

**Digest of the  
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the New Chaucer Society  
July 22, 2012, White Stag, PSU, Portland, Oregon**

In attendance: Carolyn Dinshaw (President, 2010-12); Alastair Minnis (President-elect, 2012-4); Trustees: Alcuin Blamires (2010-14) [AlcB], Ardis Butterfield (2012-16) [ArdB]; Christopher Cannon (2008-12), Susan Crane (2012-16), Ruth Evans (2008-12), Frank Grady (2010-14), Tom Hahn (2012-16), Larry Scanlon (2010-14) [LarryS], Lynn Staley (2012-16) [LynnS], Stephanie Trigg (2008-12), David Lawton, Executive Director; and for individual items: Patty Ingham (Co-Chair, Portland Program Committee), Mark Allen (NCS Bibliographer), David Matthews (Editor, SAC).

Apologies were received from Trustees Juliette Dor (2008-12) and Laura Kendrick (2008-12).

**The meeting was opened by President Carolyn Dinshaw at 10:15 am.**

**1. Minutes from the meeting of July 17, 2010 (Siena).** The minutes were **approved**.

**2. President's Business**

**i)** Reported that **the search for a new ED and institutional home for the Society** went smoothly.

**ii)** Reported that NCS has discussed **ways of increasing consultation and communication between Trustees and members**. Changes that NCS has made in the way in which the Program Committee is selected – inviting nominations from the membership – have increased openness. Demographic issues, such as marginalized institutions and the problems of members securing travel funding, are still pressing.

*Action: RE to make 2014 Program Committee aware of demographic issues.*

**iii) Program Chair for 2014.** It was suggested that co-chairs, as with the 2012 committee, might be desirable.

**iv) Possible appointment of a V-P:** agreed that the direct election of the President now allows the President-elect, who also automatically becomes a Trustee, to shadow the President before taking office, which obviates the need for a V-P.

**v) Matters arising from the minutes**

Action items should be listed and apportioned to specific Trustees and officers; President and ED to reinforce the responsibility for following through.

Suggested that we make the website a hub for educational materials.

Agreed that we should in future post a digest of the Trustees' Meeting minutes on the website.

ED's biennial Report used to go into the Newsletter, and this should continue.

*Action: RE to put a digest of minutes and ED's Report on website and in Newsletter.*

**3. Report by Incoming ED (RE)**

**i) Chaucer Bibliography.** The Trustees approved Stephanie Amsel as the next Chaucer Bibliographer, as a replacement for Mark Allen and Bege Bowers. We formally recorded our thanks to Mark Allen and Bege Bowers for their outstanding work.

Agreed that there should be consultation with outgoing bibliographer and SAC editor and incoming bibliographer and SAC editor about the future of the annual bibliography published in

SAC, and also about the cumulative annotated Chaucer bibliography (the last was Bege K. Bowers and Mark Allen, eds., *Annotated Chaucer Bibliography, 1986–1996* (Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame P, 2002)).

*Action: RE to talk to SAmSel and to poll membership re printed annual bibliography.*

**ii) SAC bids.** Reported interest from several teams; prospective teams to demonstrate commitment of at least 5 years. Deadline for developed, not final, bids: mid October, 2012.

*Committee chosen to look at bids: FG, LarryS, SC, RE, and AM.*

*Action: RE to encourage and advise the bidders.*

#### **4. Finance Committee Report (CC)**

Fourth member of the FC needed. ArdB was chosen as replacement Trustee to replace CC, whose term has ended.

*Action: RE to seek 4<sup>th</sup> member of Finance Committee.*

Presentation of Finance committee Report. SC pointed out 1 error: in July 2002 the endowment stood not at \$132,000 but at \$175,000.

Proposed that we might recommend to members that we spend \$20,000 of the endowment on a post-doctoral position. After discussion, it was agreed that we should wait until the endowment has grown to \$500,000 before we decide how best to use the money. We need a list of desiderata before we decide how to spend it. Suggestions included sabbaticals for high-school teachers, stipends for high school teachers' research, stipends for retirees to attend Congresses, fellowships for masters students, free subscription for some, and travel scholarships for graduates from the UK and Europe.

*Action: LynnS chosen to keep the wishlist. AM to ask membership about items they would like to be placed on the wishlist.*

#### **5. ED's Report** [at this point JD was Skyped in]

Reported slight drop in membership (currently c. 600), due largely to switching the date for renewal to July 1.

*Action: DL and JRez will write to lapsed members.*

Agreed that in future, NCS should not deal with big hotel chains and block bookings. Trustees strongly seconded DL's thanks to the WashU people for their help with Congress organization. DL reported that he was very satisfied with the number and quality of the 2012 Howard Scholars; suggested they would have ideas about how to use the off-year. Agreed we need to do more for high-school teachers.

**2014 Congress Bids:** discussion of the 4 bids on the table, not all of which were at equal stages of development

*Action: CD to contact various proposers during lunch for further information, and to report back at end of meeting.*

Lunch.

#### **6. Report by 2012 Chairs of Program Committee (Patty Ingham, also representing Karma Lochrie, who was not able to attend)**

Reported that co-chairing worked well; discussed issues to do with chairing.

*Action: KL and PI to put together a job spec. for next Program Chair(s).*

Praised Jessica Rezunyk for her invaluable assistance and formally recorded our thanks.

