

## **AEGS Annual Closing Report: January 2007 – May 2007**

Submitted to the Marquette Department of English  
May 24, 2007

From Rebecca J. Parker Fedewa, AEGS President

With the Approval of the AEGS Executive Board: Brian Gogan, Steve Hackbarth, Melissa Lee, Maggie McKinley, Heather Pavletic, Josh Steffey, Leah Stegman, Kathleen Volk, Jennifer Willacker, Colleen Willenbring, and Mark Zunac

AEGS strives to foster community among graduate students and faculty in the department, to prepare graduate students for professional life, and to serve as a representative body to various committees within the English department. AEGS believes that the understanding of one's discipline and profession is not bounded by class schedules and academic calendars and that commitment to learning and professionalism is not separated from good fellowship and living.

-- AEGS Constitution, Article II

During the Spring 2007 semester, AEGS worked on ongoing issues from the fall, initiated new projects – some that may be pursued further next year, and passed along recommendations for the next board to promote a smooth and effective transition. Because I disseminated a Semi-Annual Progress Report, this report mainly will address this past semester along with general comments regarding the year. With the approval of the Executive Board, I respectfully submit this report.

AEGS was pleased to hold a highly successful silent auction on 19 September 2006, in the Alumni Memorial Union. The auction raised \$2,594.01, all of which goes solely to conference funding for English graduate students. This event was a testament to our department's graduate students serving one another, personally and professionally during the year-long planning process. Thanks are extended again to all who participated and, especially, to Brian Gogan, whose dedication as auction chair made this event possible. For a full list of donors, volunteers, and additional auction details, please see AEGS' Web site and follow the links for the records and minutes of the 2006-07 academic year.

On a related note, during the spring semester, AEGS is pleased to have provided two travel scholarships of \$100.00 each to English graduate students presenting at conferences (during the *entire* academic year, 6 travel scholarships were awarded). The Executive Board tweaked the funding request form to enhance its clarity. The new and improved form is available on AEGS' Web site as well as in the department file cabinet. AEGS also recognized and supported MA and PhD students during their exams with cards and Starbucks gift cards, mailed congratulatory cards to those graduate students who were married or became parents, and gifted flowers on Administrative Professionals' Day to Deb Jelacic and Sandy Peterson in gratitude for their service to our department. Welcome letters also were distributed to graduate students who were new to the program during the spring semester.

In an effort to promote increased communication between graduate students and faculty, AEGS continued discussions on its three-part proposal, which originated from the 2004-05 academic year and which subsequent boards have forwarded. The proposal addresses perennial graduate student concerns. The first part of the proposal was viewed by the GSC during the fall and the third part this spring. Issues included the following: clarification of graduate-appointed positions, ABD graduate students teaching literature courses, grade appeals, exam failures and dismissals, orientation for RAs, dissertation committees, graduate work in undergraduate courses, and evaluations for graduate courses. Developments included the following: the possibility of graduate students (who are interested in teaching literature) placing a CV and letter of interest in an assigned folder in the department file cabinet, a further look into training and orienting new RAs, and a future look into graduate course evaluations being encouraged. The GSC also investigated the reasons why graduate students enroll in undergraduate courses. Kathleen Volk surveyed various graduate students and reported the results to the GSC, which lowered the undergraduate courses available to graduate students from 15 credits to 9 credits. Thanks are extended to Kathleen and Josh Steffey for their communication with faculty on these and related issues.

To utilize the overlap between the training that English TAs already receive and the requirements for certification of the Preparing Future Faculty Program, AEGS received approval from PFF for already-existing TA requirements to fulfill various PFF certification requirements. PFF Liaison Brian Gogan initiated a meeting at which it was concluded that English TAs need only fulfill 4 of the 7 PFF criteria in addition to assembling a portfolio. At the January staff meeting, Brian presented these developments for PFF certification. Special thanks are extended to Brian for pursuing these advancements for TA certification in PFF.

