

**Minutes of the  
NCTE Annual Business Meeting  
for the Board of Directors and Other Members of the Council  
Friday, November 19, 2010  
Orlando, Florida**

The Annual Business Meeting for the Board of Directors and other Members of the Council of the National Council of Teachers of English was called to order by President Carol Jago at 5:30 p.m., November 19, 2010.

Platform guests included Erika Lindemann, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NCTE Parliamentarian; Kent Williamson, NCTE Executive Director; Kylene Beers, Teachers College/Columbia University, New York, NCTE Past President; Yvonne Siu-Runyan, Boulder, CO, NCTE President-Elect; Bob Dandoy, Slippery Rock, PA, Resolutions Committee Chair; Sandy Hayes, Becker Middle School, MN, Incoming NCTE Vice President; Keith Gilyard, Pennsylvania State University, NCTE Vice President; Megan Pankiewicz, Winter Springs High School, FL, Resolutions Committee; Diane Waff, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Resolutions Committee; Gina DeBlase, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, Resolutions Committee; and Kevin Browne, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Resolutions Committee Associate Chair.

Kia Jane Richmond, MI, moved to adopt the rules for the Annual Business Meeting of the Board of Directors and Other Members of the Council, seconded by Patti Stock, MI. The motion CARRIED.

Charleen Delfino, CA, moved to adopt the agenda, seconded by Karen Smith, AZ. The motion CARRIED.

Gloria Horton, AL, moved to dispense with the roll call of directors, seconded by Samantha Conklin, MI. The motion CARRIED.

Kay Haas, KS, moved to dispense with a formal reading of the 2009 Minutes of the NCTE Annual Business Meeting, seconded by Jennifer Ochoa, NY. The motion CARRIED.

Kathleen Blake Yancey, FL, moved to accept the posted *Annual Reports*, seconded by Jerry Harste, IN. The motion CARRIED.

President Jago introduced President-Elect, Yvonne Siu-Runyan, Chair of the 2010 Distinguished Service Award Selection Committee. Siu-Runyan thanked this year's committee members: Keith Gilyard, NCTE Vice President; Kay Haas, Secondary Section Associate Chair, and Nancy Patterson, Middle Level Section Chair.

The Distinguished Service Award recognizes a person or persons, either volunteer or staff, who have exhibited valuable professional service within and outside the Council, including scholarly or academic distinction at any level; who have demonstrated distinguished use of language; and who have exhibited excellence in teaching.

Siu-Runyan announced the recipient of the 2010 Distinguished Service Award: Patricia Lambert Stock, Emerita Professor of Writing, Rhetoric, American Cultures, and English, Michigan State University, East Lansing.

President Jago introduced Kathleen Blake Yancey, Chair of the 2010 James R. Squire Award Selection Committee. Yancey thanked this year's committee members: Randy Bomer, University of Texas at Austin; Janet Emig, Naples, FL; and Patti Stock, Michigan State University, East Lansing.

The James R. Squire Award, formerly called the NCTE Executive Committee Award, was established in 1967. In 1999 the Executive Committee renamed the award to honor former Executive Director James R. Squire for his contributions to NCTE and the profession at large. The award is given in recognition of outstanding service, not only to the stature and development of NCTE and the discipline which it represents but also to the profession of education as a whole, internationally as well as nationally. The award—given only to an NCTE member who has had a transforming influence and has made a lasting intellectual contribution to the profession—is not an annual award. In fact, it has been presented only 11 times in the past 40 years. The award is bestowed only when selection committees, composed of past presidents of the Council, decide that nominations in a given year warrant its presentation.

Yancey announced the recipient of the 2010 James R. Squire Award: Mike Rose, University of California, Los Angeles. Rose was unable to travel to Orlando. President Jago read a letter of acceptance on his behalf.

