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Everyone in the room introduced herself or himself.

I. Congratulations to Sarah Dangelantonio

1. Any old business Sarah wishes to introduce?
  - a. Sarah had sent out a draft of the 2015 convention survey (to be e-mailed to attendees after the convention) and asked committee members to send her feedback by Monday, March 23, so that she could revise the survey before sending it to 2015 attendees.
  - b. Sarah also announced the sad loss of the planned food trucks and passed out 2015 convention programs to the committee. The programs were duly admired by all.
  - c. Sarah told us that Bookworks, a local Albuquerque book store, had both purchased an advertisement on the inside front cover and was operating a sale table on the Pavilion.
  - d. This year’s literacy grant from Better World Books totaled \$800 and would be awarded to the Laguna Pueblo Library during the Thursday afternoon Scholarships and Awards Ceremony and would be received by a representative of the Laguna Pueblo tribe.
  - e. Sarah announced that the Convention Blog award would be announced after the convention and that Lexey Bartlett, high Plains Regent and Traci Thomas-Card, Alumni Representative, would judge that award.
  - f. Sarah shared some statistics for submissions and acceptances from 2014 and 2015.

category	2014	2015
overall submissions	777	781
submissions by undergraduates	682	710
submissions by graduates	45	67
submissions by alumni epsilon members	6	4
Sigma Kappa Delta submissions	17	12
roundtable proposals submitted	46	44
# of separate people submitting	788	764
overall acceptance rate for paper submissions	82%	81%
percent of “acceptees” who “accept the acceptance” and register	lower*	92%
# of people pre-registered for the convention	*	~1000

\* Sarah did not know the exact figure.

- g. Sarah announced that all convention materials – t-shirts, give-aways, regional bracelets, Central Office materials, etc. had arrived.

- h. Sarah reminded the committee that everyone who was a committee member or a convention essay reader was invited to the Gary Soto reception in 2006 on Wednesday evening after the book signing.

## II. Announcements / Sharing of plans for Minneapolis 2016

1. Charles Baxter and *The Soul Thief*
  - a. Felicia Jean Steele announced the selection of *The Soul Thief* by Charles Baxter as the 2016 Common Reader. Baxter has agreed to speak on Thursday, March 3 (Simon Ortiz spoke in the Thursday evening time slot at this year's convention) and has lowered his usual speaking fee by 1/3 as a courtesy to Sigma Tau Delta (his fee for this is now \$5000 + \$100 travel expenses). He lives in Minneapolis and will not need to be housed at the conventional hotel.
  - b. Felicia also announced that the committee is inviting David Levithan, an editor at Scholastic Press, to speak on Saturday afternoon and to be part of a publishing roundtable on Saturday morning. Levithan is a YA author known to many of our students for *Hold Me Closer: The Tiny Cooper Story* and *Boy Meets Boy*.
2. Career oriented workshops
  - a. In response to wishes expressed by many students and sponsors, the 2016 convention will maintain and increase the number of career-oriented workshops given by professions in fields such as publishing, library science, museum curatorship, arts management, and other fields tangential to or directly related to an undergraduate English education.
    - i. Lexey Bartlett has a name to give us of a museum archivist who might be able to come to the 2016 Minneapolis convention
  - b. The committee expressed interest in the 2016 convention sponsoring
    - i. A workshop on "How can a chapter put together a literary arts journal"
    - ii. a career workshop on diversity in publishing
    - iii. a workshop on "How to Craft a Good Scholarship Application"
3. Speakers?
  - a. See II.1 also
  - b. Felicia announced that, as there will be two featured speakers at the 2016 convention and not the three featured speakers of the 2015 convention, we will have some "mini-speaker / more of a big workshop" sort of events featuring (plans still in the works) some poets local to the Twin Cities who have immigrated to Minnesota and "found a home" there.
    - i. Ka Vang
    - ii. Bryan Thao Worra
    - iii. Poet Nation Somali slam poets
    - iv. Todd Boss installation poetry
    - v. Traci Thomas-Card shared some information about Kao Kalia Yang, a Hmong memoirist from the Twin Cities < <http://kaokaliayang.com/>> to speak about her memoir *The Latehomecomer*
  - c. We hope that the convention survey and informal conversations give us some feedback on keeping Friday night free from a large keynote speaker event, and

some feedback on the extended lunch break (about 3 hours) on Saturday afternoon before Leslie Marmon Silko's presentation.

