Crossroads Diversity Panel
Presentation by Boden Sandstrom on Non-traditional Careers in Ethnomusicology: lecturers, adjuncts and careers after 50.

Introduction:

My presentation is on non-traditional careers and diversity in SEM—specifically of lecturers, adjuncts and those entering our field after 50 or thereabouts. First, let me introduce myself. I have been a lecturer in the Division of Musicology and Ethnomusicology, School of Music, University of Maryland since 1996. I received my Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology at the University of Maryland at the age of 53.

My job as lecturer is eclectic. My primary responsibility is teaching. I teach mostly undergraduate students: ethnomusicology classes for the University of Maryland’s General Education CORE curriculum and the Honors Program. My other responsibilities are managing the Ethnomusicology Program’s world music ensembles, the budget, and the technology lab. I am also in charge of technology for the School of Music.

Issues for lecturers and adjuncts:

Typically lecturers and adjuncts have short term contracts, do not have an organized system of salary increases, and are not allowed to compete for university research money or sabbaticals. However, lecturers are often expected to give service to the university community and produce books and articles in order to maintain their status within the university and professionally.

My service to the different segments of the University community (Division of Musicology and Ethnomusicology, School of Music, the College of Arts and Humanities and the University of Maryland) is fairly typical for a long standing lecturer. I have
served on and chaired various committees such as the University’s CORE Curriculum Committee, the Faculty Senate, the University’s Technology Committee and the Student Judiciary Board as well as various School of Music committees such as Student Affairs and Programs and Events. I also serve on graduate students thesis and dissertation committees.

Even though lecturers have 2nd class status, the University of Maryland depends on lecturers to teach approximately 40% of the CORE courses for the University. Lecturers have very little job security and usually do not have a structured pay raise system other than by cost of living increases and sometimes merit pay. Because of the current budget crisis faculty and staff at the University of Maryland have been asked to take furloughs for the last two consecutive years. In this regard, lecturers are treated the same as faculty (number of days determined by salary) even though they do not enjoy the same benefits. This is discriminatory. It is illegal in Maryland for lecturers to be represented by a union; therefore there is very little recourse.

Recently in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Tuesday, November 7, 2009) the featured video is on the plight of adjuncts (*Adjuncts*). Some of the problems it addresses are lack of stability, low pay, and the work environment being similar to factory work in that one’s work is not recognized. It was summed up by one adjunct who said that there should be two water fountains--one for tenured faculty and one for adjuncts.

**Issues for those entering the field of ethnomusicology after 50:**

According to the recent survey of the membership of SEM (2008), 47% of the membership is over 50; however, the survey did not ask people the age they were when
they entered the field. When entering the field after 50, many of us are often, either not offered or not able to seek tenure-track positions. Many of us are already settled with our families and are reluctant to move and have already given a great deal of energy to other professions. I, for example, started the first women’s sound company in the United States and was the chief sound engineer for fifteen years. During this period I obtained a Master’s in Audio Technology. Before that I was a librarian and a political activist.

There is discrimination in hiring older teachers for tenure track positions. During a job search a colleague indicated that he/she preferred to hire someone with “young legs.” One of the reasons I sold my company was that I knew I could not keep throwing speakers into the back of a truck at 4AM; I didn’t think as a professor I would have to have young legs.

Because lecturers and adjunct faculty are typically not in tenure track jobs, it is hard to find mentors. Once my mentors passed and retired, I was without a rudder. Nevertheless, I have produced an award winning documentary and written several important articles on women’s music and gender issues in technology. However, the book has eluded me. I think this a typical problem for non-tenure track faculty who are not a part of the tenure-track mentoring process.

**Diversity in SEM**

As I have pointed out, lecturers, adjunct faculty and those entering the profession after 50 usually do not have job security, make less money and often are not able to apply for university travel and research grants; therefore they are less likely to be able to attend conferences or stay in the profession and will be less likely to be in SEM. This cycle
creates the likelihood of less diversity in SEM, which is a loss to SEM. Many of us have contributed much to the Society for Ethnomusicology. I was co-chair of the Gender and Sexuality Taskforce Committee for 3 years and was instrumental in forming an Activist Committee with the purpose of drawing attention to and taking action against the discrimination and oppression that SEM members and other scholars and musicians suffer on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation, both within and beyond academia. We were successful in getting several of our positions adopted by the SEM Board.

**Questions and Suggestions:**

How can SEM better address issues affecting lecturers, adjuncts and non-traditional members? Would creating a committee to address the needs of these groups help?

Are Conferences too focused on the reading of papers? Perhaps there could be more opportunities for communication and mentoring.

How can SEM improve the mentoring of lecturers, adjuncts and those on non-traditional paths?

Would SEM be willing to help lecturers and adjuncts get more rights and benefits at their Universities?

How can the special interest committees help create this type of diversity?

Does the nomination process for the Council and Board take the representation of these groups into account?