



Eugene O'Neill
SOCIETY

**Eugene O'Neill International Society
Annual Business Meeting
May 27, 2021**

- **Secretary/Treasurer Report (Patrick Midgley)**
 - Membership Report
 - Currently 83 dues-paying members
 - This is down from 89 members in 2020
 - The slight dip is likely due to financial constraints from COVID-19
 - Financial Report
 - Total available funds \$29,638.49
 - Heritage Bank Account: 22,242.49
 - Paypal Account: \$7,396.00
 - Anyone registered for the postponed 2020 Conference was refunded in full
 - Questions from the floor
 - David Palmer: Who comprises the 300 members on our email listserv?
 - Patrick: The listserv includes anyone who has interacted with the Society via applications, online events, conferences, panels, etc. Once subscribed, they can cancel their subscription with a single click on any of our emails.
 - Rob Dowling: For Shiyun and Thierry, what are the biggest tensions in terms of getting international scholars to sign on to the Society? Is there anything we can do?
 - Shiyun Xu: I think if we can include scholars for other American dramatists that could be helpful (Susan Glaspell, Sam Shepherd).
 - David Palmer: We try to include that in our CFPs. For example, Sandra Shannon, President of the August Wilson Society, will be speaking at our panel at MLA in January 2022.
 - Shiyun Xu: I will mention to Chinese scholars that our Society is not limited to O'Neill.
 - Jeff Kennedy: One idea in that vein is to have a page on our website that is specific to American Theatre Scholars and links to all those different scholarly group. We have many connections with the Miller and Albee Societies, for example, but we do not utilize those.
 - Alex Pettit: This is something that's been very much on my mind. The current mission statement of the *Review* affirms our commitment to publishing on O'Neill's colleagues and collaborators. That's not new, but it has been more strongly

emphasized recently. I recently had a wonderful chat with the folks at the Glaspell Society and was able to reaffirm our commitment to more expansive publication. There is a lot of new scholarship on the Provincetown Players and we've got to pick it up and get it in the *Review*.

- Jeff Kennedy: Ellen Gainor has a new book through Cambridge that's going to be just amazing.
 - Alex Pettit: Absolutely. We've got to continually reaffirm our commitment to new scholarship and strengthen the links between us and the Glaspell Society. Hope that brings something for you to bring home, Shiyun.
 - Jeff Kennedy: With Andrew taking over the Newsletter...we've got 500+ members on Facebook. Perhaps our Newsletter might be used in the same way, since more people get that than the *Review*. We should consider the links between Miller, Albee, Glaspell, etc.
 - Bess Rowen: There's an interesting disciplinary bifurcation in the *Review* with more scholarship in English than Theatre. I think we could expand to include more theatre scholarship.
 - Thierry Dubost: In Europe, one of the main problems is that Theatre Studies are not organized in terms of countries. But it seems to me that one point of entry might be Ireland. Connecting O'Neill and Ireland might bring new, strong scholarship, because Irish Studies are exceptional in Europe.
 - Katie Johnson: Yes indeed, the more we connect with IFTR, ASTR, ATDS, etc., the more we will grow. But I know we've had this conversation before, so I'd like to move forward to discussing the 2022 Conference.
- **2022 Conference Report (Beth Wynstra, Steve Bloom, and Herman Farrell)**
 - Beth Wynstra:
 - Our conference theme is *Longing and Belonging*
 - Dates are July 6-9, 2022
 - Steve and I are reviewing conference venues and pricing, so there may be some changes on those fronts, but we will certainly keep you posted.
 - Steve Bloom:
 - Would like to note that we should receive credit for planning *two* conferences.
 - In some ways, we are starting from scratch, but we've met with Suffolk University once again already. And we're still talking to Boston University to see about several spaces for our itinerary.
 - More to come!
 - Herman Farrell:
 - The CFP will hopefully be out by June 4th.
 - Basically the idea is to note the Longing/Belonging Theme. We'll invite folks to return and repurpose their papers for this new theme.