President Jago introduced Todd Goodson, a member of the 2010 David H. Russell Award Selection Committee. Goodson thanked this year's committee members: Douglas Hesse, University of Denver, CO, and Carol Booth Olson, University of California at Irvine.

The David H. Russell Award is given for any work or works of scholarship or research in language, literature, rhetoric, or pedagogy and learning published during the past five years. Works nominated for the award should be exemplary instances of the genre, address broad research questions, contain material that is accessibly reported, and reflect a project that stands the test of time.

Goodson announced the recipient of the 2010 David H. Russell Award: Marc Lamont Hill, Teachers College/Columbia University, New York, for his book *Beats, Rhymes, and Classroom Life: Hip-Hop Pedagogy and the Politics of Identity*. Attendees were invited to the Opening Session of the Day of Research, Saturday, November 20, 8:00-9:15 a.m. (Coronado Springs Resort, Yucatan Room 1) to hear Hill speak. Hill accepted the award at the Sunday General Session at 10:00 a.m. (Coronado Springs Resort, Coronado Ballroom J).

President Jago introduced Leila Christenbury, NCTE Historian, who provided the following moment of NCTE history:

This moment of history is going to take a look at Convention themes for the past 100 years. As an organization, NCTE began with a meeting and almost every year since that first 1911 gathering in Chicago the organization has held at least one and some years more than one annual gathering. In the beginning of the organization there was no perceived need to brand those meetings as anything other than what they were, opportunities for like minded members to gather, talk, present ideas, hear famous and not so famous speakers, eat, socialize, and in general, plan for the betterment of teaching and learning in English.

According to the NCTE archives, the idea of holding an unnamed, undesignated meeting in a place and a time yielded rather definitely the concept of giving the gathering, the conference, the convention a general theme or idea. Thus was born the practice of the convention theme, one that has been somewhat persistent, although conventions of 1942, 1943 and those from 1963-1968 did not have themes. But the theme has been fairly consistent for approximate eighty years.

When did these themes start, and what were the convention themes? Records indicate that the first NCTE Convention to use a theme was 1932 when NCTE met in Memphis and the gathering was ostensibly centered around a quotation from John Dewey. The quotation was "I believe that all education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race."

It must have been a well received way to establish a theme as the use of quotations as convention themes persisted. In eleven subsequent NCTE conventions, 1954-1956, 1958, 1961, 1962, 1970-72, 1974, and 1975, quotations from luminaries such as Aeschylus, Margaret Mead, Alexander Pope, Robert Browning, Walt Whitman, Edith Hamilton, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Marianne Moore, and Thomas Wolfe have provided quotations that served as themes of conventions.

An exception to the use of famous writers was the 1975 quotation theme; convention planner and incoming NCTE President Stephen Dunning quoted himself as his theme. In addition, a number of convention themes have been references to famous lines by famous figures. In 1950, the convention theme is a line from a poem by Robert Frost, "The Work is Play for Mortal Stakes." The 1992 convention theme, "How Infinite in Faculties, Celebrating Ourselves as Teachers," is a nod to Shakespeare. In 2006, Isaac Walton received a shout-out including the distinctive spelling of "compleat," "The Compleat Teacher": Bringing Together Knowledge, Experience, and Research". And in 2009, T. H. White was acknowledged with the convention theme "Once and Future Classics: Reading Between the Lines."

Convention themes could also be affairs of action. Attendees were urged to "recreate" in 1937 and 2001, "map" in 2007, "re-imagine" in 1999. They "sustained" in 1981, "honored" in 1996, "evaluated" in 1938, "unified" in 1939, "widened" in 1978, and in 1989 and 2002 "celebrated." They "educated" in 1990, "defined" in 1994, "connected" in 1987, and about time, if you ask me, "taught" in 2000.

Target topics of convention themes were "curriculum" in 1945; "communication" in 1978; "language" in 1979, 1988, 1997, and 2002; "art and science" in 1984; "diversity" in 1989; "the imagination" in 1990; "story" in 1996; and "moral action" in 1997.

