**Northeast Regional Honors Council**

**Business Meeting Agenda**

Sheraton New Orleans Hotel, Oak Alley Room

Friday, November 8, 2013 (5:00-6:00 PM)

1. **Welcome and Call to Order**

President Lori Rubeling (Stevenson University) welcomed everyone in attendance and called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. She led an introduction of all the officers and asked for a show of hands of those who are new members (2); those new to the region though not yet members (10); and those who are returning members (approximately 70).

1. **Minutes of Spring 2013 Meeting**

Executive Secretary-Treasurer Shirley Shultz Myers (Gallaudet University) presented a draft of the minutes from the business meeting at our spring regional conference in Philadelphia on April 6, 2013. Julie Fennell, Community College of Allegheny County moved to accept the minutes; Ross Wheeler, Queens College, seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

1. **Financial Report**

Shirley Myers reported that the number of institutional memberships to date are about the same as last year. Joanna Gonsalves (Salem State University) noted that the dues increase has already begun to help us replenish the treasury that had dropped about a third in value with subsidizing of conferences and various initiatives including most recently our new website designed by Lori Rubeling. Ross Wheeler moved to accept the report. Linda Kobylarski, Post University, seconded the motion. The treasurer’s report was accepted unanimously.

1. **2013 Philadelphia Conference Feedback Report**

Registration total: 419. Of these 23 were free (13 minority scholarships and the rest 12th and 24th registrant free options) = 396 paying registrations. We received much positive feedback. A full report can be found in the Philadelphia meeting minutes; one item to add is the high approval for the visit of the senior citizens as our post-City-as-Text event

1. **2014 Conference Report**

Conference Chair and President-Elect Helen Fallon (Point Park University) reported on the save-the-date postcard that went out in September—Thanks to Lori Rubeling and Ross Wheeler with their help in getting this ready for printing.

Proposals are due Friday, November 22. Please find the survey monkey link to submit proposals under the Conference tab of our new website. In addition to Lori’s design of the web, webmaster/newsletter editor Peter Campbell (Ramapo College) has posted all the conference information and links on this same page. Thanks to Faculty Representative Lorna Ronald (Queens College) for help with editing the conference theme statement.

Advice for the conference: One, bring warm clothing to Niagara Falls. If a thaw happens before our conference April 3-6, 2014, then the Maid of the Mist boats will be in the water for trips to the falls—the view of the falls from these boats is spectacular. Two, if you wish to cross over the bridge to the Canadian side, everyone except New York residents must bring a passport. New York residents can show their driver’s license and get a temporary pass at offices at the Falls. Three, if you choose the Place-as-Text option involving a hike, bring sturdy shoes as parts are rocky.

Justin Karter, a grad student at Point Park University and a graduate of SUNY Buffalo Honors Program, is assisting Helen Fallon with conference preparations. He and local host Rebekah Keaton (Niagara County Community College), along with Vice-President Joe McGinn (Towson University) have been working hard on Place-as-Text options. Rebekah Keaton provided descriptions of the options which you can find at the conference website. In addition, Justin Karter has set up community service opportunities as an alternative to the Place-as-Text options. Another alternative builds off the workshops we offered the previous two years for an all day outing to observe the natural environment and then write, draw, and photograph; we will install these works around the conference center.

Another creative offering is the return of the student Art Show we hosted in Portland, Maine. The conference center has a beautiful but too small gallery, so we will be using another fine room called the Cataract Room. All conference participants will vote on the works and prizes will be displayed.

If people can arrive early enough on Thursday, we may offer something other than the photo scavenger hunt of the past few years. Smokin’ Joe’s allows exploration of native American performance.

A retired professor at Niagara County Community College, a self-described wild-eyed naturalist, will serve as our Place-as-Text speaker. We are still looking for a speaker for the Friday night banquet.