Noted that graduate students are generally well served by the Congress, but in future the Congress should avoid all-graduate student sessions, as this did not serve them well. Noted need to address needs of faculty at regional universities who were unable to attend the Congress due to lack of funding. Noted that more needs to be done to encourage the seminar format at future congresses. Noted that threads were working, but that fewer threads might be desirable. Advised more open sessions for 2014. It was suggested that we make the first session at the 2014 Congress plenary.

### **7. Chaucer Bibliography (Mark Allen)**

MA reported that SAC 34 has more entries – 325 – than SAC 33, which had 205.

Online Bib. had nearly 10,000 records and 190,000 hits from 1/2011 until 5/2012.

SAC 35: 50% of the entries are done.

UTSA Library will continue to support Chaucer Bibliography Online, which is available on Project MUSE.

*It was agreed that NCS would offer financial support for the online version for the next 2 years.*

MA is working on a print version of the cumulative bibliography going back to 1975. DM is interested in taking his proposal to MUP.

Victor Lopez at UTSA is willing to carry on as cataloguer.

Discussed again whether there was a need for the print version of the annual bibliography that appears in each issue of SAC.

CD thanked MA on behalf of the Trustees for his outstanding service.

*Action: RE to remind membership to support the CB by joining the cadre of bibliographers.*

### **8. SAC: David Matthews (outgoing SAC editor)**

i) Reported on **submissions to SAC**, for the period July 2010-June 2012:

- Submissions are back up
- Acceptance rate: **16.4%**
- US/Canada submissions: **53**; UK submissions: **7**; Other (Israel, Japan, continental Europe, Australia): **7**
- Essays sent out for review in this period have gone to **69** different readers.
- For comparison: DM's Siena report stated: submissions received **51**; accepted **10**; rejected **38**. FG's last two reports as editor: **69** submissions (July 2004-June 2006); **65** submissions (July 2002-June 2004)
- Submissions are more "age" than Chaucer

ii) **Design proposal: new title pages.** DOI and inclusive page numbers will appear in future. Project MUSE does not yet provide Front Matter for SAC, which is a disadvantage.

iii) **Project MUSE.** SAC is online from vol. 30 (2008) onwards. Vols 23-29 exist in useable PDFs; remaining issues would need to be scanned by MUSE, at \$100 an issue. Vols. 23-29 not scheduled to appear until 2015 or 2016, because of danger of diluting royalties for all MUSE journals. Although SAC has turned down EBSCO's offers in the past, it was proposed that Trustees explore other database options to keep it competitive. Noted that we did not know if SAC's availability on MUSE had led to a drop in membership.

*Action: RE to move on scanning back issues and scheduling those for MUSE, at cost of \$2,200.*

**iv) Printed annual bibliography:** noted need to establish if members use this (see #3 and #7. above).

**v) Index:** future?

*Action: RE to poll membership on a range of issues to do with SAC.*

**vi) SAC Advisory Board:** Currently grows by one member every two years as ex-president joins it, losing one member at the same time. Discussed changing the term of service to 5 years so that all members would serve equal time. *Agreed not to make that change.*

The Trustees formally thanked DM for his outstanding work.

## **9. Biennial Lecturer (for 2014)**

Noted 22 valid nominations to date. Request for nominations had been extended throughout the Congress, and voting would take place after all the nominations were in. Discussion of the principle of the Biennial Lecturer, especially the importance of a specifically Chaucerian theme.

## **10. Tabled Items**

**i) Howard Scholarships:** preliminary discussion about extending these to other constituencies; see #5, above.

### **ii) Memorial tributes**

*It was agreed that tributes should be made at the Business Meeting and that there would in future be names just on the website, and obits (received not commissioned) in Newsletter, which is archived on the website*

*Action: DL to ask at business meeting for names and anyone who wants to send in a tribute can.*

*Action: agreed that obits should be taken down when website is redone.*

### **iii) NCS and civic engagement**

Discussion about NCS policy in regard to civic engagement. DL has written 2 letters in his time as ED: one to protest the University of Tasmania's decision to stop teaching medieval English literature and one to support Rosalind Field's canvassing for Chaucer studies in Britain. The latter was successful. Not clear that the Society's constitution allows for social advocacy. LarryS volunteered to investigate the policies and practices of other scholarly societies and to report back. Given the exigency of similar issues germane to the state of medieval studies, it was agreed that the President and ED would bring this issue up for discussion at the Trustees' Meeting in 2014.

### **iv) Wiley-Blackwell Chaucer Encyclopedia**

Agreed that it was not advisable to become involved as a Society.

*Action: It was agreed that CD would tell Wiley-Blackwell to approach individuals for support with the project.*

### **v) Congress 2014 venues update**

DL reported that he had been unable to contact one bidder. Agreed that there were two viable bids on the table. Vote taken: Reykjavík the winner.

*Action: DL to announce decision at Business Meeting and will encourage resubmission of one bid for 2016.*

### **vi) Proposal to involve graduate students in off-years between congresses**

Discussion about how best to do this, and where the off-year event should take place.

*Action: It was agreed that a committee be formed (John Ganim, RE, AM, DL) to come up with proposals for what to do in off-years.*

The meeting was adjourned at 6.30 pm.

Ruth Evans