MINUTES, MRSC Board, 11-29-16

The Board of the Medieval and Renaissance Studies Center (MRSC) met at 1:30 pm on Monday, March 6, at Barnes & Noble Café in the University Center. Present were Janis Elliott, John Howe, Brian McFadden, Angelamariani Smith, and Abigail Swingen. [Connie Scarborough was away in Seville]

I. Proposal to Change the Name of the MRSC: At the November Board meeting, a resolution was proposed to the MRSC Board to change the Center name from the "Medieval and Renaissance Studies Center" to the "Medieval and Early Modern Studies Center." The Board referred this resolution to the affiliated faculty members for comment. The result of the poll was a 50/50 split pro and con, though some Board members judged the defenders of the "Renaissance" to be more passionate. Actually, there was considerable consensus in that most affiliated faculty members agree that there is momentum among academic societies toward the "early modern" but suspect that students may still find the "Renaissance" more golden—the split vote results from how different affiliated faculty members weighted these factors differently.

The board decided to table the proposed resolution for a year, but to simultaneously instruct the MRSC directors to review the MRSC website to ensure that its terminology is "early modern friendly."

II. Affiliated Faculty Member Approved. The Board approved the application of Peter Briggs (Museum of Texas Tech University) for affiliated faculty member status.

III. Proposal to Change the By-Laws Regarding the Composition of the MRSC Board. The present rules regarding the composition of the MRSC Board are as follows:

"The MRSC Board consists of seven persons who broadly represent the affiliated faculty members and some major areas of study.… The seven board members are those persons who received the highest numbers of votes cast by fellow affiliated faculty members at a triennial election in April 2014. The next election will take place in April 2017, with an in-person nomination meeting followed by a mail or electronic ballot. Rules require that the seven-person board include the director(s) and at least one representative from each of the following academic areas: Art, CMLL, English, History, and Music. In board elections, if the top seven candidates conform to that distribution, then the election stands as voted. If one or more of the required areas is not represented in the initial election results, then the lowest vote getter(s) in the top seven from non-required group(s) is dropped and the highest unelected vote getter(s) of the missing group(s) is substituted."

The MRSC Board at its March meeting recommends that, subject to the approval of the affiliated faculty members, all references to "seven members" be replaced with "eight members," and that there be an expansion of the required areas of study to be represented so that the Board must include "at least one representative
from each of the following academic areas: Art, CMLL, English, History, <Museum Science,> and Music."

The rationale for this proposed change is that—given that the Museum of Texas Tech University is seeking to expand its ties with the University proper, and given that the MRSC wishes to advance medieval and Renaissance interests at the Museum, and given that MRSC 5301 (the methods course in medieval and renaissance studies) is a useful course for graduate students in museology—closer formal coordination between MRSC and the Museum of Texas Tech University would benefit both.

IV. **Subvention for Students to Attend Interdisciplinary Medieval and Renaissance Conventions.** Students are urged to apply for the $200 subvention sooner rather than later. There is a Texas Tech contingent attending the International Congress on Medieval Studies (Kalamazoo, May 11-14), and those who want to travel with the group can get flight itinerary information from John.Howe@ttu.edu.

V. **TEMA Meeting Fall 2018:** Planning continues for the 2018 Annual Meeting of the Texas Medieval Association (TEMA), which Texas Tech will host. The Board agreed to proceed with a proposal to host TEMA on Friday/Saturday October 19-20, prefaced by a Thursday, October 18, conference on the Museum 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.” Plenary speakers have been secured for TEMA: Maureen Miller (UC Berkeley, medieval Church) and George Greenia, recently emeritus William and Mary, Compostela pilgrimage). For the Bible conference, the morning speaker on medieval; traditions of Bible study will be Franz van Liere (Calvin College); the two afternoon speakers have not yet been named.

All of this requires a leap of faith in that the Athletic Department only finalized its 2017 fall football schedule this February and will presumably not have its final 2018 fall schedule until early in 2018. The hope, based on the 2017 schedule, is that the weekend of October 20/21 2018 will be an away game, but this is by no means guaranteed.

VI. **Grant Initiatives:**

A. **"The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: Celebrating the 500th Anniversary of the Publication of the Complutensian Polyglot Bible,"** an exhibit to run from August 2018 through February of 2019, organized by John Howe and Janis Elliott, has solidified its arrangements with the TTU Museum and the Remnant Trust. The first grant application has been received by the Helen Jones Foundation and given a high ranking; the Museum of Texas Tech has agreed to teach an exhibit class in spring 2018 devoted to this project

B. **"The Horse in History,"** a proposed summer institute for 30 K-12 teachers to be held at Texas Tech in summer 2018, has had preliminary and final grants submitted
to the NEH. If funded, we hope to have a related sessions schedule for the TEMA conference.

VII. **Procedures for MRSC Elections:** As reported in the minutes of the November meeting: "Spring 2017 will be the time to elect the MRSC Board (see [http://www.depts.ttu.edu/classic_modern/medieval/governance.php](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/classic_modern/medieval/governance.php) for governance regulations, terms, and requirements). 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 Center exists within the College of Arts & Sciences, under the purview of the Dean of A&S, but Dean Brent Lindquist has agreed that the newly elected Board may select the MRSC director(s), subject to his ratification."

However, the Board in the March meeting elected to delay decisions on the exact dates and procedures for electing the new Board until the Museum issue has been settled by a poll of the affiliated faculty members (see point III above). The result of this delay will be that the election will not be held until the very end of April.

The meeting concluded at 2:15 pm

--John Howe, acting scribe