

**MINUTES OF THE ALA EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETINGS,
ASA CONFERENCE, NOV. 14-16, 2008**

Wednesday, Nov. 13, 2008

The meeting began at 7:20 a.m.

Present: Folabo Ajayi, Fahamisha Patricia Brown, Maureen Eke, President, Amy Elder, Tony Hurley, Mohamed Kamara, Eustace Palmer, Abioseh Porter

1. Ratification of the Agenda:

The Agenda was ratified.

2. The President's Opening Remarks:

A. Maureen welcomed Mohamed Kamara, one of the new EC members and expressed gratitude he was here. She also noted the importance of reminding EC members of their acceptance of a commitment to attend the two EC meetings per year or to find substitutes.

B. She expressed her intention to send President-Elect Obama a congratulatory letter on behalf of the ALA and asked whether she should mention human rights issues that we advocate in this letter. She decided to draft a letter as circulate it to the EC for comments before sending it.

C. She mentioned that she has already written the letter to President George W. Bush, Secretary of State Condeleeza Rice, and the Congressional Black Caucus that the Macomb ALA Business Meeting approved, urging the U.S. to provide aid to the UN and African Union peace-keeping troops. She will circulate this letter for EC emendations and names of particular congresspersons to add as recipients.

D. She has sent Lokangaka Losambe, Convener of the 2009 ALA Conference, requesting three panels on: 1) job searches for graduate students; 2) tenure issues for African literature faculty; 3) publishing possibilities in the U.S. for African based scholars. Ken Harrow and Ben Lindfors will help with these panels, and others are very welcome to contribute. She suggested that EC members planning to travel to Africa identify university colleagues who might be interested in conducting workshops on these topics.

E. Maureen mentioned the possibility of establishing an ALA website base of African articles. She will contact Chiwengo about this project.

Discussion:

- Abioseh suggested adding to the website all ALA paper submissions.

3. Ratification of the EC and Business Meeting Minutes from the 2008 ALA Conference at Macomb, IL:

The Minutes were ratified.

4. Matters Arising from the 2008 ALA EC and Business Meeting Minutes:

No matters arose.

5. EC Officers' Reports:

A. Treasurer's Report: Tony

- Tony distributed the Financial Statement for 4/1/08 – 10/31/08, which reported in summary:
Revenue: \$35,331.49
Expenditures: \$12,882.50
Assets as of March 31, 2008 (including Wachovia Checking: \$7,619.67; Account Activity not yet cleared: \$1,000.00; Wachovia Money Market Fund: \$15,829.32): \$22,448.99.
Pax World Funds Balance as of 9/30/08: \$89,063.38
Total Assets: \$111,512.37
- Because of stock market losses, our PAX account declined by \$10,000 this past year; in accordance with ALA guidelines, which requires ten percent of the ALA's revenue for the year to be transferred to the endowment account, on 4/16/2008, Tony transferred \$2,300.00 of ALA assets to the PAX account.
- He also reported the following membership numbers:
2007 365
2008 325
Lifetime 25
Institutional 2007 30
Institutional 2008 50
- Because of the expense of providing breakfast at the bi-annual EC meetings, members should inform the Treasurer know if they are not planning of attending these meetings. In this regard all EC members should be reminded of the requirement to find proxies if they don't plan to attend EC meetings.

The Financial Statement was accepted and Tony was thanked for his work.

B. *JALA* Editor's Report: Abioseh

- The current issue will be available within the next two weeks.
- Abioseh suggested that the *JALA* go completely on-line. It will continue as a print publication while he and Mark Lilleleht will work on this project.
- There are plenty of submissions.

Discussion:

- It was decided that those who wish back issues of *JALA* can obtain them from ALA Headquarters. A notice advertising *JALA* should be included as a separate flyer with future Conference materials and be posted on H-Africa and H-Cine.

The EC thanked Abioseh for his work.

6. Standing Committee Reports:

A. Finance Committee: Folabo

- Before giving her report, Folabo presented the slate for ALA Vice-President:
Robert Cancel
Anthonia Kalu
Oty Agbajoh-Laoye
Chiwengo Ngwarsungu

For the EC:
Catherine Kroll
Joseph McClaron
Tomi Adeaga

Discussion:

The Vice-Presidential slate needs to be paired down to two candidates, and more names for the EC are needed, since there are four members who must be replaced; Folabo requested EC members e-mail her more suggestions.

- Folabo reminded the EC that no decision about the dispensing of miscellaneous funds had been made by the EC at the 2008 ALA meeting.
- She is working on a form for requesting funds and another to report on the expenditure of awarded funds.
- She has contacted Kasahun to come to tomorrow's meeting to explain where Africa World Press is in regard to publishing the Annuals.

Discussion:

It was decided that the Vice President should be in touch with Kasahun and ask him to agree to be at one EC meeting of the ALA to present an annual report; this annual report does not preclude his meeting with the EC at other times if he wishes.

The Finance Committee Report was accepted, and Folabo was thanked for her work.

B. Issues Committee: Mark

Mark was not present; no report was entered.