Not just today, as we contemplate our upcoming NCTE centennial, but also in the past, was the history of NCTE acknowledged. In 1982, the theme was "Let the Best of the Past Inform the Future." In an interesting precursor to the current centennial slogan of "Reading the Past, Writing the Future," the 1985 convention theme was "Listening to the Past, Speaking to the Future."

Outlier themes are those that trumpeted national defense (not surprising for the time, 1941, when the convention theme was "Our Defense of American

Traditions”) and those that were a bit risqué, in 2008, “Because Shift Happens.”

The end of Vietnam and the recession put convention planners in an introspective mood. The 1973 convention theme urged attendees to consider “Seeing Ourselves.” Only one convention theme to date has asked a question, and it was in 1957, when the conference theme queried, “How Wide Is Your World?” Finally, rounding out outlier themes, two striking and enigmatic examples were both a single word. The convention theme in 1976 was “Beginnings,” and it was “Significance” in 2004.

And now to take a bit of personal privilege as NCTE Historian, I present to you my own idiosyncratic and very short honor role of convention themes that defy quick contemporary understanding, if not, a retreat to the question, “Just what were they thinking.” The 1948 convention theme was “English for Maturity.” What’s that? Then as if we don’t have enough of it every day already, in 1947, we were asked to look for “Realism in English Teaching.” In 1951, we appeared to climb on the psycho-analytical couch as the convention theme was “English and Human Personality.”

Conventions are times of optimism and belief that our gatherings will indeed make a difference, that we will leave the conference site and return to our communities and classrooms to do good and possibly, considering these days, even heroic work. Certainly in 1959, convention goers came to the Cosmopolitan Hotel in Denver, where they could confidently believe the theme, “English Meets the Challenge.” Well, in hindsight, even in our most optimistic moments we may not believe that we ever can, but “English Meets the Challenge” is a terrific convention theme, a robust and positive sentiment that now, in 2010, as here in Orlando, we live our literate lives, we might well do to adopt.

President Jago introduced Past President Kylene Beers, who introduced the NCTE past presidents and executive directors in attendance: Yetta Goodman, John Stewig, Stephen Tchudi, Julie Jensen, Janet Emig, Ruth Cline, Shirley Haley-James, Beverly Ann Chin, Carol Avery, Sheridan Blau, Jerome Harste, Anne Gere, Leila Christenbury, Patricia Lambert Stock, Randy Bomer, Kyoko Sato, Joanne Yatvin, Kathleen Blake Yancey, and Miles Myers, former executive director.

President Jago asked for a moment of silence for those members who had passed away since the last Board of Directors Meeting. They included Janice M. Albert, Elizabeth Brienman, Gregory Carmichael, Kathleen Cecil, Barbara

Fitzgerald, Donald H. Graves, Gary Greene, Judith Harbour, Doug Ingalls, Michael Leff, Maureen Maguire, Virginia Marion, James E. Miller Jr., Ginny Muller, Jayne Phillips, Arnold Preussner, Vivian Rice, Christopher Roberts, Susan Rosenkoetter, Stephen Rusnak, Joseph Schmiedicke, Jeff Sweatt, Mildred Turner, Michael Weinberg, and Allan Weiner.

President Jago introduced Rebecca Bowers Sipe, Chair of the NCTE Nominating Committee. Sipe solicited nominations for the 2011 ballots. Candidates are needed as follows: Vice President to be chosen from the Secondary Section, Elementary and Middle Level Representatives-at-Large, Trustees of the Research Foundation, and members for the NCTE Nominating Committee. The Section Nominating Committees are soliciting nominations, as well as CEE and TYCA. Representatives from each of these Nominating Committees were seated at tables in the back of the room. Open meetings of the Nominating Committees were scheduled for Saturday, November 20, 12:00-12:45 p.m. in the Yacht and Beach/Hampton Room and on Sunday, November 21, 8:00-9:00 a.m. in the Coronado Springs Resort/Ballroom K.

