

**Minutes – American Comparative Literature Association Board Meeting
Vancouver BC 8 January 2015**

1. Report of the Nominations Committee: candidates for Second Vice President, Publishing Committee Chair, Graduate Student Representative

A slate of candidates was presented for approval by the board, and, after a brief discussion, received unanimous approval. The nominations committee will proceed to contact the candidates (and if necessary alternates) asking if they are interested in standing for office, and elections will be held in January. There was discussion of the possibility of moving the nominating process earlier, into October, in order to streamline the process.

In addition, there was a resolution to require, in the future, that all candidates for the position of Graduate Student Representative be enrolled in Comparative Literature programs or their close equivalents. The resolution was passed unanimously.

2. Report of the Finance Committee (Berman): draft budget for 2015

In her role as Chair of the Finance Committee, Jessica Berman presented a draft budget, made easier thanks to the work of our new ACLA staff person, Heidi Colwell. After a strong year in 2014, with a large surplus thanks to a very large conference at NYU, the organization will face a tighter year in 2015, with a smaller conference based at a hotel, leading to higher expenses.

A number of concerns were expressed about the AV budget for the upcoming Seattle conference, which is in the vicinity of \$100 000, as a consequence of prior commitments to offer all seminars AV access. Conference registration fees for 2013, 2014, and 2015, have all borne a surcharge of \$10 to prepare for the costs of AV in a hotel-based conference, and surpluses from past years will counter-balance much of that cost, but the amount of money involved remains large. It was agreed to pursue further the question of whether it was appropriate to guarantee AV access for all participants, especially in hotel-based conferences, and it was suggested that there might have been room for negotiations to lower the costs for this year. There was a suggestion that board approval be required for expenditures such as this that rose above a certain level, although no level was established at this meeting. There was further discussion of whether or not universities hosting the conference be required to make a minimum financial contribution to the running of the conference, as the size of contributions has varied considerably from year to year. The question of whether or not the conference should meet at hotels was also raised. It was agreed to discuss these issues further in Seattle.

a. Discussion of Investment strategy

Jessica Berman also reported on a conversation she'd had with the association's accountant, who suggested that the association should review its investment strategy, and in particular the questions of what the purpose of the endowment is, who should manage it, and using what criteria. At present funds are managed by Highlander Capital on a volunteer basis. It was agreed that Ali Behdad would contact Highlander Capital, and begin a discussion of these issues. The association's accountant also raised the question of whether or not it made sense for the association to be incorporated in Maryland, a consequence of the early history of the association, when it is now based in South Carolina.

3. Graduate Student Representatives

The graduate student representatives reported on a number of initiatives and proposals for events at our conference, including a workshop on transforming the CV into an alt-ac resumé, a roundtable on job interviews, and a panel on the relationship between comparative literature and the other disciplines. They also raised the possibility of board representation for contingent faculty, which is already a subject under review by the bylaws review committee.

4. Bylaws Committee

Joey Slaughter presented a preliminary report from the committee reviewing the association's bylaws. The committee was established in light of recent calls for the association to take an official position on political questions. At the moment, the association has no mechanism for receiving such initiatives from the membership, and the committee will review the possibility of creating such a mechanism, along with other questions referred to it, such as the role of the ADPCL, and the possibility of a representative on the board for contingent faculty. At this stage, the committee is reviewing procedures at other learned societies, and will report back at a later stage with its own findings.

5. Discussion of the State of the Discipline Report

According to the schedule initially established, the State of the Discipline report website should be accepting its final submissions around the time of our Seattle conference, and work should begin immediately thereafter on the preparation of a print volume, with the goal of publication in late 2016 or early 2017. In order to ensure adherence to this schedule, the board will invite the report editor to attend the next board meeting to present a timeline for publication.

6. Discussion of Future Conference Locations

The possibility of a conference in Philadelphia in 2019 has been pursued without success. The secretariat will send out a call for hosts, and report on the results of that call at the next board meeting. The Secretary-Treasurer also raised the possibility of meeting in Honolulu in 2020, and will report back with further information at the next board meeting.

7. Managing growth: Seminar organizational issues and challenges with the 2015 conference

There were a number of frustrations with the way the seminar and paper selection process worked this fall. Many of these frustrations were the result of implementing a new selection process and a new website at the same time; other problems came because the conference has had to be capped at 2000 participants, leading to a significantly higher rejection rate than in the past. A number of specific frustrations and concerns were raised, including opaque instructions on the website, concerns about who could read reviewer comments, unfortunate consequences of the decision to allow each member to submit three paper proposals to three separate seminars, and other issues. Eleni Coundouriotis and the Program Committee will review these concerns and present a proposal for changes to these procedures at the next board meeting, which should give time for the implementation of any changes required to the website.

Respectfully Submitted,
Alexander Beecroft, Secretary-Treasurer.