- Longing/Belonging embraces both *Beyond the Horizon* and the upcoming Centennial.
 - There will be a warning embedded in the CFP that we may not be able to accept all repurposed papers.
 - The deadline will be September 1, 2022; the turn-around will be October 1, 2022. I'll be soliciting volunteers to review submissions.
 - Steve Bloom:
 - Hopefully this new title speaks to O'Neill's connection to current events.
 - Questions from the floor:
 - Jeff Kennedy: the more places that CFP can be sent, the better!
 - Katie Johnson: yes, please send suggestions.
 - Zander Brietzke: is the CFP going to embrace O'Neill's contemporaries, the Provincetown Players, etc.?
 - Steve Bloom: we didn't explicitly address that but I think it will. We always get papers from our Glaspell friends.
 - Herman Farrell: I'll make sure it does.
 - Jeff Kennedy: Consider the 20 people who wrote articles for Ellen's book, for example. I'd be more than happy to chair something like that. We've had great responses from sponsored panels from the Glaspell Society.
 - Katie Johnson: they proposed several panels, staged readings, and social events at the 2020 conference.
 - Rob Dowling: where did the papers that were given at Emilie Jouve's conference in Toulouse go?
 - Jeff Kennedy: they have their own French journal that took on that entire conference.
 - Thierry Dubost: there was a set frame, and people had to go through mandatory reviews. People were asked to change a lot, which led to trouble. But I guess there are a few papers still waiting to be published. It was a very large organization and difficult to organize.
 - Katie Johnson: well, it's 5:30pm, and we're on Point Two of the Agenda, so let's move ahead to our conversation about replacing Kurt on the Board (who can never really be replaced), as well as thinking about what the Board should look like.
- **Board Discussion (Katie Johnson)**
 - Four terms will expire in December 2021: Eileen, Sheila, Jeff, and Ryder. Maybe some of you will be renominated and join us again, but what kind of cohort would we like to assemble? Herman, you had some ideas.
 - Herman Farrell: According to our by-laws, there are four categories we should have:
 - US scholars
 - International scholars
 - Theatre practitioners
 - Theatre organizations (i.e., the O'Neill Center)

- Rob Richter: Tiffani Gavin is the new Executive Director of the O’Neill Theatre Center who replaced Preston. Steve and I were on a public call with her and I had a follow-up meeting with her.
- Rob Dowling: I have a suggestion. Maybe we should have an artistic director from a theatre company—national or international—who will be on the Board. We could zero in on one spot specifically for an AD. There is one woman in Japan I’ve been in contact with who would be delighted to join. Those are the people who really have their finger on the pulse of O’Neill in the modern moment.
- David Palmer: it’s already come up in the chat, but Eric Hayes is a very strong connection.
 - Eric Fraisher Hayes: I am interested in getting more involved!
 - Jeff Kennedy: is the leadership of the Foundation mostly in place?
 - Eric Fraisher Hayes: the new President is Florence Macauley.
- Katie Johnson: we can also consider people who bridge more interdisciplinary gaps, including sexuality and race studies.
- Steve Bloom: putting aside the performing arts, I want to express agreement with those who have wanted to maintain our connection with the O’Neill Center.
 - Rob Richter: I can set up a talk with Tiffany to discuss that desire.
 - Jeff Kennedy: it might be interesting to invite Tiffany to address us to create a connection with us.
 - Herman Farrell: I’ll be heading out there this summer, and I’ll use that as an excuse to meet up with her.
 - Susan Rand Brown: Provincetown has a very active annual Tennessee Williams Playwriting Festival. I could reach out to the AD, David Kaplan, if necessary.
 - Rob Dowling: That’s how Patrick and I met—that’s why Patrick’s here in the first place.
 - Susan Rand Brown: it’s hard to get O’Neill people to the expressionistic place that makes O’Neill viable at the Tennessee Williams Festival, for example, where they’re bringing it [American drama] to a more modern place.
- Katie Johnson: I love that idea!
 - Bess Rowen: to follow up on that—and Rob and Patrick were there in 2016—there are a lot of opportunities to present things there. But if we want to connect with Williams scholars, that’s not the place to do that. There is a conference in New Orleans, and I think that would be a good place to connect there. We have that recent letter between Williams and O’Neill—and making that connection might get us scholarship and members.
- Katie Johnson: that’s great. And just to move forward, we want to talk about the Board. David’s term as Conference Coordinator expired in 2019 and we retroactively voted him back in for another term. In looking at that, we noticed a few things in terms of conferences. One was that the Conference Coordinator has only two year terms, and we’d like to change that to three to be more in line with other appointments. And then Chris is going to walk us through the other bylaws