President Jago gave her presidential report:

My presidential year began with the fiscal decision to husband Council resources by shortening the Executive Committee meeting which traditionally took place all day Tuesday following convention. Instead, the Executive Committee met for two hours on Sunday afternoon following the presidential address. This cost-saving measure remains in place for the current convention.

At the November 2009 meeting the Executive Committee decided to appoint a team composed of NCTE members working in schools to review the second draft of the Common Core standards. I would like to thank Jeff Williams for his extraordinary leadership in this endeavor. Jeff gave countless professional hours compiling feedback from his committee, writing the NCTE review, and presenting our findings to members of the Common Core writing team. The Council owes him an enormous debt of gratitude for his willingness to undertake this challenging task that consisted of a series of reviews over the course of the following months.

In July 2010 the Executive Committee voted via conference call to provide funding for the creation of an NCTE book series and Web support for teachers in states that have adopted the Common Core Standards. This ongoing publishing initiative will collect and showcase exemplary teaching practices in accord with NCTE principles.

Following upon the success of the Norman Mailer writing contest in 2009, NCTE decided to continue its participation in this initiative, supporting and celebrating young writers in creative nonfiction in 2010. Doug Hesse agreed to continue as our point person, organizing readers and reviewers of student submissions and representing the Council at the Norman Mailer gala in New York City in October, along with Yvonne Siu-Runyan. His tireless work and energy are an inspiration to us all.

As we awaited the roll-out of the NCTE Connected Community online, I provided the NCTE ning community with ongoing commentary through regular postings from the president. I drew heavily from the rich resources of the Poetry Foundation, NCTE journals and publications, Billy Collins' Poetry 180 project, and Mike Rose's blogs.

Over the course of my presidential year I have spoken at many state affiliate conferences and contributed to state affiliate journals, including the award-winning *Oregon English Journal*, edited by Ulrich Hardt, and *English in Texas*, edited by Carol Bedard, Leigh Van Horn, and Kim Pinkerton. In the speaking and writing I have done on behalf of the Council over the course of the year, my goal has been to draw attention to the importance of literature both in the education of students and in the intellectual life of teachers.

This year has been a challenging one for teachers across America. The work of the Council has never been more crucial.

President Jago introduced Kent Williamson, NCTE Executive Director, who presented his report:

FY10 was planned as a year of austerity and targeted reinvestment for the Council. Spending was budgeted to decline by more than 13% or \$1.4 million from budgeted FY09 spending, and operating income was projected to decrease by a similar amount (-\$1.47 million) from FY09 budgeted operating income, leaving us with a FY10 budgeted deficit on operations of nearly \$400,000 and an overall loss of \$822,017. Thankfully, we ended FY10 in better shape than anticipated—more than \$524,000 better off than predicted by our operating budget, and a full \$2.922 million better than budgeted net income. What a difference a year makes—FY10 outcomes were \$5.7 million stronger than the recession-plagued FY09 figures. Before we break out the champagne, it's worth noting that these gains were driven mainly by sharp reduction in spending on operations (down \$1.57 million) and sharp increases in investment

income (a \$2.33 million gain in FY10 vs. a \$2.86 million loss in FY09)—neither improvement factor is sustainable across multiple years.

