

NECSEM Annual Meeting, March 3, 2018
Wellesley College

President's Report (Damascus Kafumbe)

Thanks were given to the Local Arrangements chair, Kariann Goldschmitt. Natasha Zelensky at Colby College will be doing local arrangements for next year (2019). It is a lot of work. Thanks were also given to the Wellesley College volunteers, to the Program Committee, to the Paper Prize committee, panel chairs, and presenters, as well as to all professors and mentors.

Last year's minutes have been posted online. Clarification of minutes that Colby will host next year (2019) and Boston College in 2020.

Damascus represented NECSEM at the SEM national conference in 2017 in Denver. The topics included the structure of regional meetings. There was a consensus that two concurrent sessions was preferable to accommodate more presentations. More than two sessions spreads participants out too much.

Other topics discussed included ways of increasing membership. Damascus said we are ahead of the game. A few years ago, NECSEM instituted the Member-at-Large position, which has helped to reach out to institutions in the region. At the meeting, participants were also encouraged to become familiar with the maps of the regions they represent. The New England chapter has many participating states and provinces: Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Brunswick, New Hampshire, part of New York, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Damascus would like to reach out to institutions in those other states, and in the Canadian provinces, working with the Member-at-Large officer.

The meeting also discussed the management of regional chapters. Most chapters prefer to manage things on their own rather than having them centralized by SEM.

This year, we did not use the listserv to publicize the conference, and we did not use our Facebook page. We would likely have had more submissions if we used those outlets. We had 16 submissions, which is about half of what we had last year at Middlebury. The good news is, they were all fantastic papers. We also need to keep our website updated. Our chapter is doing well, and everyone is working well together. Damascus felt at the national meeting that some of the chapters were struggling. We might be the only chapter that supports an Undergraduate Paper Prize, and that sends a representative who represents both undergraduate and graduate students. When Damascus started going to NECSEM in 2012, there were no undergrads there, and his Middlebury students were the first in recent history to present at the conference. This year we have some 10 undergraduate presenters, and 1 high school presenter. Our chapter is contributing to the advancement of the field in important ways.

We are still maintaining a healthy bank balance, which Susan will talk about. Many of our host institutions have contributed materially to the conference. Future local arrangements chairs should be in touch if they need support in reaching out to their administrators. We have also been able to take advantage of institutional concerts during the week of the conference, so that we do

not have to spend money on that programming. Last year, Middlebury funded everything; they funded our guest concert and our keynote. So we have not had to pay for those things, because it saves us some money. We have not often invited keynote speakers, but done more President's Roundtables. This year we have a special roundtable about our role as ethnomusicologists in the current political environment. We would like to hear more from students. In the past, we have listened mostly to professors and other professional people. We have been able to continue funding the student paper prizes, and supporting our Student Concerns Representative to attend the national SEM meeting.

We have been able to plan our conference several years in advance. NECSEM 2019 will be at Colby College, and Natasha Zelensky will be our Local Arrangements Chair. Thanks to Natasha! We needed someone to fill that one-year gap. 2020 will be at Boston College, and 2021 we will be at Wesleyan. This information will be posted to the website.

Treasurer's Report (Susan Asai)

Copies of budget are circulated. Thanks to Payam Yousefi (student representative) for helping with outreach to faculty whose students are presenting. That is our starting point. Now that we know which states and which parts of Canada are included, it is our responsibility to tell faculty about the conference and say, please come to our meeting and support students – graduate students, undergraduate students, now high school students. We need their feedback, their support, and direction. This will be an ongoing effort. Payam will continue as student representative. Susan will continue as Treasurer for two more years. It is important to reach out to faculty in a timely manner so that they can plan.

The budget is healthy. Minus the food from today, \$2,167.57. We are not in debt. Our memberships are up a little bit. At the 2015 meeting, there were 5 full memberships, at the 2016, 10 full memberships, and then last year's 2017 meeting, we had 13 full memberships. So it's going up incrementally, and we need to work on that. The student memberships have varied. In 2015, we had 14 new student memberships. In 2016 it went down to 8 student memberships; that was at UMass-Boston. And at Middlebury, we had 19 student memberships. So we need to try to build on those numbers. So Susan is both Treasurer and Membership Coordinator. They are intertwined. Thanks to Middlebury College, last year we did not have any expenses, except for the student prizes. Thanks to Damascus.

Discussion of getting a credit card machine in order to accommodate people who do not carry cash, and do not want to go online. Kariann suggests using the Paypal app, which might cost less (4.6%) than credit card fees.

Karl Haas asks about how to increase membership. Corinna Campbell points out that we should clarify that chapter dues and registration are the same thing. So if people are not going to the conference, and we ask about registration, but they did not attend. However, you can still support your chapter even if you are not here. Damascus points out that in the informational emails to presenters, this is mentioned, but some presenters do not pay their dues. He says we should include that membership information in the call for papers. Susan asks whether the payment of dues should be mandatory for presenters. Many organizations do this, and they might not even

let you submit an abstract otherwise, like SEM. If we have tens of submissions, we should have more than 13 memberships. Kariann asks about how MACSEM runs their membership.

