees. We also need to promote the value of ASTR membership. There was an extended discussion of the ways in which working sessions create intellectual community.*
- Provide input to the Ad Hoc Committee on Membership.
- Consider feasibility of ASTR encouraging regional meet-ups with both financial and administrative support. Request preliminary findings for discussion at Spring 2014 EC; to be continued as needed for November 2014 EC meeting. *Discussion: After the new VP of Awards takes office in November, ask the Awards and Fellowships Committee to consider broadening the scope of the Co-Sponsored Events Grant category to include these; perhaps also review deadlines and consider doing this three times a year rather than twice.*

g. Graduate Student Caucus

Michelle Cowin-Mensah, chair.

- Review the goals of the Mentorship Breakfast.
- Consult with New Paradigms about creating an “Alt-Ac Track” page on the ASTR for compiling and posting information on career options beyond the academy.

h. Task Force on Organizational Sustainability

Cindy Brizell-Bates, chair; Kirsten Pullen and Leigh Woods, members.

- Consider issues of fiscal sustainability, continuity, organizational memory, membership, recruitment and retention. This was the previous charge, to be carried forward. *Discussion: The conversation should not merely be about conserving rather than spending resources—we need to sustain vibrancy as well as money. To what extent is fundraising among our membership sustainable as a model? What sort of grants might we seek? What can the new administrator bring us in terms of support and skills? We need to tell these candidates what we want to do: where do we put our money and time?*

i. Followup

The President proposed meeting again via conference call in a couple of weeks.

17. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn. Moved by Cowin-Mensah, seconded by Stevenson. **The motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned shortly before 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marla Carlson
ASTR Secretary
27 April 2014

ADDENDUM 1 TO THE MINUTES

Special Meeting via Conference Call, 4 May 2014

Present: Cynthia Brizzell-Bates (Treasurer), Marla Carlson (Secretary), Soyica Colbert, Michelle Cowin-Mensah (GSC Representative), Nancy Erickson (Administrator, *ex officio*), Heather Nathans (President), Kirsten Pullen, Adam Versényi, E.J. Westlake, Leigh Woods.

Absent: Patrick Anderson (Vice President for Conferences), Robin Bernstein, Joshua Chambers-Letson, Catherine Cole (Vice President for Publications), Suk-Young Kim, Jill Stevenson, Analola Santana, Shane Vogel. Leigh Woods left the meeting at 3:39 p.m.

The President called the meeting to order shortly after 3:00 p.m.

1. Announcements and Updates:

- a. Sarah Bay-Cheng will set up the Digital Humanities Resource Guide and plans to have a site map ready by the end of May. The donor funding this initiative will remain anonymous.
- b. The President of TLA has provided feedback on the EC's discussion of the Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Libraries. The two organizations' presidents expect to have a redraft of the committee's charge in a week.
- c. The President has emailed Charlotte Canning for information about the Consortium of Doctoral Programs.
- d. New Paradigms in Graduate Education will soon be consulting with the President on their current tasks.
- e. Katie Johnson forwarded a request from the *Eugene O'Neill Review* asking the EC to respond to some questions as part of a journal review by sisters organizations. It was agreed to forward this request to the Vice President of Publications.
- f. The question was raised how long working session material should remain on the ASTR website, as a matter of currency. It was agreed that the Webmaster will send an annual renewal notice to each group's member page; if there is no renewal action, then the content will expire.
- g. The President's call for volunteers received 32 responses, significantly more than the number of volunteer slots we need to fill. It was suggested that we ask the volunteers who we don't have an immediate assignment for if they would like to become mentors at the annual conference. A question raised why new members were not requested for Organizational Sustainability, and it was explained that the Task Force on Working Conditions had people rotating off, and the Ad Hoc Committee on Mentorship is new. The Ad Hoc Committee on Membership can use more volunteers than initially requested,

and very likely the Ad Hoc Committee on Mentorship can as well, because it has many tasks that could be delegated. The President will question the chair of this committee, who could not be present for this meeting, and will send a spread sheet detailing suggested volunteer allocations to leaders of the task forces and ad hoc committees.