Again we must acknowledge that we aren't really "recovering" as the same Council we were before the most recent economic tumble; rather we are learning to live as a different kind of organization. The question we face now is, Can we be successful in pursuit of our mission as an entity with a different membership profile (more teams and school-based memberships rather than individuals only), different kinds of publishing activity (more e-pubs, a tighter bond to strategic goals and mission), a smaller but highly qualified staff, more grant-funded professional development activity, a more active and effective policy advocacy apparatus, and healthy annual meetings? There is ample data suggesting that we are in the midst of a multi-year transition to this as our new status quo:

- We again ended FY10 earning substantially less operating income than we had budgeted and less than we had earned the year before. The \$7.47 million in operating income is the smallest amount earned since FY98, when our rates and prices were much lower. BUT, with only \$7.35 million in expenses (the lowest spending in more than 20 years), we ended the year with a \$124,887 surplus on operations and a net income gain of \$2.1 million.
- The operating surplus in FY10 marks the seventh time this decade when we have done better than break even on operations, earning an aggregate surplus on operations in excess of \$2 million over that time. That's a marked improvement on the 1990's when we lost money on operations in nine out of ten years despite having a much larger membership.
- FY10 ended with NCTE maintaining net reserves of \$19.94 million, some \$3.3 million more than where we were at the beginning of the decade. Expressed as a percentage of operating expenses, our reserves moved from 1.67 years of spending in reserve in FY01 to 2.71 years-worth of spending in reserve in FY10—while the market can change quickly, we ended the year with an extra year's worth of expenses in security at the precise moment when major changes are afoot that could reshape our institutional landscape.

- Membership dropped by 9.7% and far fewer journal subscribers and book buyers produced a decline of nearly \$200,000 in journal income and roughly \$178,000 in book sales income. Again, program expenses in both areas have dropped at a faster rate, so the net surplus on journals and books combined is more than \$200,000 better than we had budgeted.

While our funded efforts were more focused as we fought through the recession, in many ways, FY10 was a year of accomplishment:

- For the first time, NCTE received an Associations Advance America award from the American Society for Association Executives. NCTE's work on the National Day on and National Gallery of Writing earned this recognition as one of the top non-profit initiatives in the country. Perhaps more importantly, more than 25,000 writers contributed work to the National Gallery, and countless schools, libraries, and community programs across the nation joined to celebrate the National Day on Writing. The Senate resolution establishing the day was the first drafted measure approved by a body of Congress in the organization's history.
- We joined with six other major national organizations to establish shared Principles for Learning, placing literacy at the center of learning in all content areas. Watch for a public announcement of these Principles from the Connected Learning Coalition.
- Work on the Centennial celebration continued with the production of a really remarkable video documentary that we will premiere after this meeting. I think you'll enjoy it, and we hope to see it screened at affiliate meetings and on cable and public access TV stations across the country.
- Preparations for the NCTE Connected Community, our social networking space to share resources, start discussions, and share collegial support, were nearly concluded. The Community launched on October 11 and will serve as a vital way to connect our work during a pivotal period in the history of literacy education.

We enter the second decade of the century with the financial and human resources needed to pursue the mission of improving literacy education in ways that were unimaginable a generation ago. If we can continue to work together with imagination, empathy, and compassion, we will make the difference for literacy learners who need great teachers now, more than ever.

President Jago called on Vice President Keith Gilyard to announce upcoming meetings and locations for Council conferences. Gilyard reported the following dates and sites for upcoming NCTE Annual Conventions: November 17-22, 2011, in Chicago, "Reading the Past, Writing the Future"; November 15-20, 2012, Las Vegas, NV; November 21-26, 2013, Boston, MA; November 20-25, 2014, Washington, DC; November 19-24, 2015, Minneapolis, MN; and November 17-22, 2016, Atlanta, GA. CCCC conferences: April 6-9, 2011, Atlanta, GA, "All Our Relations: Contested Space, Contested Knowledge"; March 21-24, 2012, St. Louis, MO; March 13-16, 2013, Las Vegas, NV; March 19-22, 2014, Indianapolis, IN; and March 18-21, 2015, Tampa, FL. Whole Language Umbrella will meet in Las Vegas, NV, July 21-24, 2011, with the theme, "Teachers, Students, and Family Together: Nurturing Literate Communities." And finally, the NCTE Assembly for Research Mid-Winter Conference will be February 18-20, 2011, at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, with "Time and Space in Literacy Research: Revisiting Context" as the theme.

