

## **SAGE Minutes**

**Tuesday, October 12, 2010**

**Wescoe 4040**

**Attending: Jana Tigchelaar, Rob “Robby” Topinka, Ann Martinez, Eric Hood, Jeremy Miller, Lance Turner, Lauren Kiehna, Ali Brox, Amy Ash, Kristen Lillvis, Mark Petterson, Nate “Narb” Barbarick, Iris Moulton, Ben Pfeiffer, Caitlin Thornbrugh, Ben Cartwright, Jordan Von Cannon, Margaret Kramar.**

**Late arrivals: Robert Baumann, Colin Christopher, Louise Krug**

**Call to Order**, Minutes approved; Tigchelaar moved, Cartwright seconded.

### **Officer Reports.**

a. Presidents’ Report. Martinez updates attendees on the removal of office phones in GTA offices—a total of 24 offices have agreed to have their land lines removed, which will allow for a tentative amount of \$3600; in addition, Martinez states that there is the possibility of more if faculty agree to remove their phones, although she hasn’t heard of any who have agreed to do so. Martinez also states that she and Topinka spoke to Marta Caminero-Santangelo about the possibility of fixing the internet connectivity problems in select offices; M. Caminero-Santangelo said she would try, but there is no guarantee, and in the past IT hasn’t been very receptive to these requests. Finally, Martinez reminds students about the second annual Christmas Party Silent Auction and asks students to consider donating their talents, crafts, or time to benefit the auction; more details will be distributed later.

b. Secretary’s Report. No report.

c. Treasurer’s Report. Tigchelaar states that according to an email from Christopher, our account currently holds \$588.89 in the treasury.

d. FY Liaison Report. Thornbrugh mentions the problem with the way 801 practicum schedules conferences for first-year teachers of 101; The problem is with both the number of classes students are permitted to cancel and the scheduling of conferences before fall break. A brief discussion about the various problems follows. The final suggestion is that Thornbrugh clarify the issue in 801, so other students are also clear on the policy.

### **Committee Reports**

a. Academics Anonymous. Nish emailed: “We’re planning to contact new hire Darren Canady about presenting his work, since many students may have been out of town during his hiring talk over the summer. Finally, we’re hoping to schedule an informational workshop on either graduate writing or library research, pending feedback from our outside contacts. Any suggestions or other tips on sessions for this year are welcome!” Petterson adds that while they do not have a final date, the committee does have everyone committed for a panel on

“Researching for Novel Writing.” The panel will include Bryce Holt, Ben Cartwright, Ben Pfeiffer, and Joe Miller, and will be held either Tuesday or Thursday during the first week of November.

b. Advisory Committee. Lillvis mentions that they met last week to work on the table of contents for the upcoming review. In addition, the visit dates for the reviewers have been set: March 13-15, 2011. The committee also delegated writing tasks for the major document they’re doing. Lillvis outlines that elected members have to do some of the writing, and asks for input on Targets for Change and Innovation: what are the goals the department will be working toward for the future? Students with ideas should let Lillvis know. Martinez asks if there is a length limit. Lillvis states that since the entire document is something like 25 pages, this tiny portion will need to be short.

c. Events Committee: Brox states that the committee is planning the Halloween Party on Friday, October 29 at Samantha Bishop-Simmons’s house at 10<sup>th</sup> and Kentucky. They will be putting a flier together. Brox encourages attendees to wear a costume as there will once again be a contest with prizes, and to bring a snack to share. DeRoux also emailed about the possibility of another gathering, such as a pub crawl, etc. Ideas for events should be sent to Brox or DeRoux.

d. FSE Committee. Nish emailed: no report

e. Graduate Assembly: Topinka states that while the graduate assembly is no more, “there will be a new thing like it.”

f. Graduate Committee: Ash states that there is a meeting scheduled for Thursday of Fall Break.

g. GTAL Committee. Christopher emailed that their first meeting will be October 28 at 11 a.m.

h. Lecturers/Readers Committee: Kiehna: no report

i. Library Committee: E. Williams emailed: no report

j. MFA Committee. Barbarick states that Billy Joe Harris asked about bringing people as readers. Suggestions should be sent to the committee. Barbarick adds that since they have no idea of a budget, suggestions should “aim high!” The committee also made a motion to consider to consider (very preliminary, in other words) James Yeh as direct hire candidate in fiction for academic year 2011-12.

