

President Kay Turner called the Spring 2016 meeting of the American Folklore Society Executive Board to order at 9:04 am April 8, 2016, in the DeVault Gallery of the Mathers Museum of World Cultures, located at 416 North Indiana Avenue on the Indiana University Campus in Bloomington.

Members present: Barry Bergey, Katey Borland, Guillermo de los Reyes Heredia, Lisa Gilman, Maggie Holtzberg, Maggie Kruesi, Jim Leary, Jeff Todd Titon, Kay Turner, Diane Tye, and Past President Michael Ann Williams. Members absent: Norma Cantú. Staff members Lorraine Walsh Cashman (Associate Director), Paulina Guerrero (Membership Director), Shannon Katie Larson (Graduate Assistant), and Tim Lloyd (Executive Director) were also present.

As per the Executive Board directive of October 17, 1991, the proceedings of this meeting were recorded.

Jason Baird Jackson, Director of the Mathers Museum, welcomed the Board to the Museum and summarized its history and current exhibitions.

Kay Turner welcomed new Board members Barry Bergey, Katey Borland, Guillermo de los Reyes Heredia and Jim Leary, and asked them to introduce themselves.

There followed a brief discussion to clarify the Board's new procedures for voting and for recording votes. The procedure is as follows: Every Board vote taken at in-person meetings will be conducted orally, and immediately after each vote the Executive Director (or other staff member) will confirm the vote tally orally with the Board. On any vote that is not unanimous, or for which any member is absent, the minutes will list all members who vote for and against the motion, abstain from voting, or are not present. After every Board vote taken electronically, the Executive Director (or other staff member) will confirm the vote tally orally with the Board. On any vote that is not unanimous, or for which any member does not vote by the stated deadline, the minutes will list all members who vote against the motion, abstain from voting, or did not vote by the stated deadline.

After review of the draft minutes of the October 14, 2015, Board meeting, and the notation of one typographical error, **Maggie Holtzberg moved that the minutes of the October 14, 2015, Board meeting be approved as corrected. Lisa Gilman seconded the motion, which passed with 10 votes in favor (Bergey, Borland, de los Reyes Heredia, Gilman, Holtzberg, Kruesi, Titon, Turner, Tye, Williams), one abstention (Leary), and one member absent (Cantú).**

Kay Turner then delivered the President's report, focusing on her Presidential initiative to bring the work of folklorists and folklore studies to a wider public, especially with respect to storytelling and narrative. In particular, this initiative is

focused on balancing the current attention to individual ownership and performance with attention to collective ownership and performance. As she stated in the Candidates' Forum when she was running for office, her areas of special interest also include increasing and improving the work of AFS sections and adding matters of substance and interest to the customary program of AS business meetings.

Discussion followed, focusing on ways for the field of folklore studies to gain ownership, in the public eye, of an intellectual territory in ways that will demonstrate the field's usefulness and value to the public, and on the need not to marginalize work in other areas of the field. Turner also noted that she plans to appoint new liaisons between the Society and the Modern Language Association as a way to re-energize connections between the two societies and fields. Discussion then ensued about the Society's overall program of liaisons with other societies.

Tim Lloyd then delivered the Executive Director's report, focusing on relations with Indiana University as the Society settles into its new home on campus; on the public phase of the AFS Endowment campaign, which will begin later this year; on plans for the proposed International Federation of Folklore Societies, in which AFS is taking a leading role; and on a recent letter signed by a number of societies including AFS and sent to the Turkish government protesting the treatment of scholars in that country.

Discussion followed, focusing on the difficulties and complications of carrying out effective advocacy, on AFS policies for sending or signing such letters, and on the matter of AFS position statements generally.

The Board took a short break at 10:23 am and returned to its agenda at 10:40 am.

Michael Ann Williams then presented the report and recommendations of the 2016 Lifetime Scholarly Achievement Award review committee, on which she had represented the Board and C. Kurt Dewhurst had represented the Fellows. The committee recommended that Barre Toelken receive the award. **Maggie Kruesi moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation to name Barre Toelken as the recipient of the 2016 Lifetime Scholarly Achievement Award. Kay Turner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously (Bergey, Borland, de los Reyes Heredia, Gilman, Holtzberg, Kruesi, Leary, Titon, Turner, Tye, Williams), with one member absent (Cantú).**

Timothy Lloyd then noted that the matter of the Judith McCulloh Award for Lifetime Service to the Field has been removed from the agenda.

