

MINUTES

Executive Committee

African Literature Association

16 April 2009

Attendance: Fahamisha Patricia Brown recording, Oty Agbajoh-Laoye, Folabo Ajayi, Ada Azodo, Anne Carlson, Marlene DeLaCruz-Guzman, Tony Hurley, George Joseph, Anthonia Kalu, Mohammad Kamara, Lokangaka Losambe, Thelma Pinto, Abioseh Porter, Carrie Walker, Maureen Eke presiding

President Maureen Eke called the meeting to order at 7:15 a.m. and set the agenda as follows:

1. Ratification of the Agenda
2. President's opening report
3. Ratification of minutes of November 2008 meetings of EC
4. Matters arising from those minutes
5. EC Officers' reports
6. Standing Committee Reports
7. Professor Ghirmai Nagash presenting Ohio University bid for ALA 2011
8. Caucus Reports
9. Headquarters Report
10. Irene d'Almeida, Convener ALA 2010 report
11. Other business

Thelma Pinto moved to ratify 2008 minutes, seconded by Folabo Ajayi. Motion carried by unanimous consent.

President's Report: President Eke reported on her activities arising from previous meetings. Three roundtables have been organized by the Executive Committee: Preparing for Promotion and Tenure; A Workshop for Africa-Based Scholars on Publishing in America, and So You Want a Tenure Track Position. EC members were urged to encourage younger scholars and graduate students to attend these sessions. Future conference conveners are reminded to schedule future EC panels, roundtables, and workshops after the scheduled EC meeting times.

Letters on behalf of ALA were sent to former President Bush and members of his administration as well as to the Congressional Black Caucus regarding the situations in Somalia and Zimbabwe. No acknowledgement was received. A letter of congratulations on his election was sent to President Obama and has been acknowledged. **ACTION:** A letter regarding the on-going crisis in the Congo is in preparation to be completed and sent by the in-coming president and her predecessor.

The move of ALA Headquarters to Hobart & William Smith College under the direction of George Joseph is well underway. A resolution of thanks to Joanne Cornwell, former headquarters director, will be made at the business meeting. Resolutions of thanks also will be prepared for the outgoing treasurer and past presidents Eustace Palmer and Thelma Pinto. **ACTION:** Letters announcing these resolutions will be sent to the institutions of these individuals.

The last item of the president's report concerned the establishment of a data base of scholarship by ALA members. Problems of copyright and other logistics have complicated the creation of this resource. The creation of a file of open source materials with links to other protected sites is under consideration as part of the ALA website.

Ratification of the Fall 2008 Business Meeting Minutes: After corrections were noted by several members, it was moved by Folabo Ajayi and seconded by Oty Agbajoh-Laoye that the minutes be approved as corrected. The motion carried unanimously.

Matters arising from the minutes: After some discussion, it was noted that the executive needs to spell out more clearly the relationship of the caucuses to the Executive Committee and to conference conveners (including program input). Both conference conveners and caucus presidents should be reminded to review the appropriate sections of the ALA Handbook. **ACTION:** The president should contact Caucus Presidents in advance of the day and time for their reports to the EC so that they can be present for the appropriate meeting. Written Reports can be submitted in advance of the meeting day and sent to the president and secretary.

Treasurer's Report: Out-going Treasurer Anthony Hurley submitted his written report to the members and circulated supporting bank statements. He is submitting his report and records to the 2009 auditors Aliko Songolo and Emmanuel Yahweh for review. Treasurer Hurley thanked members of the EC for their cooperation and support during his terms of office. Additionally, he announced that he had asked the Awards Committee to recommend a cash award to his student assistant for his invaluable work.

JALA Editor's Report: JALA Editor Abioseh Porter reported that publication of *The Journal of the African Literature Association (JALA)* is back on schedule. The latest issue has been included in the conference packets. He also asked for a Resolution of Thanks for his work reorganizing and directing the ALA website. It was moved by Ada Azodo and seconded by Thelma Pinto that the reports of the treasurer and JALA editor be accepted. Motion carried unanimously.

ALA 2011: Professor Ghirmai Negash reported on Ohio University's bid for the 2011 ALA conference. Although the state of the economy has slowed fund-raising efforts, commitments of \$35,000 are confirmed with another \$25,000 looking promising. 2009 Convener Losambe recommended that an account be opened for the conference as soon as possible so that funds can be transferred and made available as needed. The conference theme will be "Trans-local Spaces: African Literature, film and Visual Arts." It was moved by Oty Agbajoh-Laoye and seconded by Thelma Pinto that the EC formally accept the bid by Ohio University to host the ALA Conference in 2011. The motion carried unanimously. **ACTION:** The president will send a formal letter of acceptance to Ohio University.