- h. The Administrator reported that her recommendation of five candidate administrative companies is almost ready for consideration by the Search Committee, and that interviews will occur on Monday 21 July.
- i. A member has asked whether ASTR would like to take a stand on Israel similar to that taken by the American Studies Association with respect to boycott, divestment, and sanctions. EC members expressed concern that such an action would exclude Israeli scholars from attending the conference if they receive travel funding from their institutions. It was agreed that ASTR does not have a sufficiently developed and articulated policy regarding requests of this type, and that we would like to address this issue in conjunction with the 2015 conference, which has politics as a theme. A white paper would be one possible mechanism.

2. Reports from Task Forces:

- a. The Task Force on Working Conditions has confirmed that there will be space for “Tell Me, Part 2” at the 2014 conference. They have provided questions to the Ad Hoc Committee on Membership for use in a survey. Kellen Johnson, Gad Gutermann, and Lindsay Cummings are serving on this task force. Jill Stevenson provided a report to the President in advance of the meeting.
- b. The Task Force on Collaborations will check in with the current liaisons and diplomatically ask them how they understand their roles. They have sent out a letter that Shane drafted to the task force volunteers. E.J. Westlake reported.
- c. The Task Force on Organizational Sustainability will contact members of last year’s task force to determine whether they would like to continue, and then supplement as needed from the new list of volunteers. Cindy Brizzell-Bates reported.
- d. The Ad Hoc Committee on Mentorship has been working to define their charge and preparing a list of items for consideration, which will receive minor adjustments this week. Robin Bernstein will then contact members about Career Sessions, and Michelle Cowin-Mensah will contact the people involved in organizing the mentorship Breakfast. They expect to report back to the EC by June 1. The committee plans to work in an advisory capacity as opposed to exercising a controlling form of oversight. Michelle Cowin-Mensah reported.
- d. The Ad Hoc Committee on Membership has emailed the heads of six task forces or committees soliciting input on questions for a membership survey: Committee on Conferences, Task Force on Working Conditions, Finance Committee, New Paradigms in Graduate Education, Ad Hoc Committee on Membership, Task Force on Collaborations.

They provided the questions from the last survey, Scott Magelssen's report on that survey, and the current ATHE survey questions. They have received feedback from two already, and all have promised to respond by Wednesday at the latest. They hope to draft a new survey by the end of this week, send it to the task force by 5/12 for feedback by 5/19, and revision by 5/26, with the new survey ready to go on 6/1. They sent the questions but not the variable responses available for selection, and it has been noted that these should be reconsidered as well. Soyica Colbert reported.

3. Other Business

- a. It was agreed that the Task Force on Organizational Sustainability will review the question of whether the Executive Committee cohorts should function as set out in the Handbook, with the understanding that we will either follow these practices or revise the Handbook in accordance with current practice. It was suggested that each person update the timetable and duties for his or her office or other role before leaving that role. It was further suggested that requesting and making these updates could be entirely the responsibility of the Webmaster or a member of the administrative staff, and that this material should live on the Handbook. It was also suggested that we review the Handbook every three years.
- b. It was noted that we need to make sure that Program Committee is properly constituted per the bylaws and its membership be made public via the ASTR website in a timely fashion.
- c. It was agreed that the Committee on Conferences can set the deadline for submission of conference proposals.

The meeting adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

ADDENDUM 2 TO THE MINUTES

Special Meeting via Conference Call, 27 August 2014

Present: Heather Nathans (President), Marla Carlson (Secretary), Cindy Bates (Treasurer), Patrick Anderson (Vice President for Conferences), Robin Bernstein, Joshua Chambers-Letson, Michelle Cowin-Mensah, Jill Stevenson, E.J. Westlake, Leigh Woods, Nancy Erickson(Administrator)

Not available: Catherine Cole (Vice President for Publications), Soyica Colbert, Kirsten Pullen, Analola Santana, Adam Versenyi, Shaun Vogel, Suk-Young Kim

The President called the meeting to at 5:15 p.m.