- change, which relates to conference funding for scholars and artists. The board voted to approve this, but would you like to gloss over this?
- Chris Westgate: We are proposing a Conference Funding Committee, which will support scholars and artists without institutional funding. Patrick has figured out we can spend around \$2,000/year. The idea is to give support for people who cannot otherwise attend and we will get their voices. One very important point: there has historically been something called the Fred Wilkins Grant which was given out to grad students, but we've never written it down. So we'd like to write that down and then have two sources of funding for contingent scholars, artists, and scholars.
 - Katie Johnson: we also talked about the six-month rule, which is in two places in our bylaws. Should we change it from six months to two months? If we wish to do so, we'd have to make those changes six months ahead of time, which would be February 2022. Is there a way to perhaps better allow for some mindful preparation for nominating members and making changes to the bylaws? The Board felt six months might be too long.
 - Chris Westgate: The slower changes built into the bylaws was based on the idea that we'd only meet once or twice a year. It would be great if we can get that going faster. We want to be flexible but also make sure we have time to deliberate.
 - Katie Johnson: and this is related to the Membership Committee. The Board suggested Eileen and Sheila, but we can't officially vote on this—do you see what I'm saying?
 - Jeff Kennedy: I feel like there's a difference between changing bylaws and nominating people for committees. The bylaws were to take six months, but not nominations—is this correct?
 - Steve Bloom: I see it similarly to Jeff, and the only thing I'd add is *elections*—but this membership committee vote, we should be able to vote on that now.
 - Katie Johnson: it does say on page 11 that we need six months before the annual meeting, but it sounds like we want to ignore that.
 - Beth Wynstra: I'll be honest: we've never really kept to the six months in the past.
 - Katie Johnson: OK. And I think in practice we have been doing this. So Patrick will send out several types of votes and we'll make the changes to the bylaws. Let's change the bylaws to reflect what we're doing in practice.
 - Rob Dowling: OK, and so we're going to put the Fred Wilkins \$500 in the bylaws? And in addition, maybe we should up it, since, you know, 500 bucks will buy you a night in Boston and a cup of coffee.
 - Jeff Kennedy: I agree, yes, but we never added the Fred Wilkins Grant to the conference budget, so we added that into the budget. It just depends. I don't have any problem with that, but since we are more delicate with our budget than I think we understand, I'd be cautious. 500 bucks has always

been more symbolic anyway. I think it's more symbolic about coming to the conference.

- Sheila Hickey Garvey: Going back to the membership—isn't this just a subcommittee?
- Herman Farrell: Going back to the membership committee—three members, myself and two board members—we can do that at any time. The six-month rule really works in terms of the bylaws changes. A committee like this—there's no discussion in the bylaws. We could vote on that today.
- Katie Johnson: thank God you're here, Herman, and that you're a lawyer. Patrick will send out a vote soon and we'll get that taken care of electronically.
- Katie Johnson: so it's 6:05pm, and I'd like for people to stay on for a few celebrations, as well as one final point about cultivating membership from Herman.

- **Cultivating Membership (Herman Farrell)**

- Herman Farrell: the cultivating membership document is really great, and I haven't made many changes to it. But going back to what Bess said about reaching out to theatre scholars—we'll continue to do that, but I also want to reach out to theatre artists and professionals, including Dramatists Guild, Actor's Equity, the Director's Union, and so forth to see if anyone is interested in joining our Society. I'd also like to see if we can buy ads in other journals. So that's my report. We'll convene over the summer and put all these things into action.
- Katie Johnson: that's excellent. The next thing is not a small matter—it's the Anti-Racism Working Group and the group cultivating diversity and equity. We had a conversation about forming an ad-hoc committee. So let me share with you what the committee has done:
 - *(Shares Diversity and Anti-Racism Word doc)*
 - We borrowed some language from the O'Neill Center's page which speaks to the ways O'Neill's work speaks to marginalized groups.
 - We added some language about our own commitment to promoting diversity and equity among marginalized groups.
 - In the interest of time, perhaps we can ask that you email us feedback about this document.
- Steve Bloom: this seems like a really important topic that we don't have time to talk about. Perhaps we could have a Zoom meeting about this topic on its own.
- Katie Johnson: I like that idea! It's too important to rush through. Let's schedule one of those in—July?—this summer.
- Jeff Kennedy: Agreed, and not to push this off, but let's make sure there's room at the conference for a substantial acknowledgement of this issue.
- Katie Johnson: love this. And also, Patrick and I are working with a Princeton student who will be creating a Podcast this summer, and he may be contacting you for an interview soon.