Associate Director Lorraine Walsh Cashman then provided an update on work towards the October 19-22, 2016 annual meeting in Miami, a joint conference with the International Society for Folk Narrative Research. The proposal deadline just passed, and registration numbers are very high. The schedule will include late morning and afternoon sessions on Wednesday. Our request for proposals for short papers received a very good response.

Norma Cantú entered the meeting at 10:58 am, and the Board welcomed her and took a brief break until 11:02 am.

Cashman then continued her annual meeting report, focusing on sites for future annual meetings. A discussion ensued about political issues and possible boycotts of particular locations and states, including the comparative value and effectiveness of economic boycotts or engagement.

Past President Michael Ann Williams then delivered a report from the editorial office of the *Journal of American Folklore (JAF)*, located in her institution, the Department of Folk Studies and Anthropology at Western Kentucky University. She described the editorial arrangement (a single editor-in-chief and rotating associate editors) their office is following, and the progress of publication of remaining *JAF* issues from the previous editorship and new issues edited by the present editorial collective. The discussion that ensued focused on ways to decrease the lag time between submission and publication, and the possibilities for online delivery of the *JAF*.

The Board broke for lunch at 12:00 pm. The meeting reconvened at 1:00 pm.

Tim Lloyd then added to his Director's report a summary of the Society's current collaboration with the China Folklore Society. Work on the projects supported by our 2013-2016 grant from the Henry Luce Foundation (museum conferences and professional development exchanges, summer workshops on ethnographic video documentation, and the development of bilingual scholarly tools) is almost complete, and will be concluded by the end of this year. We will be submitting a third proposal to the Luce Foundation for new work in 2017-2019, including an annual China-US folklore studies summer institute, and collaborative China-US ethnographic museum field studies and exhibition development.

Our China work has also led to a number of unforeseen but positive outcomes, including a number of smaller-scale scholarly exchanges; increased Chinese, East Asian, and Asian American membership in the AFS; increasing numbers of article- and book-length publications in both languages on folklore and folklore studies in both countries; and the International Federation of Folklore Societies noted above. Tim Lloyd and Diane Tye spoke about these outcomes.

The Board then discussed the staff's preliminary reports on the 2016 member survey. Graduate Assistant Shannon Katie Larson described the basic demographics of the Society in 2016 compared to that at the times of our earlier surveys in 2002, 2006, and 2011. The Society remains predominantly female (63%), and just under half (47%) of our members define themselves as public-sector folklorists (though additional evidence makes clear that many folklorists work in both realms simultaneously, and that an increasing number of public folklore programs are housed at universities). Continuing a trend, about 1 in 6 AFS members lives outside the US. Membership Director Paulina Guerrero reported that the diversity of the Society's membership has increased somewhat, primarily because of increases in Asian membership, but that overall the Society remains not particularly culturally diverse, and the percentage of African American and LatinX members appears to have slightly decreased.

Lorraine Walsh Cashman reported on members' responses to questions about the annual meeting and about Society communications. Generally, members approve of the increased size and complexity of the annual meeting, although negative comments about "too many concurrent sessions" continue. Use of the AFS website is increasing, although comments about the site's complexity continue. Members also take issue with the portion of the site's pages that require member-password access, although we have greatly reduced the number of such pages in the past few years. Along similar lines, a number of members recommended that AFS provide services or take actions that we are already providing or taking, indicating the need for more and better communications with our members.

At this point, Board members discussed their concern that some of the images in the Society's web site header communicated overly "exotic" messages that should be removed from the site. The staff agreed to replace these images before the next meeting.

Tim Lloyd reported on the responses to the questions that asked about members' priorities for additional or new Society actions over the next few years. Members' highest three priorities were as follows:

1. Bringing younger people into the field (48% said "highest priority" and 43% said "important")
2. Advocacy concerning the importance and contributions of our field (48% and 38%)
3. Increasing the diversity of AFS membership (42% and 43%)

Discussion then turned to these priorities, which the Board saw as intimately related, focusing on the ways in which the Society and other institutions in the field could attract young (undergraduate) students in the humanities and social sciences into our field, and could take actions to create a more supportive

climate for the field within the professional worlds where folklorists work, to ensure that adequate productive work and opportunities are available to folklorists throughout their careers.