1. Selection of Management Company

MOTION: To negotiate a contract with Ewald Consulting as the new management company for ASTR. Moved by Stevenson, seconded by Westlake. *Discussion:*

- *A named Account Executive or Executive Director will coordinates the management of ASTR's work and serve as "point person" for the Society.*
- *The proposed financial terms are \$55,000/year based on 850 hours per year with no transition fee for October. This is comparable to the current fees for Erickson & Associates and the Communications Manager, whose contract runs through May 31, 2015. The Treasurer noted this cost falls within the moderate range. The services are strong for what ASTR needs, and all the services can be provided by Ewald Consulting without additional contractors. The Treasurer feels confident about working with Ewald throughout the transition.*
- *Ewald has experience with a broad level of services, such as advocacy and lobbying, which the Task Forcess have identified as an important focus.*
- *Ewald has extensive expertise in working with the YourMembership.com website platform, so no change is necessary, and they have strategies for using social media and marketing to grow ASTR.*
- *Ewald will follow the needs specified by ASTR in researching future conference locations. The Vice President for Conferences noted that city and site selection are flexible.*
- *Executive Committee representatives on the search committee expressed confidence in this company being able to do the job as well as to help ASTR thrive in new ways.*

The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m. EDT.

ADDENDUM 3 TO THE MINUTES

Special Meeting via Conference Call, 26 September 2014

Present: Heather Nathans (President), Marla Carlson (Secretary), Cindy Bates (Treasurer), Robin Bernstein, Joshua Chambers-Letson, Soyica Colbert, Michelle Cowin-Mensah, Suk-Young Kim, Kirsten Pullen, Jill Stevenson, Adam Versenyi, Shaun Vogel, Leigh Woods, Nancy Erickson(Administrator)

Not available: Patrick Anderson (Vice President for Conferences), Catherine Cole (Vice President for Publications), Analola Santana, E.J. Westlake,

The President called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

1. Approval of the consent agenda.

The consent agenda includes the following items, available via email for review prior to the meeting:

- Minutes of 27 August conference call meeting
- Motion to close Compass merchant account
- Motion to accept ATAP Administrator Job Description

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda prepared by the President for this meeting. Moved by Stevenson, seconded by Woods. Vote: 13 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions. **The motion carried unanimously.**

2. Motion to accept Ewald Consulting Contract for Services

MOTION: To accept the proposed Ewald Consulting Contract for Services. Moved by Cowin-Mensah, seconded by Stevenson. *Discussion:*

- *The attorneys reviewed the contract several times, and their suggestions have been incorporated. The Treasurer is happy with the contract and notes that Ewald gave up transition fee that they had initially asked for and are charging half the normal rate for first two months.*
- *The Communications Manager will stay on until May 2015, when his contract ends, and Ewald will not charge for their communication services during this time. At that point, Ewald's monthly fee will increase to cover the duties of the Communications Manager. This twenty-month contract gives the Society ample opportunity to see how this works and what may require renegotiating. The Executive Committee will monitor the arrangement very closely over the coming year. It was noted that every management company considered had someone internally who would fulfill these needs. These companies were fully informed about the scope of work that Shaun does, and those tasks fall within the hours budgeted in this contract. It was further noted that Shaun has a graduate degree in theatre and has for a long time been visible as someone successful in an alt-academic career, and suggested that we might think of ways to recognize him for what he brings to the organization.*
- *It was confirmed that Ewald will provide regular updates on hours spent, with quarterly reviews, monthly reports of time, and a sixty-day termination option.*

- *The transition will occur in three phases: a transition phase from October through December; January through May working with Shaun; then finish out FY 2016 with Ewald alone.*
- *The Society will need to be very clear about what the contractual scope of services includes, because anything else will incur an additional fee. This would have applied to any company and applies as well to our current arrangement with Erickson and Associates.*
- *Senior management of Ewald will be present at the November conference along with their conference management staff and have already discussed with the President how they can use this opportunity to get to know the organization. The importance of creating a good impression upon the membership was stressed, in particular insofar as it affects the Communications Manager, and it was noted that we need to maintain confidentiality about the process as we move forward.*
- *The announcement will be coordinated with ATHE's announcement.*

Vote: 13 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions. **The motion carried unanimously.**

3. Other Business

The Administrator will schedule and make arrangements for the Spring Executive Committee meeting scheduled as soon as agreement can be reached on a date and the hotel. She and the President will consult about dates and poll EC members.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m. EDT.