Corinna asks if this was part of the discussion at the annual meeting, if the regional dues were part of the SEM registration; that is one of the reasons people had been advocating for that. Susan asks how SEM would link with the chapters. We had one person who paid through SEM, but there is no record of it for the chapter. Damascus says that is why most people are hesitant. Susan says it would work well if there was a system in place to transfer the funds. Damascus says he will check with the Business Office and find out what other chapters are doing. Corinna points out that some chapters do not have a bank account.

Comment on the experience in the Southern California chapter. It is a tradition that senior faculty, and most of the graduate students do go. It is beneficial to personally invite people, and as much as possible make it an oral tradition. Susan emphasizes that we need to invite them to come to support the organization and support students, and we need their expertise. Kariann says that when she lived in Florida and participated in the Southeast chapter, she was asked to be on the Program Committee. There you have to fly or drive a whole day to get to the conference. So it becomes a multi-day conference event. These cultural differences actually helped a bit with membership. There were at least 5 tenured faculty at the last Southeast chapter meeting. The turnout at Middlebury was a travel situation, and there were about twice as many people there. Suggestion to make the conference more of a destination.

Questions about funding for student travel. Damascus suggests the possibility of giving travel awards for outstanding papers. Maybe we need to increase our membership and dues before we could afford to offer travel stipends. Corinna suggests a carpool incentive. Susan would like it not to be an award, since it does not need to be competitive. Even something small for \$5 stipends. Corinna says she and Karl had talked about getting a van to go to Middlebury, and Damascus says the college offered housing as well. Some institutions might be able to help in specific ways. Damascus asks whether it would make sense to waive membership fees for students. Karl says if we could get the non-students to pay more regularly, then we could fund some of these other things. Payam says \$10 is not that much as a student, but it makes a difference if one has to lodge somewhere. Susan says the number of miles away should matter. If we are worried about our membership, the question would be whether we can sustain that. Sarah suggests making a goal to get memberships up to a certain level so that we could invest in those stipends. Damascus suggests getting some data about why students do and do not attend. We could be assuming that they do not attend because of cost and distance, and it could be time. Karl asked why things are different in Southern California. Sarah suggests it could be perceived return on the investment of time. Gathering the data on its own would be illuminating, and might make people feel more connected.

Damascus asks if we have had more student participation in Boston conferences. Corinna points out that there is often more effort put into publicizing out of town conferences. Susan says she has seen that Boston conferences do not do as well. There was one at Northeastern that was dismally attended. Social media is important in any location.

Students Concerns Report (Payam Yousefi)

One topic of discussion was making the method of paying dues easier, either with credit card or with Paypal, also the question of transparency on what needs to be paid, whether it is the membership and the conference fees separately; several people were not clear about that. Maybe the website can be clearer.

Another issue discussed was travel and lodging, which we learned was a special situation with Middlebury. It would be helpful to make the Facebook page more active. Suggestions could include announcing prize winners, or listing call for papers that students can then share across Facebook. Someone pointed out that the link to the Facebook page on our website is broken.

There have been efforts to reach out to faculty to attend the conference. Question about why faculty do not come. This year NECSEM was the same weekend as SAM. It is also BU's spring break. Karl asks why faculty did not come last year. Payam says that it is cultural, whether there is talk about who is carpooling, who is staying with whom. The Facebook page is helpful for promoting that culture. Kariann says that UCLA and Santa Barbara are bigger programs that are really interconnected. Sarah says David Locke mentioned last year that senior faculty might not attend if they do not want to be in a contested environment.

It would also be helpful to have information earlier and more widely distributed about submitting papers for prizes, perhaps on the Facebook page. A month in advance, this is the deadline.

We have a webmaster, Antanas Meilus.

Damascus says he will send the call much earlier next year.

Payam had asked whether he should submit a written paper or a read paper for the prize. Damascus says that information will be included next year.

Motion to accept the reports as submitted. Seconded. Vote to pass. Reports will be posted to website.

Elections

Treasurer, vice president, member-at-large, and webmaster are up for reelection (2 year terms) All are willing to continue serving. Karl is open to someone else being vice president. Kariann might after tenure.

Motion to approve continued service. Seconded. Vote to pass. Officers remain the same.

New business

E-mail Antanas if you have updates for the website, or to fix links

Question about waiving dues for undergraduates – that was the decision at Brown.

Question about the connection between the paper prize and publication – it has not been maintained as a tradition at *Ethnomusicology Review*, as Sarah discovered two years ago, although the outcome was good in that it was published in *Ethnomusicology* journal. It helps to provide detailed comments to prize winners, as is done in the African Music Section of the Society for Ethnomusicology (AfMS-SEM).