President Jago moved to "New Business" and called on Bob Dandoy, Chair of the Resolutions Committee, to present this year's resolutions. Dandoy thanked the committee for its work: Kevin Browne, Gina DeBlase, Megan Pankiewicz, and Diane Waff. Dandoy also thanked the NCTE Parliamentarian, Erika Lindemann, and NCTE Staff Liaison Lori Bianchini.

Dandoy called on Kevin Browne to read the first resolution:

### **Resolution 1**

#### **Resolution on Social Justice in Literacy Education**

Resolved, that the National Council of Teachers of English

- support efforts by educators to teach about social injustice and discrimination in all its forms with regard to differences in race, ethnicity, culture, gender, gender expression, age, appearance, ability, national origin, language, spiritual belief, sexual orientation, socioeconomic circumstance, and environment;
- acknowledge the vital role that teacher education programs play in preparing teachers to enact and value a pedagogy that is socially just;
- advocate for equitable schooling practices that reinforce student dignity and success; and

- oppose policies that reinforce inequitable learning opportunities or outcomes for students.

The Resolution Committee moved the adoption of this resolution.

President Jago announced that this resolution came out of the Committee and did not need a second. She opened the floor for discussion. No discussion was brought forward. Jago then asked for a vote. The motion CARRIED.

Dandoy called on Megan Pankiewicz to read the second resolution:

## **Resolution 2**

### **Resolution on Affirming the Role of Teachers and Students in Developing Curricula**

Resolved, that the National Council of Teachers of English

- reaffirm the rights of teachers and their students to draw from many diverse and dynamic sources – not only a list of exemplar texts – in the selection of classroom texts and materials.
- continue to endorse a school curriculum that honors cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, language variety, and the interests and needs of the individual student; and
- continue to support and advocate for the inclusion of teachers at all levels of educational decision making.

The Resolution Committee moved the adoption of this resolution.

President Jago announced that this resolution came out of the Committee and did not need a second. She opened the floor for discussion. No discussion was brought forward. Jago then asked for a vote. The motion CARRIED.

President Jago then asked Constance Weaver, MI, to read the first Sense-of-the-House Motion:

### **Sense-of-the-House Motion #1**

Be it resolved, that the National Council of Teachers of English

- create a public web page for parents with information and links to resources on the toxic effects of current and proposed standardized testing in relation to language arts;
- work with parent organizations to disseminate such information; and
- provide a forum for discussing standardized testing.

President Jago asked for a second. Sheridan Blau, NY, seconded. She opened the floor for discussion. No discussion

was brought forward. Jago then asked for a vote. The motion CARRIED.

President Jago asked Stephen Krashen, CA, to read the second Sense-of-the-House Motion:

### **Sense-of-the-House Motion #2**

The NCTE expresses disapproval of the concept of national standards to be applied to all students and of the specifics of those written by the National Governors Association. NCTE will alert its members to the dangers of expending major efforts on standards and tests, which make meaningful teaching impossible.

President Jago asked for a second. Jerry Harste, IN, seconded. She opened the floor for discussion.

Stephen Krashen, CA, had further comments: NCTE was founded exactly 100 years ago as a protest against overly specific college entrance requirements and their negative effect on high school English education. A hundred years later, we are faced with overly specific requirements on all grade levels, which will have a negative effect and in my opinion will strangle the language arts profession. There is no need for new standards, and it diverts us from doing what we really need to do. The entire standards movement is based on a false assumption, that our schools are broken. The evidence for this, we are told, is the fact that our test scores on international comparisons are unspectacular. We fall behind all these other countries. If we look at research by Payne and Biddle, David Berliner, Gerald Bracey, we see that middle-class children from well-funded schools do extremely well on these tests. In fact, they are at the top of the world. Our overall average is unspectacular because we have such a high percentage of children in poverty, over 20%, compared to Denmark and Sweden's 2% and 3%. The implication is that what we have to do is protect children from the effects of poverty. Poverty is the problem. That is the major problem facing American education. It must be dealt with. The least we need to do is protect children against poverty in terms of nutrition ( no child left unfed, as Susan Ohanion has said), healthcare, and of course, our specialty, because of who we are, is making sure there is access to books for everyone. The problem we have with standards? Standards lead to tests. That's what they do. The tests are there to enforce the standards. We are all agreed that testing under No Child Left Behind is at much too high a level. This is going to make it about 20 times worse. We are going to have pre-tests; we are going to have value added tests; we are going to have post-tests; we are going to have interim tests. This is the end of civilization as we know it. We must not just mitigate this movement. We must stop it cold.