4. Multimedia (Todd Boss)
5. Anonymity of Sponsors
  - a. Felicia and Diane announced that they were speaking with Elfi Gabriel at the Central Office to try to make the school and sponsor's names disappear from the online submission evaluation screen that judges use to score essays.
    - i. Judges on the convention committee agreed that they did NOT wish to know the school or sponsor of the submitted essay in order to judge it more blindly.
    - ii. Committee members agreed that everything that could be done to increase the anonymous nature of submissions should be done.

### III. Questions we have been asked to discuss<sup>1</sup>

1. How many times ought a student or alumni member be able to present at the annual convention. Someone has suggested that participation be limited to three total spots that could be any combination of paper presentation, roundtable presentation or chairing a session.
  - a. The room seemed to feel that this was not a widespread problem, and were not ready to make a motion limiting participation to three slots. At the same time, they had recommendations for future convention chairs:
    - i. Give first priority for chairing a session to students whose paper submissions have been turned down.
    - ii. Gently encourage students to do only a single roundtable, as long as doing does not leave the roundtable short-handed.
  - b. Kevin Stemmler is quite certain that this question has already come up and that the board has already voted to limit student participation to three events at most, including paper presentations, roundtable presentations and chairing sessions.
2. Any other questions people might have?

### IV. New Business members wish to introduce

1. Lexey asked Sarah to add to the Gala script a mention of three awards for which the regents committee would like to receive more applications: Outstanding Chapter, Outstanding Chapter Sponsor, and Outstanding Literary Arts Journal. The committee agreed this would be a good idea and Sara amended the Gala script to add this call out to the winners.
2. Shannin Schroeder did not want scholarship winners to be mentioned again at the Gala, but she asked to be included in the Gala script so that she could remind everyone to apply for Study Abroad and Summer Program Scholarships, as these are open.
3. Members discussed suggestions for "open evenings" that could provide opportunities for underage students, students uncomfortable exploring Minneapolis if alone. Suggestions included a game night or a trivia night, or the Bad Poetry reading (which could then be separated from the dry t-shirts). Student leadership should be canvassed for ideas.

4. The members discussed the drop in attendance for the Gala – many folks either arrive late and miss the Wednesday evening and Thursday morning events, or they leave right after their school’s final paper on Saturday and miss the Gala. About 600 of the conference’s 1000 attendees attend the Gala. We agreed to brainstorm ideas for increasing attendance at the Gala, as that seemed less well attended than Wednesday’s events. Jayne Higgins later reported that 800 conference attendees registered between 3 pm (when registration opened) and 8 pm (when it closed) on Wednesday.
5. Robert Durborow expressed interest in having convention speakers who were not just creative writers, but writers of non-fiction. Faculty members convinced him that many past conventions have included the work of travel writers, and biographers, and memoirists.
6. Traci expressed disappointment in the small number of alumni epsilon convention submissions and exhorted the committee to think about ways of increasing alumni presence at and interest in the convention. It was pointed out that alumni were at the convention in capacities other than that of paper presenter. Quite a few were invited to give a workshop or be part of a roundtable, some had come with their old chapters to introduce undergraduates to the convention, and some were back as professors with chapters of their own. The drop from 6 to 4 submissions from 2014 to 2015 may reflect the relative difficulty of travel to Albuquerque, so the committee will look at 2016 submission rates to the more centrally located Minneapolis.
7. The committee suggested the possibility of a “fun” event on Friday night after groups have returned from dinner – an event similar to the 2014 pool party in Savannah. This will be explored by the convention chairs and student leadership.
8. As nearly 200 applications were received for the Penguin internship, the possibility of getting more publishing companies from Minneapolis to come to the convention and meet our students in workshops was discussed.

The convention committee had no motions to bring to the board.

<sup>1</sup>A little background information from central office: We have a limit on paper submissions. Regarding roundtables, we have a limit on roundtable submissions by a school, but not participant involvement. Regarding chairing a session, our policy is to give spots first to those students that submitted but were not accepted for presentation. Then we assign one chair session to presenters that are willing to chair a session. During the last few years, we have had more chair session volunteers than spots.