Finance Committee Report: Chair Folabo Ajayi reported that she had sent out emails with funding proposal request forms to the caucuses and ALA committee chairs. To date, no funding requests have been received. Additionally, requests have been received by unemployed, independent scholars for reduced conference registration rates. This request will be passed on to conveners of future conferences. Finally, she reminded the EC that the Finance Committee will need to be reconstituted as she assumes the presidency at the end of the conference. It was moved by Thelma Pinto and seconded by Loka Losambe that the report be accepted. Motion carried unanimously.

Awards Committee Report: Chair Oty Agbajoh-Laoye reported that the Fonlon-Nichols Award for Osonye Tess Onwueme and the Distinguished Member Award for Kenneth Harrow had been purchased and were available for examination by interested members. The Graduate Student Award is at the stage of manuscript reviews. Five papers are in English and one in French. Readers are being asked both to

read the papers in manuscript and to attend the presentations of the paper, and to make their recommendations before the business meeting. The Awards Committee supports the treasurer's request for a special service award to his assistant Mark Murphy and recommends a cash award of \$500. Finally, the committee reminded the EC of its decision to create an award for scholarship/literary merit for a scholar/writer outside of Africa.

The ensuing discussion of this report resulted in the following recommendations: measures should be taken to insure the widest participation possible in identifying candidates for awards. EC members are asked to make nominations by the fall meeting; call for nominations should be made at the spring conference and followed up on the website; selection criteria should be published in future conference programs. It was moved by Folabo Ajayi and seconded by Mohammad Kamara that the report be accepted with the recommendations. Motion carried. Abioseh Porter called for a commendation for Chair Agbajoh-Laoye and her committee for their work with unanimous consent.

Travel Grants Committee Report: Chair Anthonia Kalu reported that three scholars were selected for travel grant support to attend and present at the 2009 conference out of only six applicants. The awardees are Chioma Opara of the University of Port Harcourt (Nigeria), Nwachulwu Agbada of J.O.J. (Nigeria), and Wandia Njoya Of Daystar University (Kenya). EC members are encouraged to attend the sessions in which the awardees will be presenting their papers. The travel grants are for \$1000 each. It was moved by Thelma Pinto and seconded by Anthony Hurley to accept the report. Motion carried.

Publications Committee: Chair Anthonia Kalu reported on her discussion with series editor Carrol Coates regarding the status of the series volumes. The Burlington convener has announced a deadline of October 1, 2009, for submittal of final versions of 2009 conference papers for consideration. The Macomb editors had announced a one-year deadline for submissions. Editions for the conferences held in Madison, Boulder, West Virginia, Ghana, and Egypt are all behind schedule. It is possible that papers from several conferences might be combined in a single volume. The additional problem of the unfamiliarity of the series editor with current word processing programs is an additional complication. Series Editor Carroll Coates and Publisher Kassahun Chicole will be asked to meet with the Publications Committee to discuss on-going problems and to meet with the EC to make their reports.

Motion to Adjourn: It was moved by Anthony Hurley and seconded by Thelma Pinto that the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

17 April 2009

Attendance: Fahamisha Patricia Brown recording, Oty Agbajoh-Laoye, Folabo Ajayi, Ada Azodo, Debra Boyd, Anne Carlson, Marlene DeLaCruz-Guzman, Tony Hurley, George Joseph, Anthonia Kalu, Mohammad Kamara, Lokangaka Losambe, Cara Moyer, Eustace Palmer (proxy for Amy Elder), Thelma Pinto, Abioseh Porter, Wangui wa Goro, Carrie Walker, Maureen Eke presiding

President Maureen Eke called the meeting to order at 7:15 a.m.

Caucus Reports: Wangui wa Goro reported for the Translation Caucus (TRACALA). TRACALA is sponsoring one roundtable and one panel as well as a Caucus luncheon at the Burlington Conference. Membership currently is about 40, and elections are scheduled. It was moved by Thelma Pinto and seconded by Loka Losambe that the report be accepted. Motion carried.

Marlene de la Cruz-Guzman reported for the Graduate Students Caucus. Elections have been held, and the Caucus is sponsoring one roundtable at Burlington. The Graduate Student Caucus is opening its membership to undergraduate student participants. It also is seeking to coordinate with the other caucuses. It will be updating its information on the ALA website. They also are encouraging attendance and participation in the Executive Committee-sponsored workshops and roundtables. Anthonia Kalu moved and Folabo Ajayi seconded that the report be accepted. Motion carried.

Standing Committee Reports: Anthonia Kalu reported for the Publications Committee. A Call for Final Versions of Conference papers for the Burlington conference has been included in the Conference Program. It is important that future conference conveners follow this procedure. As chair, she emphasized the need for structure and standard operating procedures for ALA publications, particularly the series volumes and for regular reviews of the information in the ALA Handbook. It is important that conference conveners be directed to relevant information in the Handbook. After discussion of the status of the series volumes, Chair Kalu volunteered to continue to serve on the Publications Committee for the next three years to provide continuity to the work of the committee. Folabo Ajayi moved and Eustace Palmer seconded that the report be accepted. Motion carried.