Tim Lloyd then presented a list of possible actions the Society could take now to more effectively advocate for and support the field, including:

1. A publication about the wide applicability of the skills folklorists possess
2. A publication on the topic "What do folklorists do better than anyone else?"
3. An "I'm a folklorist because..." video series, and one on professional survival skills
4. A series of videos documenting folklorists' "conversion experience" narratives
5. A stronger, more detailed statement of appropriate compensation for contract folklorists
6. A statement on appropriate evaluation standards for digital scholarship
7. A statement regarding appropriate compensation and other benefits for the contingent academic workforce
8. A revised AFS Statement on Professional Ethics
9. A revised policy statement on public folklore evaluation standards
10. A policy regarding appropriate professional behavior at AFS annual meetings, including a sexual harassment policy

The Board took a short break at 3:25 pm and returned to its agenda at 3:30 pm.

The Board agreed that its decisions about and plans for future Society activities would generally be governed by the three priorities listed above.

The Board concluded its deliberations for the day at 4:00 pm, to reconvene the next morning.

The Board returned to order at 9:02 am on April 9, 2016, in the Indiana University Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology seminar room at 501 North Park Street in Bloomington.

Members present: Barry Bergey, Katey Borland, Norma Cantú, Guillermo de los Reyes Heredia, Lisa Gilman, Maggie Holtzberg, Maggie Kruesi, Jim Leary, Jeff Todd Titon, Kay Turner, Diane Tye, and Past President Michael Ann Williams. Staff members Lorraine Walsh Cashman (Associate Director), Paulina Guerrero (Membership Director), Shannon Katie Larson (Graduate Assistant), and Tim Lloyd (Executive Director) were also present.

The Board met in executive session with no staff present until 9:50 am to discuss the Executive Director's performance in 2015-2016, with the recorder turned off. At that time, the staff returned and the recorder was turned back on. Kay Turner

recognized and thanked the staff for its efforts over a difficult past year, including the move to Indiana University and the labor dispute at the Westin Long Beach. She also expressed the Board's belief that the strong language of the Cultural Diversity Committee's report should not be taken as critical of the staff. Kay Turner noted that in its executive session the Board had approved the proposal from the Executive Director and President for the Executive Director's performance objectives for 2016-2017.

Cultural Diversity Committee co-chair Norma Cantú then reported orally on the Committee's written report and recommendations that had been received a few days before the meeting. She and the Board also referred to a document prepared by the staff that presented just the Committee's recommendations for action.

The report, Cantú noted, was a synthesis of many people's work and thought. The Board expressed concern that the Committee had been charged with making positive action and priority recommendations to the Board regarding increasing the cultural diversity of the annual meeting, yet a great deal of the report appeared hostile and accusatory in tone, particular about the Board's past actions regarding the labor dispute at the hotel site of the 2015 annual meeting in Long Beach. There was also discussion of the status of committee reports to the Board. The Society's policy is that the Board creates and charges committees to carry out some particular task for the Board, and names people to a committee because of their interest in or commitment to the issues at hand. Once that committee has reported to the Board, the Board is free to take whatever actions it decides are best about whatever recommendations may be in that report.

The Board then turned its attention to several specific recommendations in the Committee's report, as follows:

1. Review all AFS governance and management operations to identify instances and structures of institutional racism and to "drive a blueprint" to change them: The Board is open to receiving and considering critiques of the way the Society is structured and operates, and to acting upon those critiques as it sees appropriate. However, the Committee's recommendation appears to request that the Board cede to the Committee (or to some other unnamed body) its own authority to lead and govern the Society, and to give that body complete independence and lack of accountability. The *AFS Bylaws* prevent the Board from doing this, and the Board would not do this in any case. However, the Board encourages the Committee to share more specific critiques of the Society's governance and management activities, along with recommendations for improvement, for its consideration.

2. Adopt a Society position statement on equity and diversity: Board members Katey Borland and Maggie Kruesi agreed to serve on a committee with

designated members of the CDC to pursue such a statement and to report back to the Board by September 15, 2016.