- **For the Good of the Order (Katie Johnson)**
 - Acknowledgments and Slide Show:
 - Zander Brietzke, *Magnum Opus: The Cycle Plays of Eugene O’Neill* (Yale UP)
 - Book talk sponsored by the Eugene O’Neill Foundation introduced by Carol Wynstra and Eric Fraisher Hayes
 - Shiyun Xu’s prize-winning translation of Rob Dowling’s *Eugene O’Neill: A Life in Four Acts*
 - Bess Rowen’s *The Lines Between the Lines: How Stage Directions Affect Embodiment* (Michigan UP)
 - Brenda Murphy received the ATDS Betty Jones Award
 - The Eugene O’Neill Foundation’s Virtual Production of the Lost Plays, directed by Eric Fraisher Hayes
 - Included scholar videos featuring Steve Bloom, Zander Brietzke, Thierry Dubost, Katie Johnson, David Palmer, Alex Pettit, and Beth Wynstra
 - The Eugene O’Neill Society Panel at ALA will be virtual on Thursday, June 3, 2021
 - Jeff Kennedy’s *Staging America* (Alabama UP) will be out in about a year
 - Zander Brietzke: two books not mentioned so far! Sheila’s book on Circle in the Square came out in 2020-21; Patrick Chura’s book also—both of these will be reviewed in the *Review* very soon!
 - Katie Johnson: and Beth—you got tenure! Congratulations!
 - Jeff Kennedy: also, Steve retired. That’s why his hair is so long.
 - David Palmer: one quick thing: MLA will be in San Francisco in January 2023, and we’d love to do something with the Foundation for that.
 - Sheila Hickey Garvey: I go back to the early conferences and things that attracted me, but before we’ve had book displays and signing, and I think that should be a part of it. And some of these new board positions—these used to be people who were invited to our conferences. There are ways of including wonderful guests might be a way to do that. I have certain doubts, but I’ll use the membership committee to do that.
 - Katie Johnson: I’m reading the chat and just smiling. I love this group so much.
 - Jeff Kennedy: one small to do what Sheila’s mentioning is to involve the publishers. Lots of ways to do it.
 - Sheila Hickey Garvey: ATHE has a big book area, for example.
 - Rob Richter: we did something similar at the New London Conference.
 - Katie Johnson: let’s make it happen! And for those of you in places of the world where it’s getting dark, or where the sun is coming up: let’s raise a glass! Good to see you!
 - All: thank you, Katie! Good job!

Zoom Chat Transcription

- **Bess Rowen (she/her)**01:22:03

The International Federation for Theatre Research Conference is taking place (virtually) in Ireland this year.

-  **Bess Rowen (she/her)**01:22:42

You should check out IFTR!

-  **Bess Rowen (she/her)**01:22:47

It's exactly that!

-  **Bess Rowen (she/her)**01:23:07

I'm active in all three of those societies :)

-  **Katie Johnson**01:24:12

July 6 -9

-  **Chris Westgate**01:40:08

great idea

-  **Katie Johnson**01:43:06

Eric, for example

-  **Patrick Midgley**01:43:19

I love that idea!!

-  **Jeff Kennedy**01:43:25

I'd like to see someone from the O'Neill Center always on our board

-  **Thierry Dubost**01:43:31

I think Rob's idea of a Japanese director is great

-  **Katie Johnson**01:43:33

Great ideas

-  **Eric Fraisher Hayes**01:43:52

I'm interested in getting more involved

-  **Chris Westgate**01:44:08

Alex Roe, Ciaran O'Reilly ...

-  **Katie Johnson**01:44:08

His programming this year has been amazing

-  **Chris Westgate**01:46:11

2 or 3 maybe

-  **Katie Johnson**01:49:16

Susan is next

-  **Katie Johnson**01:50:29

Awesome. And we can talk about a possible October 16 event.

-  **Bess Rowen (she/her)**01:50:39

I go every year

-  **Bess Rowen (she/her)**01:50:46

And have good connections there

-  **Bess Rowen (she/her)**01:50:55

2016 was Williams/O'Neill

-  **Patrick Midgley**01:51:03

2016! Where I met everyone!

-  **Katie Johnson**02:05:52

Sheila is next

-  **Thierry Dubost**02:09:41

No problem, I can stay awake for a while

-  **Katie Johnson**02:09:48

Merci!

-  **Katie Johnson**02:11:50

Send ideas our way

-  **Vivian Casper**02:18:59

If the chat disappears after this meeting, will you send the statement in the email?

-  **Steven Bloom**02:19:39

Congrats, Zander!!

-  **Patrick Midgley**02:19:41

Vivian, absolutely, we will get a big follow-up out with all the relevant details.

-  **Vivian Casper**02:20:22

Thanks.—V

-  **Bess Rowen (she/her)**02:21:08

October 2021!

-  **Beth Wynstra**02:26:39

Ronan is helping with our conference!!!!

-  **Alex Pettit**02:26:42

Cute kid alert, chez Wynstra!

-  **Thierry Dubost**02:28:14

it was a pleasure

-  **Chris Westgate**02:28:20

cannot wait for boston!!!