Active representation continues between AEGS and the Graduate Student Organization via Mark Zunac, who, as AEGS' vice president, serves as liaison to the GSO. The Graduate School, with input from the GSO, sent out Calls for Proposals to find a more affordable and comprehensive insurance plan for graduate students. This is a continuation of a student-led process that was started many years ago. The Graduate School's goal is to have a new insurance plan available in Fall 2007. Mark also serves on the GSO's Media Board, which held interviews and voted on candidates for new media representatives, *Tribune* editors, and radio as well as television managers. Thanks are extended to Mark for liaising between the GSO and AEGS. Those seeking more information regarding the GSO are encouraged to contact Mark, who will continue to serve in this capacity in the 2007-08 academic year.

Improvements continue gradually in the ASF. General upkeep continues, and the computer room-lounge has been painted. Christina Williams and Rebecca Parker Fedewa met with Dr. Machan on 23 January 2007, to discuss future possibilities of the ASF. The Executive Board generated a list of concerns regarding the facility, and Rebecca forwarded them to Dr. Machan. Progress depends on funding, so options will be evaluated as funding allows. Because all TAs will have office space in the ASF starting Fall 2007, the outgoing Executive Board has encouraged the incoming board to pursue upgrades. TAs are encouraged to contact Christina with maintenance problems (whether in individual offices or in common areas). Christina will address concerns and, if necessary, pass them along to Dr. Ratcliffe for increased attention.

MA study groups were organized for the March exam and continue to meet for the August exam. Special thanks are extended to Jen Willacker for arranging these groups throughout the academic

year as well as for organizing a farewell gathering for 2<sup>nd</sup>-Year MAs (thanks also to Amanda Henderson Escobedo, who hosted the event). Jen worked with Liaison to 1<sup>st</sup>-Year MAs Leah Stegman, who will help 1<sup>st</sup>-Year MAs transition into these groups over the summer and during the next academic year. In a similar vein, Colleen Willenbring generated interest among PhDs for summer study groups and is connecting those with similar areas of interest.

Special thanks are extended to Melissa Lee for her informational and entertaining editions of *English News* for the 2006-07 academic year, to Maggie McKinley for her attentive distribution of AEGS' meeting minutes, to Steve Hackbarth for his management of AEGS' funds, and to Kathleen Volk for maintenance of AEGS' Web site. Thanks are given to Heather Pavletic for liaising between the First-Year English Committee and AEGS, keeping the Executive Board informed regarding such FYE issues as enrollment, assessment, and the possibility of incorporating the Preparing Future Faculty Program into practicum and staff meetings.

AEGS welcomed prospective graduate students on 30 March 2007, at an informal meeting in the department, followed by a lunch at the Lunda Room and an afternoon reception at the Alumni Memorial Union. Thanks are given to Steve Hackbarth, Melissa Lee, Leah Stegman, Jake Stratman, Kathleen Volk, Jen Willacker, and Colleen Willenbring for volunteering their time. Thanks are extended to Colleen, who also served as a representative with Dr. Block at the Graduate School Open House on 4 April 2007, as well as to Eric Dunnum who will serve as a representative at the Open House on 30 May 2007.

AEGS recognizes and congratulates those who successfully defended dissertations this academic year: Matthew Darling, Tom Durkin, Katherine Hansen, Ellen Letizia, Sister Meg McCann, Crystal Mueller, Val Murrenus Pilmaier, Amy Raduege, Debra Ripley, Moon-ju Shin, Jake Stratman, and Wendy Weaver.

The spring election for AEGS' Executive Board was held April 24<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>, following the nomination process. Each candidate was encouraged to submit an office-specific statement of candidacy, providing what his or her goals would be for the coming academic year. These statements were disseminated to English graduate students via a mass e-mail prior to the start of the election. Thanks are extended to all candidates for their participation in this year's election and to Melissa Lee for distributing these statements. Please see the addendum at this report's conclusion for complete election results.