Headquarters Report: George Joseph reported that the fall meeting of the Executive Committee will be held on Saturday, October 10, 2009. Attendance at this meeting is required of all members of the EC. If members are unable to attend, they are responsible for identifying a proxy to attend in their place. Hobart and William Smith College is located in Geneva, New York, served by airports in either Syracuse or Rochester, New York. The Archives have been packed and are ready to ship from San Diego to Geneva. A secretary has been assigned by the college to ALA Headquarters. A pre-publication copy of the next issue was distributed for review. It was agreed that the minutes of the 2008 meetings needed to be edited prior to publication. The *ALA Executive Handbook and Calendar* also requires regular review and update. The statement, "What is the ALA?" is in particular need of revision. Ada Azodo moved and Mohammad Kamara seconded that the director's report be accepted. Motion carried.

Series Volume Publisher's Report: Kassahun Chicole reported that there had been no communications from the Series Editor since the Western Illinois conference.

Heritage Project Report: Debra Boyd reported on the status of the Heritage Project. She pointed out that sufficient attention has not been paid to the 35th Anniversary status of the Burlington conference. For 2014, the 40th Anniversary of ALA will be marked with a visual history including a video and a legacy display panels. She currently is conducting interviews with founding members as a part of the project. A budget has been assigned to the project. A vote of thanks was extended to Debra for her continuing efforts.

Ada Azodo moved and Oty Agbajoh-Laoye seconded that the meeting be adjourned.

18, April 2009

Attendance: Fahamisha Patricia Brown recording, Adeleke Adeeko, Oty Agbajoh-Laoye, Folabo Ajayi, Ada Azodo, Anne Carlson, Helen Chukwuma, Carroll Coates, Irene D'Almeida, Marlene De La Cruz-Guzman, Tony Hurley, George Joseph, Anthonia Kalu, Mohammad Kamara, Mark Lillileht, Bernth Liindfors, Lokangaka Losambe, Cara Moyer, Rashid Na'Allah, Chiwengo Ngwarsungu, Eustace Palmer (proxy for Amy Elder), Thelma Pinto, Abioseh Porter, Carrie Walker, Maureen Eke presiding

Maureen Eke called the meeting to order at 7:15 a.m.

Conference Convener's Report: Lokangaka Losambe reported that the conference has been a success with about 450 registrants. A Call to Submit completed papers has been distributed with a deadline of October 1.

The Agenda for the Business Meeting as reviewed and approved.

Caucus Reports: Helen Chukwuma, president of the Women's Caucus (WOCALA) reported that elections have been held. Discussions on selection of the 2010 luncheon speaker are on-going.

Elections: Folabo Ajayi reported on the results of the election: Tomi Adeago, Laura Murphy, and Rashid Na'Allah have been elected to the Executive Committee. Arlene Elder has been re-elected secretary. Fahamisha Patricia Brown has been elected treasurer. Janice Spleth has been elected vice-president. Wangui wa Goro has been elected Deputy Vice-president. The results will be reported at the business meeting.

Standing Committee Reports: Chiwengo Ngwarsungu reported for the Teaching and Learning Committee. The committee needs new members and wants to encourage junior faculty and graduate student participation. Suggestions for panels for future meetings include the following: Western literary tools in African literary criticism, literary criticism in Africa and the Diaspora, teaching African literature today, diasporic writing. Other possible projects include a roundtable of past members of the committee and an undergraduate student panel. Folabo Ajayi moved and Thelma Pinto seconded that committee report be accepted. Motion carried.

Mark Lilleht reported for the Issues Committee. The 2009 project was a display on sex trafficking inside and out of Africa. This issue arises out of the larger issue of violence against women and children. For 2010 the committee hopes to organize one or more panels connected with an exhibit. Maureen Eke is the new chair of the Issues Committee. Eustace Palmer moved and Folabo Ajayi seconded that the report be accepted.

ALA Web Site: Mark Lilleht reported on the reorganization of the ALA web site. He is creating password protected pages for standing committees, caucuses, and headquarters. He will be posting *JALA* issues beginning with the latest issue, minutes of business meetings from 1989 forward, and back issues of the *ALA Newsletter*. He also plans to create e-mail accounts for officers within the site. He raised the issue of the need to revise the ALA Mission Statement to reflect more completely the ideals and activities of the association.

The 2010 Conference: Irene D'Almeida, conference convener reported on conference plans. The theme is "Eco-Imagination: African and Diasporan Literatures and Sustainability." Dates are April 7-11, 2010. [Dates changed to March 10-14.] The conference will be a small one and will need monetary support from the Caucuses. Tucson is served by an international airport.

