

# MINUTES

MRSC Board, 1-12-15

The Board of the Medieval and Renaissance Studies Center (MRSC) met at 2:00 pm on Wednesday, September 11, 2013 at Barnes & Noble Café in the University Center. Present were Carole Edwards, Janice Elliott, John Howe, Brian McFadden, and Abby Swingen (Angela Marianni Smith was stuck at DFW; Connie Scarborough was teaching in Seville)

## I ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- 1) Scarborough is away in Seville for spring 2015; for this term Howe will be the sole certificate advisor in residence.
- 2) MRSC now has a second university bank account, one without all the restrictions involved in State fund accounts. To donate to it, money should be sent to the TTU Development Office with the notation on the Check "MRSC Program Support, 24G485 B53005 400."
- 3) MRST 5301 will continue to be offered each spring semester. Howe (History) is teaching the course this spring to 9 graduate students, a new enrollment record. John Beusterien (CMLL) will teach it in spring 2016.
- 4) Howe & Scarborough met with Brent Lindquist, the new A&S Dean and MRSC "boss," on September 19 and arranged for the renewal of the MRSC budget for another year. The meeting was very cordial, but the MRSC officers consider it prudent to continue to work to build the certificate program toward its projected goal (6 certificates awarded per year) and to document MRSC contributions carefully. MRSC will need to justify its existence at least as much as any other academic unit, especially since not all people automatically assume that TTU is and should be distinguished in the study of the pre-modern and early modern world.
- 5) Marianni Smith, though stuck at the airport, had managed to forward an announcement of Norden Rodenkirchen's presentation on "Hameln Anno 1284: Medieval Flute Music on the Trail of the Pied Piper," scheduled for Monday, February 2, at 8:00 pm in Hemmle Recital Hall. Free admission. Learn "the rest of the story" about the Pied Piper and his music.
- 6) Howe announced that this spring there will be two off-campus scholars teaching classes of MRST 5301: Bruce Brasington (WTAMU) on studying medieval law, in HH40 on April 14; then Timothy Graham (UNM Albuquerque) on paleography, in HH40 on April 21. These are regularly scheduled classes, but the room has some extra seats and faculty members or graduate students who would like to attend should contact Howe.

## II. TTU TO HOST TEMA CONFERENCE IN FALL 2018

The Board agreed to support a bid to Host the meeting of the Texas Medieval Association on the TTU campus in fall 2018. An invitation to TTU to host had been tentatively offered at the TEMA meeting in 2014, subject to MRSC Board approval which was unanimously forthcoming at this meeting. TTU hosted TEMA in 2008, and all who were involved then found it both a great success and a great deal of work.

Some preliminary preparation will need to begin immediately. Elliott volunteered to investigate how best to contact the TTU Museum in regard to beginning the process of trying to coordinate and secure some compatible medieval and Renaissance exhibits to be available at the time of the conference. McFadden volunteered to make inquiries with the Remnant Trust for similar purposes.

Such conferences gain coherence if they have a theme. Texas Tech's previous TEMA meeting focused on the "Medieval Southwest." The year 1518 itself was a big one for Martin Luther and Charles V—are there any quincentenary events that we should be celebrating?

### **III STUDENT CONFERENCE SUBSIDIES**

The Board is continuing its program of providing \$200/student reimbursement subsidies to graduate students who want to attend approved medieval and Renaissance studies conferences. The International Congress of Medieval Studies (Kalamazoo), the Renaissance society of America Meeting, and the Sixteenth-Century Society Meeting are automatically approved. Requests for other **interdisciplinary** medieval and renaissance conferences will be considered by the Board on an ad hoc basis.

A major advantage of this small subsidy is that it can be enhanced by matching funds from students' home departments and from the Graduate School. Given that the Graduate School has sometimes run out of possible student travel funds early in spring semester, affiliated faculty members should remind eligible students that these funds are available and that they should get their requests to the Board as soon as possible.

### **IV. NEW MRSC AFFILIATED FACULTY MEMBERS APPROVED**

The Board considered the applications and *vitae* of two new TTU faculty members:

- 1) Starra Priestaf (French, CMLL), PhD Emory University, a specialist in Renaissance and Early Modern French literature;
- 2) Christine M. Walker (History), PhD University of Michigan, a specialist in early modern Atlantic World.

Both were unanimously and enthusiastically approved for MRSC affiliated faculty membership.

### **V. FUND RAISING?**

The Board discussed how to proceed now that MRSC has its own "fund for excellence" account in which to park MRSC non-State funds. It was agreed that the first step to take was to authorize the co-directors to try to set up a donation link on the MRSC Web site, one similar to the one that the Classics Society has set up on the CMLL Web. Discussion ensued about whether a MRSC donation button could or should also appear on the relevant departmental Web pages, in the way that the Classics Society link appears on the CMLL Web. The Board's conclusion was that this should NOT be a goal because the MRSC exists not to be an adjunct to one or more departments but to be an interdisciplinary link among them, and thus a donation made to MRSC would not necessarily translate into a direct equivalent benefit to History, English, Art, etc. However, it was agreed that it would be an appropriate goal, once the

fundraising link was established on the MRSC Web itself, to try to add links to the MRSC Web on relevant departmental pages that list university resources, related programs, etc.

## **VI. SPECIAL ELECTION FOR A NEW BOARD MEMBER**

Carole Edwards informed the Board that she would resign her seat on the Board. Much of her research in French involves Caribbean literature, and, while she had been carrying the medieval and Renaissance French portfolio in the absence of a French Department expert in those fields, she was now intending to defer to Starra Priestaf, the new hire in the field, and spend more time in her Caribbean haunts. The Board therefore needed to make a decision about how to proceed inasmuch as Edwards' term on the Board extends to 2017 and the By-laws do not specify how to hold a special election.

After discussion, it was decided that the Board would conduct a special election to fill the remainder of Edwards' term and that the procedure would be as follows: step 1) Howe will send a notice to all eligible affiliated faculty members and ask them to REMOVE themselves from the contest by a specified date if they are not willing to stand for election or serve; step 2) Howe will send a list of the eligible faculty members who are willing to serve to all affiliated faculty members and ask them to choose one and to email their choices to him by a specified date (Howe and another Board member serving as election monitor will keep the votes confidential and will have no electoral conflicts because they are not standing in this election); step 3) Howe and the designated monitor will count votes and notify the recipient of the most votes that he or she is the "lucky winner." Note that this is an open election: the By-laws do specify that the Board must include representatives from each of five specified academic units that have a significant presence in TTU medieval and Renaissance Studies, but in this case, because CMLL is still represented by Connie Scarborough, all required areas are already covered and thus any affiliated faculty member can win and claim the open seat.

The meeting concluded at 3:00.

--John Howe, acting scribe