Discussion then turns toward the new MFA/Creative Writing Graduate Student Journal. Pfeiffer begins by outlining the inception of the journal, stating that beginning “last spring semester, there was extensive discussion among creative writers about the way *Cottonwood* wasn’t serving the purpose of a graduate student journal.” Pfeiffer then states that the process turned toward discussing how to either change *Cottonwood* or start a new journal. Because of a negative reaction from some faculty members to changing *Cottonwood*, talk turned to starting a new journal with the funds formerly allocated to *Cottonwood*.

Pfeiffer then brings up the issue of whether there has been inadequate communication about the journal; Pfeiffer mentions that some of that communication breakdown may have been due to the aforementioned sensitive faculty issues. Now, however, Pfeiffer states, there will be regular updates to the listservs (graduate, MFA) and other news will be announced to a website which is to be created. Pfeiffer states that there is a possibility that the journal will need more positions on the editorial board, something that will be discussed at the next meeting, a special session open to all graduate students, to be held Tuesday, October 19, 8 p.m., at Pfeiffer's house, 1108 Centennial Drive.

Barbarick adds that this journal is good not only for creative writing students but for the department, "even "Mr. and Mrs. 'I Study Shakespeare.'" This journal has the potential to raise the profile of the department nationally. Barbarick mentions that they would like to send a representative to the next AWP conference in Washington, D.C., in 2011.

Moulton clarifies that "the reason we decided to move away from *Cottonwood* was the idea of inclusion," and that the existing journal wasn't allowing for enough graduate student involvement.

Cartwright states that the difficulty of the problem with *Cottonwood* is singular, something he has never faced elsewhere. Cartwright outlines the typical chain of command with graduate students at other journals, and says that the situation at *Cottonwood* was very different.

Ash poses a question about how the issue of the "messiness" over the history with *Cottonwood* will affect the future of the journal. Ash states that while the journal itself is "great," it seems like a lot of the issues about the beginning of the journal are wrapped up in the messiness of the break with *Cottonwood*.

Moulton confirms that this is a potential issue: "The mess about Cottonwood could indirectly come into play with the new journal."

Pfeiffer: "We don't want to discuss it, but the way that it happened might come up in the department." In response to Ash's question about confidentiality, Pfeiffer states "It was our mistake in keeping it confidential after this point."

Ash notes that the confidentiality extended to a very important meeting that happened about the editorial board on Friday (October 8): "It seems that the rescheduling of this meeting took place offline. More importantly, it was never publicized that this would be a voting meeting. I later learned that the meeting was held on Friday with only 11 people in attendance and that the elections for editorial positions had taken place." Ash outlines some of the past attempts to streamline communication with the journal, particularly highlighting a separate email thread that rose out of a Bathtub Collective meeting and, later, from names added at the Lincoln Michel and James Yeh talk. Ash: "However, it is important to note that interest in the journal is not limited to those who were able to attend those two particular events."

Miller: “Lack of communication is definitely a problem. I was there [at the Yeh talk], but I didn’t know about it.” Miller goes on to state that while “everything’s in flux, there will be plenty of opportunities” for other interested people to help the editorial board.

Ash reiterates that it wasn’t that people weren’t interested in serving in an editorial role, but that these interested people “just didn’t know” the meeting would be taking place.

Hood asks if there will be an opportunity to reshape the editorial staff in the near future: “How long are the positions set?” Response from Moulton that the editorial positions are for one year. Hood also states that he thinks it would be wise for there to be priority given to people who are toward the end of their program.

Pfeiffer states “that is something we could consider,” and might be discussed at the meeting on Tuesday, October 19.

Brox: “Who is ‘we’? ‘We’ has been used a lot.”

