

MINUTES: Meeting of MRSC Board and Affiliated Faculty 02/13/2020

Location: Arts Practice Collaboratory (Main Library)

Present:

Jacob Baum
Peter Briggs
Julie Nelson Couch
Janis Elliott
John Howe
Angela Mariani
Brian McFadden
Lane Sobehrad
Abigail Swingen
Lucas Wood

Unable to attend: Board members John Beusterien, Francesca di Poppa

MINUTES

Nota bene: our first Board meeting of 2020 contained a lot of news and many agenda items, and as a result these meeting minutes are unusually long. Please read at your leisure, but the co-directors would like to respectfully request your responses to the various underlined calls for information as soon as you are able, so that we can better represent all of our activities on our website and social media, and also offer help to students planning to attend Kzoo and other conferences.

1. Discussion of MRSC Finances

- The Co-directors were pleased to report an increase in our support this year. In addition to the renewal of annual \$2000 commitment from Dean Lindquist (Arts & Science), we received new funding of \$2000 (renewable based on performance) from VP Joe Heppert (Office of Research and Innovation), and an offer from Sean Cunningham (Chair, History) to find us an additional \$2000 in funding.

2. Report on MRSC Website

- A few months ago our website was moved from the CMLL server to the History Department (new URL: <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/history/medieval/>). The transition had a bit of a rocky start, since the MRSC directors were not notified of the upcoming change, but History has welcomed us warmly and provided assistance and access. We are investigating the possibility of moving our accounts from CMLL to History as well.
- In addition to the basic information included on the website, the minutes of MRSC board meetings are there under the Governance tab. The Home page now has an Announcements box; a list of current and past events; a Facebook link; and it will soon have an Instagram account too. Board members, affiliate faculty, students, and all fellow M&R travelers are encouraged to please send us events, conference Calls for Papers, etc. to post on the website.
- Dr. Elliott requested that we begin collecting information re/fall MRSC courses now, as the deadline seems to be earlier each year. We will post these on the website.

3. Discussion of MRST 5301 – Spring 2021, and other courses

- There was a discussion of the need for an instructor for the Spring 2021 iteration of MRST 5301; it was stated that Dr. Beusterien has volunteered to teach it (w/departmental approval). The point was made that 5301 is often by necessity taught as an overload.
- The suggestion was made by Dr. Swingen that perhaps we might talk to Sean Cunningham in History about the potential for a donor to fund a 'buyout' that would reimburse a department for the credit hours to allow one of their professors to teach MRST 5301 without carrying an overload.
- Dr. Baum, who is teaching 5301 this semester, mentioned that he has had requests from several students who wondered why the graduate level Latin reading course did not fulfill a MRSC Certificate requirement. It was explained that the course in question is intended to be remedial, and per/the Registrar, remedial courses cannot count toward a certificate. It was suggested that we could look into the possibility of a student taking it as a 7000 course. The Latin Prose course does count, and certain other Latin courses could be accepted on an ad hoc basis.
- Dr. Wood, whose graduate medieval literature course is taught in French, asked if we thought there would be interest in a similar course taught in English (with reading material in French) which would count toward the certificate. There was interest in finding out more about this.
- Dr. McFadden is now officially a MRSC advisor. Brief discussion of Sharepoint training.

4. Summer Courses

- Dr. Timothy Graham's seminar **Paleography and Codicology: Medieval Manuscript Studies** will be offered June 1-25, 2020, at the University of New Mexico (application deadline March 15, 2020). With our newly expanded funds, we will be able to give partial financial support to 1 or 2 students who wish to attend this. Please let us know if you have students who are interested. Tech will accept the credits for this course, and it can be counted toward the grad MRSC certificate.
- MRST 7000 (Research) can also be taken over the summer and could be eligible for funding.
- Dr. Elliott's **Medieval Rome** class is also available this summer and can be taken as MRST7000 (it involves being in Rome for the entire month of June). Please let your students know about this.

5. Kalamazoo – May 2020

- At least six faculty will be presenting at Kzoo this year (Couch, Howe, McFadden, Mariani, Scherff, Sobehrad). We would like to know how many students will be attending/presenting as well. It was also requested that all information regarding faculty and student presenter/session/title/date should be sent to the co-directors so that it can be posted on the website.
- There was a discussion of the possible need for a vehicle to transport TTU faculty and students from the airport. It transpired that several faculty would already have rental cars, and several were willing to try and give rides if possible, so there did not seem to be a need for a TTU-funded vehicle.