The End-of-the-Year Party was held on 2 May 2007, and was *extremely* well-attended. During the celebration, the following persons were recognized: the McCabe Award winners, fellowship recipients, the 2006-07 Assistant Director to FYE, the new 2007-08 Assistant Director to FYE, Drs. Ratcliffe and [Paula] Gillespie for sharing their talents with the FYE program, Deb and Sandy for their tireless service, the 2006-07 AEGS Executive Board, and the new 2007-08 AEGS Executive Board. The party also honored Dr. Machan for nine years of service as department chair, with tributes by Drs. Bodden and [Michael] Gillespie. Thanks are extended to Mrs. Mary McCabe for attending, to those who worked on set-up or clean-up crews, and to those who brought food or drinks. See addendum for a complete list of those graduate students recognized or assuming new responsibilities in the 2007-08 academic year.

I thank members of the 2006-07 Executive Board for their dedication and service to their colleagues and the department. I am indeed grateful to fellow graduate students (on *and* off the

board) who offered their time and insights, to Deb and Sandy for their relentless support of AEGS' work, and to faculty who have offered advice. Finally, I thank my husband, Kirk Fedewa, who has been a constant source of support and wisdom regarding all things AEGS and beyond. It has been a privilege to serve my colleagues and the department these past years, and I am eager to see what next year's board has in store.

Signing Off,  
Rebecca J. Parker Fedewa  
AEGS President, 2005-2007

### **Addendum**

**John D. McCabe Award Winners:** Brian Gogan, MA, and Derek Blemberg, PhD

**Fellowship Recipients:** Marty Brick (Schmitt), Denna Iammarino, Manny Lofdahl, and Colleen Willenbring (Smith), and Mark Zunac (Department)

**2006-07 Assistant Director to FYE:** Derek Blemberg

**2007-08 Assistant Director to FYE:** Rebecca Parker Fedewa

**2006-07 Co-Assistant Directors to the Writing Center:** Dana Edwards and Mark Zunac

**2007-08 Assistant Director to the Writing Center:** Christina Williams

**2006-07 AEGS Executive Board:** Rebecca Parker Fedewa (President), Mark Zunac (Vice President), Steve Hackbarth (Treasurer), Maggie McKinley (Secretary), Heather Pavletic (Liaison to FYE), Kathleen Volk (Liaison to GSC), Josh Steffey (Liaison to Faculty), Colleen Willenbring (Liaison to PhDs), Jennifer Willacker (Liaison to 2<sup>nd</sup>-Year MAs), Leah Stegman (Liaison to 1<sup>st</sup>-Year MAs), Brian Gogan (Liaison to PFF), and Melissa Lee (Public Relations)

**2007-08 AEGS Executive Board:** Steve Hackbarth (President), Mark Zunac (Vice President), Eric Dunnum (Liaison to FYE), Kelsey Squire (Liaison to GSC), John Malloy (Liaison to Faculty), Dan Burke (Liaison to PhDs), Leah Stegman (Liaison to 2<sup>nd</sup>-Year MAs), Colleen Fenno (Liaison to PFF), and Maggie McKinley (Public Relations) [*Treasurer, Secretary, and Liaison to 1<sup>st</sup>-Year MAs will be elected in Fall 2007*]

Note: Although Kathleen Volk was elected president at the close of the Spring 2007 election, she will not be returning to Marquette for the 2007-08 year and, thus, declined the office. Per AEGS' constitution, runner-up Steve Hackbarth accepted the office of president, and an immediate appointment for Liaison to PhDs was needed, as this was the office to which Steve had been elected. On 21 May 2007, Rebecca Parker Fedewa held a meeting of the incoming Executive Board and served in a non-voting, advisory capacity. Dan Burke was appointed to this liaison position and accepted. These changes are reflected in this addendum's list of the 2007-08 Executive Board. Thanks are given to those whose flexibility helped in this transition.