C. Awards Committee: Oty

Oty was not present; no report was entered.

D. [Out of the Agenda sequence] Publicity and Media: Fahamisha

- Fahamisha has sent out publicity information about the 2009 ALA Conference to professional organizations and wishes to follow up with photos from the Conference once it has taken place.
- She has also been thinking about a way to draw younger scholars into the ALA.

Discussion:

- Tony suggested offering travel funds to graduate students to allow them to come to ALA Conferences. On a previous topic, he reiterated that it is essential for EC members to provide proxies if they cannot attend EC meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

Thursday, November 14, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 a.m.

Present: Oty Agbayoh-Laoye, Folabo Ajayi, Fahamisha P. Brown, Maureen Eke, President, Amy Elder, Tony Hurley, George Joseph, Anthonia Kalu, Mohamed Kamara, Lokangaka Losambe, Eustace Palmer, Thelma Pinto, Abioseh Porter, Carrie Walker

7. Leftover Business from Wednesday:

C. Awards: Oty

- She said that the call for nominations for the Fonlon-Nichols Award has been sent out; the deadline has been extended until the end of December, and the deadline for the Distinguished Member Award also will be extended.
- The Graduate Student Award, both its nature and the method of its determination, still must be decided.
- Both Awards should be understood as perennial and the results should be published in *JALA*.

Discussion:

- Abioseh suggested that, for the Graduate Student Award, papers should be submitted to the Awards Committee for judging a month before the Conference.

Discussion ensued about the difficulty of getting the Membership to respond that far in advance of the annual Conference.

- Abioseh moved that the EC give \$500 annually to the Awards Committee for the Graduate Student Award. The motion passed.
- Oty asked that someone from the *JALA* Editorial Board join the Awards Committee to make the decision about the winning graduate student paper, since the paper is to be published in *JALA*. She said she would take the EC suggestions back to the Awards Committee for discussion.

The Awards Committee report was accepted, and Oty was thanked for her work.

12. [Out of Agenda order] Reports on upcoming ALA Conferences:

- Dr. Shirmail Negash from Ohio University presented a proposal for hosting ALA in 2011. He had previously submitted a written proposal.

Discussion:

- Maureen asked for a letter of commitment from the Ohio University. She also suggested that he speak with earlier conference conveners to determine the details about holding conferences. She noted that there is a form for conveners in the *ALA Handbook*.
- George Joseph will send him a copy of the *Handbook* from ALA Headquarters.
- Maureen further commented that the EC has received a report from Rasheed N'Allah, convener of the 2008 ALA Conference about the progress on their *Proceedings* and will write a letter thanking him. He has not made a decision yet on how many papers will be included.
- Huma Ibrahim was elected at the 2008 Business Meeting to aid the Series Editors and needs to be contacted and asked to get in touch with Carrol Coates.

8. Standing Committee Reports Cont.:

D. Travel Grants: Anthonia

- Anthonia said she did not know that she is no longer the Chair of the Travel Grants Committee and that a communication problem exists in notification of changes in Committee Chairs.
- She added that her Committee's report and announcements are on the ALA Website.

Much discussion ensued about difficulty of getting Chairs to quickly identify their committee members:

- Tony suggested that we add the identification of Committee Chairs to the early Agenda of the spring meeting and ask them to identify their members at the last EC meeting.
- Maureen will contact Ada, who was selected as Chair of the Travel Grants Committee at the Macomb meeting, and explain a mistake was made because she

- had never been a member of this Committee. She will be asked to join it with a view to being the next Chair.
- There was general agreement that each committee should select an experienced member to move into the Chairmanship after two years to guarantee continued expertise.
 - Thelma suggested that the *ALA Handbook* be updated to reflect the new decision about Committee Chairs and their successors.

Anthonia was thanked for her report.

C. Headquarters: George

George reported that the setting up of ALA Headquarters is well underway and that he has found a responsible and efficient secretary.

Discussion:

- George was asked to design new stationary reflecting the change of Headquarters.

11. [Out of Agenda order] Caucus Reports:

A. WOCALA: Ada Azodo

Ada was not present but had sent in her report.

B. Graduate Student: Carrie Walker

- Carrie reported that the Caucus now has 30 members
- They have planned a reading group for the 2009 Vermont Conference and a graduate student mixer.

Discussion:

- Abioseh suggested sending an invitation to all EC members to join their discussion group.
- Lokangaka plans to give them half-price meals to help support their mixer in Vermont.

Carrie's Report was accepted and she was thanked.

12. [Out of Agenda order] Report on Upcoming ALA Conferences:

A. 2009: Lokangaka Losambe

- Lokangaka reported that Maryse Conde will not be able to attend; she has withdrawn for health reasons.
- Wole Soyinka will deliver the Keynote address on Wednesday, April 15th at 6:00 p.m.; Zakes Mda will be the banquet speaker.
- Other confirmed plenary speakers are: V.Y. Mudimbe
M.J.C. Echeruo
Magdalene Odwudo
Nkoshama Pinenpamla
Kwame Anthony Appiah
(TRACALA speaker)
Akachi Ezeigbo (WOCALA speaker)

All the speakers' honoraria, travel expenses, and accommodations are being supplied by the Conveners.