Dates:

1. Registration, run by NCHC, will open around the third week of January.
2. Hotel reservations will open in January as well.
3. Notifications for proposals will go out December 15.
4. Minority scholarship applications are due January 15. If we receive more than 10, we may need to reward on a first-come, first-served basis. Students must have proposals accepted to qualify for the scholarship. Note: All proposals require director e-mail addresses as well so that directors along with students will know about proposal results.

Student Events

Student Representatives are Sara Payne (Point Park University and Elvy Gerez (Monroe College). Elvy Gerez (Monroe College) is on a study abroad trip but has been working with Sara Payne throughout the late summer and fall. Sara Payne asked that directors send the FB page to your students. They are looking for more activity there, and students can find valuable advice and information for students, especially first-timers. Still deciding on photo scavenger hunt or Smokin’ Joe’s—a unique venue to know about Seneca Indians there. Friday is still Open Mic capitalizing on the conference theme of “Standing on the Edge.” Students may take a risk and perform! Instead of a DJ for Saturday’s social, the plans are for more interaction that a casino night of games might foster. We will be asking for student volunteers for various gaming tables. Last year we had 40 student volunteers, each of whom received $10 as a thank you.

Questions from the audience

1. Will we have faculty led interactive workshops as we did the past two years? No, because attendance was very low for these. We may bring them back for our 2015 Gettysburg conference. This year, we will have student-led interactive workshops, however.
2. Do students need to have a proposal accepted to submit an art work, too? No, you can do it that way, but you also can submit only the art work. Fill out the contact information and then just check the box at the bottom of the proposal form about submitting an art work. The full .pdf about the art work will be due mid-January. Watch for an announcement via e-mail.
3. Someone from Erie CC in Buffalo did not know about the conference in Niagara Falls. Everyone who is not on our distribution list but wishes to be should provide email addresses as well as other contact information to the secretary-treasurer (Shirley Myers)
4. Transportation: Could neighboring schools share chartered buses? Yes. Look in our directory (available under Membership on our website) to see who is close to you and then contact, or post on Facebook to organize transportation.
5. Not a question but a compliment: Elaine Torda from Orange County Community College, brought students last year for the first time and all had the best time.
6. **Future conferences**

 a. 2015 Conference in Gettysburg, PA: April 9-12, 2015 – Lori Rubeling did the site visit. It is off routes 15 and 30, so it is outside the downtown, but a trolley costing $3 a day takes us to downtown Gettysburg and all the sites. We will be staying at a major hotel complex with a large movie theater. We are now looking for local hosts!

 b. 2016 Conference in Cambridge, MA: March 31-April 3, 2016 – Joanna Gonsalves, previous president and conference organizer of Portland, did a site visit. The site is excellent, and the price finally allows us to get to the Boston area as we have wanted to do for a long time. Because of the expense, the closest we had come was Salem 20 years ago. Cambridge will be an excellent City-as-Text location. It is also right next to MIT and near a pedestrian bridge close to Boston University and the arts area.

As with Niagara Falls, we will be able to put art up throught the conference facility. (a conference on graphic novels at the time of the site visit exhibited conference art everywhere, including th back of bathroom stall doors. So this hotel is ready for a creative academic student conference like hours. Boston is the home of many colleges besides those mentioned already and of course Harvard, like Babson, Northeastern, Roxbury CC, Bunker CC, and UMass Boston.

c. 2017 Conference in Pittsburgh, PA: under investigation; date tbd Julie Fennell (previous president) and Helen Fallon visited two possible hotels, and might be investigating a third. The last time we had a conference in Pittsburgh was 2005. The two visited so far have these dates:

1. March 16-19 Westin
2. March 30-April 2 Marriott

These dates do not conflict with Easter (April 16) or Passover (April 10-18), but the dates of the Westin, which is the better facility, might hit too many Spring Breaks as well as St. Patrick’ Day. Many in attendance did think the mid-March dates were problematic, especially since some schools will not authorize travel during a Spring Break. Only one person liked it better. The room rates are also good, but we need to lock in the dates four years out to get them: $149 Marriott: $159 Westin. We will report again once we have information on the third hotel, and ask for your input at the business meeting in Niagara Falls.