Pfeiffer: “‘We’ is not just the editorial board, who has been elected, the people in Bathtub, in the creative writing classes.” Pfeiffer continues, stating that he thought most people knew (about the meetings), adding, “Here’s the thing that I’m concerned about: nothing was done maliciously. This was a mistake.”

Hood: “It seems like if it was a mistake, it’s an easy mistake to fix.”

Pfeiffer states that a revote seems unfair to the people who did show up, to invalidate that participation based on these concerns. Pfeiffer again emphasizes that there might be opportunities for editorial service for people who weren’t at the voting meeting, saying “People could quit, people could find that they are too busy.”

Pfeiffer: “I hope that if outside of this meeting, if people feel like they’ve been excluded, that they’ll talk to us, to me. There’s nothing that I don’t think open, face-to-face communication can’t fix. I personally think that everyone who’s participating in this wants this to be an opportunity for everyone.”

Krug states that she had an issue with open communication attempts. She explains that she sent an email which “asked a simple question about the meeting on the listserv” and received a dismissive response. Krug: “It seems like there was a very simple problem and not a direct answer.”

Barbarick: “I would imagine that there is a problem with communication.”

Krug (referring to the notification about the voting meeting): “If the email wasn’t to everybody, then it doesn’t count.”

Thornbrugh states that the sheer number of different email threads demonstrates “how much they were trying to communicate.”

Kiehna: "Is this official communication? Is there an official MFA listserv?"

Multiple answers follow from various people about the MFA listserv. The list is apparently only inclusive of MFA creative writers, and not doctoral level creative writers. Cartwright says he had to get added to the list, and that the process was pretty complicated.

Ash: "Once that departmental problem is solved, then these communication issues will be resolved."

Tigchelaar asks how voting worked at the meeting, whether people who wanted editorial positions filled out an application or wrote a letter outlining their qualifications.

Pfeiffer states that there was no application process. Those who were present spoke up on their own behalf or on behalf of those not in attendance whom they knew to be interested in positions.

Thornbrugh details that those who were interested in positions got to talk for two minutes about their abilities. Tigchelaar asks for clarification, that this refers to the people present at the meeting. Thornbrugh concurs.

Pfeiffer explains that those who were not present but were nominated by those there were represented by informal discussion. "We talked about what we knew about them as our friends."

Turner: "It all seems to be going back to communication. I had never heard anything until that big email went out yesterday."

Tigchelaar asks about the bylaws. How were they authored?

Pfeiffer states that he wrote them, and that M. Caminero-Santangelo and Harrington approved them. Pfeiffer also states that the bylaws are available for perusal; interested parties should email Thornburgh.

Tigchelaar notes the time, and moves to table the discussion. Widespread agreement. Pfeiffer encourages people to come to the meeting October 19 where this conversation could potentially continue, and states that it is "inappropriate" to be discussing this at a SAGE meeting since the journal is a separate organization with separate funding.

Martinez outlines SAGE purposes, including to represent the interests of all graduate students, which would include all creative writers and others interested in participating in this journal.

k. Professionalization Workshops Committee: Lillvis mentions an event in November on conferences and how to write proposals.

l. Public Face/Alumni Relations: Martinez reminds students about some of the homecoming events the department has planned for the Friday after fall break, including a tree where students,

faculty, and alumni can write a departmental memory onto a leaf, and an open house in the department serving food and snacks. More details will be forthcoming.

m. SAGE Advice: Cartwright states that they have met twice, and have some interesting developments and ideas to share, but due to the late time, they'll put together report to send over SAGE listserv.

n. Summer Institutes Committee: Hume emailed: no report

o. Supplemental Funds Committee: Turner states that they have met. He also adds that he is aware of a few faculty members who have agreed to have their office phone lines removed, although he doesn't have any specific numbers or amounts.

p. Sustainability Committee: Brox: no report

q. Webmaster's Report: Brussow emailed: no report

**Old Business: none**

**New Business.**

**Motion to adjourn:** Lillvis moved, Turner seconded, approved.

Meeting Adjourned.