- He is working on securing funding to bring in the Francophone and WOCALA speakers and to provide support for TRACALA.
- Graduate Students will pay half price for meals. The Conference Conveners will fund their mixer and pay the honorarium for their speaker.
- EC members are urged to book their rooms as soon as possible.
- 250 abstracts from all over the world have been received so far.
- All the preparations are moving smoothly and the Conveners expect to hold a good conference in April.

The EC accepted Lokangaka's Report and thanked him for his continuing efforts.

The meeting adjourned at 9:08 a.m.

Friday, November 15

Present: Adeleke Adeeko, Oty Agbayoh-Laoye, Folabo Ajayi-Soyinka, Fahamisha P. Brown, Bob Cancel, Maureen Eke, President, Amy Elder, George Joseph, Anthonia Kalu, Mohamed Kamara, Lokangaka Losambe, Eustace Palmer, Thelma Pinto, Abioseh Porter, Carrie Walker

9. Leftover Business from Thursday and Friday:

Standing Committee Reports, continued:

G. Teaching and Research Committee: Ngwarsungu Chiwengo

- A Roundtable is planned on African Literature, Animation, and Film for the Vermont conference. A Panel is in formation.

- Chiwengo contacted the MLA to determine if and how the ALA could publish through their series on African writers. The MLA said it was possible, but the ALA would have to follow MLA guidelines and policies. McGraw Hill, she reported, is not interested in publishing a specific area of literature. She would like a discussion of this possibility at this meeting.
- The T&R Committee is experiencing a problem with attendance and responses to e-mails. She raised the question of how committees can function under such circumstances.
- The Committee would like to interview scholars and writers at ALA conferences, however, it needs equipment and space to conduct interviews at the Vermont conference.

Discussion:

- The suggestion was made that the writers the Teaching & Research Committee wishes to interview be provided with permission forms and that Lokangaka give the Committee a list of those invited.
- Adeleeko recommended that the EC resume the custom of asking the President to write a letter to new EC members and Committee Chairs reminding them of their responsibilities and the Vice President to Committee members with a similar reminder.
- Abioseh suggested we institute a Presidential Reception for new ALA Members at ALA conferences to greet them and inform them of opportunities to serve on committees.
- Eustace reminded the EC that the *Handbook* requires that the committees be reconstituted every year.
- Folabo suggested an Ad Hoc recruiting team to come up with names of African students who might be mentored and encouraged to achieve success in their programs.
- The EC members should send the names and addresses of their Deans and department Head to the Secretary to enable the President to write letters of support of members to them.

Chiwengo's report was gratefully accepted by the EC.

12. (Out of Agenda order) Reports on Upcoming ALA Conferences:

- C. South Africa: Thelma and George
 - There is a problem with the date when the ALA could go to South Africa

Discussion:

- It was suggested that if any South African university wishes to host an ALA conference on any given year, the prospective hosts should file a formal bid that follows the guidelines in the *Handbook*.

4. (Out of Agenda order) Matters arising from the Macomb ALA Meeting:

- Thelma spoke on the relationship of the ALA with the ASA. She mentioned that we have had space problems with the ASA for quite a while. For this reason and others, the next fall meeting of the EC will be at Headquarters rather than at the annual ASA Conference.

Discussion:

- We need to inform the ALA membership that beginning in 2009 the EC will hold a one-day retreat at Headquarters because of logistical problems with the ASA.
- The date of this meeting should generally be the first weekend of October.
- George will get back to us about accommodations and travel arrangements.

9. (Out of Agenda order) Left-Over Business from Wednesday and Thursday:

8. Standing Committees:

F. Publication: Anthonia

There was no report.

Discussion:

- Eustace commented that Anthonia contact Carrol Coates to determine if the Annuals are on target for publication.
- The Vice-President will send a letter to Janis Mayes saying that because EC Committees are reconstituted every year, she will no longer have the responsibility of being Co-Chair of the Publication Committee.
- Folabo raised the importance of the EC finding a way to be in touch with African publishers to see if they could collaborate with U.S. publishers. In this regard, Fahamisha suggested that African publishers get in touch with the African Book Collective to be listed and accessible.
- The Publications Committee is charged with looking into this matter.

D. (Out of Agenda order) TRACALA: Wangui

The Report had been sent to the EC; it was accepted, and Wangui was thanked.

10. (Out of Agenda order) Ad-Hoc Committee Reports:

B. Heritage: Debra

- In Debra's absence, Fahamisha reported that the Heritage Committee needs access to the Archives in San Diego to determine which materials are available to use at the 2009 Conference.

Discussion:

- The issue of copyrights for pictures was raised.
- Anthonia suggested the EC hire a mover to transport ALA Archives from San Diego to the new Headquarters.
- George will speak with Bob Cancel who will go and evaluate the extent of the Archives to determine the cost of transporting the materials.

15. New Business:

- The EC should institute an on-line discussion about representatives of the ALA in African countries and the Caribbean.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:56 a.m.