MINUTES, MRSC Board, 8-24-16

The Board of the Medieval and Renaissance Studies Center (MRSC) met at 2:00 pm on Thursday, August 24 at Barnes & Noble Café in the University Center. Present were Janis Elliott, John Howe, Brian McFadden, Connie Scarborough, Angela Marianni Smith, and Abigail Swingen.

I. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1) Planning is underway for the Texas Medieval Association Annual Meeting of 2018, which Texas Tech will host on a weekend in early October, to be scheduled to avoid potential conflicts with home football games and competing academic societies.

2) The TTU Museum has approved the associated exhibit on “The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: Celebrating the 500th Anniversary of the Publication of the Complutensian Polyglot Bible.” 20 enclosed cases in the Museum have been designated for the exhibit, which would run from August 2018 through February of 2019. John Howe and Janis Elliott are the organizers. The Remnant Trust will be one co-sponsor. A preliminary meeting with LCU went well, and some members of its faculty offering to assist us in contacts with certain private collections. About a quarter of the exhibit items can be obtained from local sources, but this next year will require major efforts to secure supporting grants and artifact pledges.

3) 2017 will be an election year for the MRSC Board of directors (see http://www.depts.ttu.edu/classic_modern/medieval/governance.php), with elections to be held next spring. In the context of these forthcoming elections, MRSC Co-directors Howe and Scarborough have announced that they will not continue on as co-directors after their current Board terms expire in 2017. The Board agreed to formally examine the director office at its next meeting, but preliminary discussion indicated satisfaction with the current interdisciplinary co-director structure, and some sentiment for continuing it even after the present co-directors have stepped down. A new director or directors will need to be approved by the new Board and by the Dean of A&S (where the Center resides administratively).

II. MRST 5301: Howe will teach MRST 5301 this spring, continuing MRSC's unbroken string of offering this course each spring since 2011. But to remedy a drop in enrollments, which were down to the minimum five students in spring 2015, will require more active recruiting, though early indications from admissions and certificate applications suggest that the class of 2017 should be larger. The ideal size, consonant with MRSC goals for awarding certificates, is 9-10 students.

III. SUBSIDY FOR GRADUATE STUDENT INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE TRAVEL: The Board reaffirmed its program of providing reimbursement subsidies of $200/student to graduate students who want to attend approved interdisciplinary medieval and renaissance studies conferences.
IV. MILEAGE SUBSIDY TO THE UPCOMING TEMA MEETING: The Board authorized the payment of mileage for a carpool car to take students to the TEMA Conference to be held at Texas A&M September 23-25. Students interested in availing themselves of this opportunity should contact John Howe at john.howe@ttu.edu.

V. EFFORTS TO ENHANCE MEDIEVAL & RENAISSANCE STUDIES AT TTU. Board members agreed to create a new brochure about the graduate certificate program, suitable for distribution in departments and at conferences. Inquiries are to made about how to create a medieval and Renaissance Studies Undergraduate Minor.

VI. NAME CHANGE? It was suggested that more graduate students in early modern studies might be attracted to the certificate program if the term "Renaissance" were replaced by "Early Modern," paralleling changes already made by some professional societies and journals. Many members of the Board were sympathetic to this proposal, which was tabled to the next meeting. It was noted, however, that any such change should probably be formally ratified by the entire MRSC affiliated faculty.

The meeting concluded at 2:45pm.

--John Howe, acting scribe