- Travel funding for students going to Kzoo: MRSC will provide \$300 to each student traveling to Kzoo. Please let us know if you have MRSC students who are attending Kzoo, and please ask the students to send (in addition to their paper title, session info, etc) their estimated expenses. It was pointed out that even if they are not giving a paper, we will help them to attend.
- MRSC will also be represented in a session at the Medieval Academy of America meeting in Berkeley March 26-28; we will put this information on the MRSC website as well (please send this info to co-directors – thanks!)
- Dr. Howe mentioned that it would be good for MRSC to fund undergrads who wish to go to Med-Ren conferences in general.

6. Upper Level Undergraduate Certificate in Medieval and Renaissance Studies

There was a substantial discussion of our intent to propose an application for an Upper Level Undergraduate Certificate in Medieval and Renaissance Studies. All attending received a handout containing a proposed preliminary draft of the description and justification verbiage for the application, plus a hard copy of TTU’s instructions for applying, and the relevant OP. Highlights of the discussion included:

- Comments on the length of the title of the certificate—the first four words are TTU boilerplate
- Discussion of # of credit hours: 15 was the consensus. Any undergraduate certificate of 20 hours or less does NOT have to go through the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.
- Discussion of possible anchor course, and whether it was necessary for an undergrad certificate. The consensus appeared to be that an anchor course was not needed, but rather a list of courses from which a student might choose (e.g. “3 from List A, 2 from List B,” and so on).
- Discussion of whether the actual submission of the proposal should come from someone in Arts and Sciences, due to the unusual situation of having two co-directors from outside A&S. There was a suggestion to check with David Roach, Associate Dean of Arts & Sciences and chair of AS-CAP. Dr. Swingen suggested that “whoever presses the “submit” button on Curriculog” should be from Arts & Sciences, and there was general agreement.
- Suggestions regarding undergraduate courses that would count toward the undergrad certificate (UMRSC?) are requested from all Board and affiliate faculty—the proposed curriculum will have to be turned in with our application.
- We will also need the CIP code for an “interdisciplinary” certificate.

7. Raising the profile of MRSC: planning a Symposium or similar event

With our new additional sources of funding, the co-directors suggested the possibility of raising the profile of MRSC by presenting a Symposium for faculty and students (proposed title, “The Global Middle Ages”). The proposed location, ICC, costs \$250 per day but has free and accessible parking. The preliminary plan was to invite 2-3 visiting scholars to address the symposium topic from a multidisciplinary perspective; and to include a couple of social events, such as a concert of Med-Ren music and/or cosplay event.

- A target date of Spring 2021 was floated; the consensus was that this would be too soon for adequate planning of a major conference or symposium, but a smaller event could be planned for Spring 2021 to start raising the profile of MRSC.

- Discussion of the term “Global.” The consensus was that the use of both “global” and “middle ages” could each be problematic, and perhaps needed more clarification/ discussion. Co-directors will revise.
- Dr. Briggs pointed out that the Museum would be very interested in participating in such an event; this was quite welcome information, and added to the planning possibilities.
- Dr. Howe mentioned that 2023 is the TTU Centennial, and perhaps that might be a reasonable target date. Subsequent discussion included agreement that 2023 would be a reasonable target date for a conference, and that the rather urgent need for profile-raising events could be met with several smaller events leading up to the conference.
- Dr. Swingen reminded us that the Humanities Center/ORI offers “Working Groups” grants for collaborative projects in humanities-oriented disciplines. Working Groups can request up to a total of \$7500 to be distributed over three years, which would fit our target 2023 date. There was consensus that MRSC should apply for one of these (deadline March 13).

8. Medieval Latin Reading Group

Dr. Howe announced that the Medieval Latin Reading Group has been re-convened and is currently meeting every other Wednesday at 4pm. There was a brief discussion of a possible time change, at least temporarily, due to a conflict with MRST 5301; Dr. Howe said that he will look into it.

We concluded the meeting with thanks to all, and a reminder that we still have lots of MRSC brochures available for those who would like to take some to conferences and other events.

Respectfully submitted,
Angela Mariani and Janis Elliott
2.16.2020