Series Editor's Report: Carroll Coates reported on the status of the series volumes. There has been no progress on the volumes for Wisconsin, Boulder, Egypt, and Ghana. West Virginia is in process. The Western Illinois convener offered a more extended submittal process than for previous editions. There is a need to update and reinforce the guidelines and process for publication of conference proceedings to conference conveners. They should be aware of the need to include a call for completed papers in the conference materials and should set a deadline that facilitates timely publication. He recommended a submissions deadline of October and a completed manuscript deadline of January. He also recommended a volume length of between 250 and 300 pages. Adeleke Adeeko moved and Eustace Palmer seconded that the report be accepted. Motion carried unanimously.

New Business: Bernth Lindfors presented a proposal for an informal ALA Council of Elders comprised of retirees and long-time members. The elders would be available for consultation in such areas as knowledge of the field, working in archives, logistics of obtaining funding, writing proposals, identification of resources, etc. The proposal is being taken under advisement; however, the EC needs a more specific written proposal before any action can be taken.

Adeleke Adeeko moved and Loka Losambe seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

19 April 2009

Attendance: Folabo Ajayi presiding; Fahamisha Patricia Brown recording. Adeleke Adeeko, Oty Agbajoh-Laoye, Ada Azodo, Anne Carlson, Helen Chukwuma, Marlene Delacruz-Gusman, Maureen Eke, George Joseph, Mohamed Kamara, Lokangaka Losambe, Abdul-Rasheed Na'Allah, Jean Ouedraogo, Janice Spleth, Wangui waGoro, Carrie Walker

President Ajayi called the meeting to order at 7:15 a.m. and welcomed new members of the Executive Committee. She reminded members that the fall meeting of the EC will be at headquarters, Hobart & William Smith College in Geneva, New York. The meeting will be held all day on Saturday, October 10, so members should plan to arrive on the evening of October 9 and depart either Saturday evening or Sunday.

Standing Committees: Chairs and EC members of the Standing Committees are as follows:

Finance – Fahamisha Patricia Brown, Treasurer, chairs the committee. She will be seeking new committee members from the among the general membership.

Awards – Oty Agbajoh-Laoye will continue as chair. Members are Rashid Na'Allah, Adeleke Adeeko, and Lokangaka Losambe.

Issues – Maureen Eke is the new chair. Wangui wa Goro is added to the membership.

Publications – Vice President Janice Spleth will co-chair the committee with Anthonia Kalu. New members are Mohamed Kamara and Lokangaka Losambe

Travel Grants – Mohamed Kamara is the new chair. Ada Azodo, and Oty Agbajoh Laoye are new members.

Teaching and Research – Chiwengu Ngwarsungo continues as chair; new members are Maureen Eke and Adeleke Adeeko.

Publicity – Fahamisha Patricia Brown continues as chair. New Members are Wangui wa Goro and Oty Agbajoh Laoye.

Policy – Janice Spleth is chair. New members are Ada Azodo, Helen Chukwuma and Adeleke Adeeko.

All chairs are encouraged to identify committee members from the general membership and caucuses.

2010 Elections: The Vice President, Janice Spleth, is charged with developing a slate of nominees for officers and executive committee membership. Because of the vacancy on the EC by Greg Thomas, four slots rather than three must be filled. The terms of G. Oty Agbajoh-Laoye, Anne Carlson, and Lokangaka

Losambe expire in 2010. **[We did not discuss whether one of the four terms would expire in 2011, the end of Thomas's term and three in 2013.]** Names of possible nominees were offered. Vice President Spleth will contact them to determine interest and availability.

New Business: The ALA mission statement should be reviewed to reflect the ALA in the 21st century. The handbook should be reviewed to insure clarity about the relationship between the caucuses and the executive committee as well as the conference conveners and the caucuses.

There was discussion about scheduling of major speakers during the conference. Discussion about discontinuing the tradition of a Banquet Speaker in order to give sufficient time and attention to the inaugural address of the incoming president did not result in a vote.

Discussion about changing the dates of the ALA 2010 conference resulted in a recommendation that Irene D'Almeida be asked about the possibility of different dates for the conference.

Maureen Eke asked for a vote of thanks and appreciation for outgoing past president Thelma Pinto who will be continuing her service to ALA at Headquarters. Members present assented by acclamation.

Adeleke Adeeko moved and Wangui wa Goro seconded that the meeting be adjourned/ Motion carried.

Potential Nominees

Further suggestions should be sent to Vice President Janice Spleth jspleth@wvu.edu

For Vice President: Wangui wa Goro, Nana Horne, Soraya Mekerta, Logangaka Losambe

For Executive Committee: Moredun Adejami, Kanika Batra, Carmella Garritano, Cathy Kroll, Aisha Lockridge, Ghirmai Negash, Teju Olaniyan