D. Other possible locations members discussed for 2017 and beyond:

(1) Brooklyn—we were there years ago but cannot afford any offers now.

(2) Flushing (Queens)—an interesting area but the hotel there would not be interested because their wedding business beats our conference revenue. However, Flushing is expanding, so we may find a place down the road.

(3) White Plains—an urban Hudson River town., home of Sunnyside of Washington Irving, many historical landmarks; the Hudson River offers environmental and scientific concerns; the hotels will be less expensive than NY borough hotels.

(4) Portsmouth, NH—a great location but hard to get to: fly into Boston which is one hour away or Manchester, NH, also one hour away.

(5) Hartford, CT is still a possibility

(6) Towns on a train line:

* Annapolis, MD (site in 2009)
* Baltimore (site in 2012)
* Bethesda, MD or Silver Spring, MD–near DC for an affordable hotel;
* Buffalo, NY
* Mystic CT
* New Port, RI
* Providence, RI (site in 2008)
1. **Amendment to Constitution to define institution for dues purposes**

Shirley Myers informed the membership that the executive board proposes following the NCHC definition of what constitutes an institution. The purpose is to clarify whether multiple campuses must pay separate dues or one set of dues. E-notice of this proposal will go out 60 days before the Niagara conference (end of January/early February) to allow a vote at the business meeting.

A suggestion to simplify the matter to specify only one criterion of a separate budget was accepted and will become the proposal sent out 60 days before the vote at the spring business meeting in Niagara Falls. The wording will become:

In the instance of an institution with physically separate campus locations, each campus location shall pay institutional member dues if it has its own budget.

A suggestion as made to also consider the place of “for profit” institutions in our membership. Shirley Myers noted that we already do have one, Post U. But this issue, along with the role of other institutions of higher education and related foundations, is emerging nationally as a point of discussion. The executive board will consider the matter and report back in at the spring business meeting. We are not a division of NCHC, just an affiliated organization so that we will need to determine our own stance on this matter.

8. **Website update and call for news**

Peter Campbell, Newsletter Editor/Webmaster (Ramapo College) mentioned

that although Lori remains consultant on design matters with the website, he and student associate editor have taken over managing the site. They are focused on the conference now but will have student input on other content.

 Ann Raia (retired, College of New Rochelle) asked the board to explore a list serv versus a distribution list which we use currently.

 Another director asked if we could see information about past conferences, and Peter Campbell explained that he has been working on just that—he is now collecting programs from past conferences to post and will create an archive for them. We did not have that capability of an archive before, but we will have it soon.

1. **Preliminary Call for nominations for NRHC officers**

The official call will be made at the spring business meeting. For the May 2014 election, we will be electing a Vice President, one Faculty Representative, the Executive Secretary-Treasurer, and two Student Representatives.

Board members emphasized the collaborative work style and creative synergy. While there is real work involved, the experience is such that past board members stay in touch and offer to help. If you have creativity, energy, and time, the region is a wonderful outlet.

Board members with positions opening this spring described their roles:

1. The presidential cycle is four years long beginning with vice-president, president-elect (and conference chair), president, and immediate past president. The conference year is the most demanding, but the board does supply plenty of support.
2. The faculty representative position can be a great start if you are not sure about what the work involves. The duties involve leading the big picture and nuts and bolts discussions at the conference; evaluating applications for scholarships (except for the minority scholarships which the secretary-treasurer handles); and reviewing proposals in one of the strands.
3. The executive secretary-treasure may serve a total of two three-year terms; this person functions as a chief operating officer as well as handling finances (dues management; IRS e-card; bank account; two treasurer reports, scholarship awards) and secretarial duties (minutes for two meetings and the planning meeting, correspondence, directory, e-communications to the region and to individuals).
4. Student representatives have the exciting challenge of creating all the student events and managing the Facebook page, and participating in the summer planning meeting (directors/deans/coordinators) must agree to support travel to this meeting as well as the two conferences. To offset these expenses, the region provides an annual travel stipend of $600 to each board member.