3. Produce an NEH-funded summer institute that “will solidly add perspectives from critical race theory, queer theory, disability studies, and critical transnational theory to our academic offerings at the graduate level”: After discussion, the Board realized that an NEH summer institute would be unfeasible, and asked Kay Turner and Norma Cantú to rethink this matter with the Committee. The Board also noted that work on this recommendation should begin with an inventory of what actually is currently being done within institutions in the field along these lines, and to ask Society members about their priorities for important learning experiences that are left out of current curricula.

4. Miami annual meeting activities: Cantú summarized the various activities the Committee is considering for the Miami annual meeting program and the need for a budget to support them. The Board discussed the relationship, and potential overlap, between the Cultural Diversity Committee and the local annual meeting planning committee, to which we have customarily given the authority and budget for including local organizations and individuals in the meeting program. The Board expressed its belief in the capability of such local committees to know their communities and to make, with those communities, effective decisions about the ways in which they would be represented in the meeting program.

Katey Borland, chair of the Society’s Committee on International Issues, then noted several of that committee’s issues related to their budget and the upcoming annual meeting in Miami, especially considering the explicitly international focus of this meeting and the anticipated large international attendance.

As this discussion concluded, Tim Lloyd summarized each of the Board’s responses as described above, and the Board agreed with that summary. Kay Turner, Norma Cantú, and Tim Lloyd will convey these responses back to the Committee. Board members who want to recommend changes to the Committee’s report for synthesis and further discussion with the Committee should give those recommendations to Tim Lloyd by May 9.

The Board broke for lunch at 12:10 pm. The meeting reconvened at 1:05 pm.

Tim Lloyd then presented his budget proposal for fiscal year 2016 (September 1, 2016-August 31, 2017). The proposed budget lines for most AFS activities remain the same, but there are requests for increases from the Committee on International Issues, the Cultural Diversity Committee, and the *Journal of American Folklore* editorial office, as well as proposals from the Executive Director that the budgets for the Annual Meeting Committee and for Executive Board travel be increased.

After discussion, **Barry Bergey moved that the requests for increases be accommodated by providing \$3,000 to the Annual Meeting Committee, \$10,000 to the Committee on International Issues, \$3,000 to the Cultural Diversity Committee for Miami annual meeting activities, \$5,000 to the Cultural Diversity Committee for Gerald L. Davis Travel Awards, and \$8,000 to the *Journal of American Folklore* editorial office. Maggie Holtzberg seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

**Norma Cantú moved that the Board approve the Executive Director's proposed budget for fiscal year 2016 as amended by the previous Board action. Jim Leary seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Under Old Business, Lorraine Walsh Cashman explained the plan regarding sections and discussion groups that she had included in the Board meeting packet. Under this plan, sections that do not charge dues will be reclassified as discussion groups, which will lessen the administrative burden on these groups. Dues-charging sections that do not fulfill their responsibilities as stated in the Bylaws, and in those sections' commitments to their members, may also be reclassified as discussion groups. The Board expressed its assent to this plan.

Under New Business, Michael Ann Williams and Membership Director Paulina Guerrero reported on their trip with a delegation from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM) to the Pine Ridge reservation in southwestern South Dakota to discuss possible assistance by the AFS and SEM to community-based field schools or other ethnographic training. In the discussion that followed, Board members stressed the importance of working carefully with the community to identify the needs we are best qualified to support, and of focusing our work on those activities that the community has told us are of highest priority to them. These considerations are particularly important in light of the complex and often conflicted history of outside "interventions" at Pine Ridge and other Native American reservations. At this point, the next steps toward any such involvement are to be taken by NEA staff.


Finally, under New Business Diane Tye requested that the Board propose to the membership an amendment to the *AFS Bylaws* that would make the Mentoring Committee, currently an *ad hoc* [temporary] committee, into a standing [permanent] committee. During the ensuing discussion, Katey Borland also recommended that any such amendment also make the presently *ad hoc* Committee on International Issues into a standing committee. Board members expressed their support for these amendments, and instructed Executive Director Tim Lloyd to draft the text of these *Bylaws* changes and bring it to the Board for review at its October 2016 meeting.



**Norma Cantú then moved that the meeting be adjourned. Guillermo de los Reyes Heredia seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



October 19, 2016

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Timothy Lloyd  
Executive Director

Date

Approved by the American Folklore Society Executive Board:

October 19, 2016

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Kay Turner  
President

Date