President Jago recognized other speakers.

Carol Mikoda, NY: During my thirty-years of NCTE membership and classroom teaching, I have seen my policies come from on high to interfere with my professional judgment. Recently, my frustration grew, so that now on a break from public schools' intensity, I must raise my voice, as I could not when I was in the midst of meeting my students' needs. We must not let our classrooms be taken over by the scripts, the lesson plans, the tests, and textbooks of non-educators. Even as we speak, unnecessarily distracting, even oppressive practice tests or benchmark assessments are being inflicted on many students in many states, whether they are racing to the top or not. This motion may, indeed, require that NCTE change a policy statement. But we must express our professional resistance. I ask you, who are in classrooms with students, to join me. We must, as professionals, resist what we know is wrong for learners.

Kay Haas, KS: Mr. Krashen said that the situation with students is poverty, and I certainly agreed. I voted for the previous resolution on assessments. However, as I look at the essence of this resolution and think of the classroom teachers whom I support and for whom I advocate and for whom I know that NCTE advocates, I think of teachers who would be caught between a rock and a hard place. Professional members of NCTE who want to do what is right would be guided by NCTE and this resolution; while at the same time will be expected to carry out standards. Whether they are Common Core Standards or the NCTE National Standards, they will have that expectation. I am not sure that we can advocate for those teachers in the trenches while still passing this resolution. I cannot support this resolution.

Joanne Yatvin, OR: In devising this resolution, our small group was certainly cognizant and respectful of the work of the Executive Committee in becoming involved with the Common Core Standards. We realize that many states have accepted these standards and that teachers will, indeed, be between a rock and a hard place. Our concern is for these teachers and for the students in trying to help them make their lives in school more livable lives. That means that they have to have some autonomy. The teachers need autonomy, and students have the right to the curriculum, the instruction, the materials that are going to meet their needs and their futures, not those devised by politicians and CEOs who really have no knowledge of education and perhaps very little concern with the needs of students or the profession of teachers.

Jeff Williams, OH: I would like to speak against the resolution for a couple of reasons. While I agree directly with Stephen's points about testing standards, I think we all have many concerns about that and it is an ongoing concern. But the idea behind standards is one that we have to consider carefully. I have nieces who go to school in rural Appalachia, and because of where they live, their teachers do not believe in having certain things available to them. I'm lucky enough to teach in a

suburb of Cleveland, where we have very high standards. We have high standards with or without national standards. The idea that geography determines, a lot of times, the expectations, especially for students who are in the poorest neighborhoods, the lowering of expectations for students, common standards allow us to have some of those pieces in place. I do not think the resolution as stated is something that I could support. I also want to remind the Council that NCTE has never endorsed these [Common Core State] standards. We were very careful in all three reviews to make clear that we do not refute them nor endorse them. We were trying to help make them palatable as much as possible and took the input of many teachers in this room.

Randy Bomer, TX: I want make sure that I understand what we are doing here in voting on this, and so I am going to say what I am understanding. Maybe the President or Parliamentarian can correct me if I am wrong. My understanding is that this sense-of-the-house motion is an expression of the feelings or the viewpoints of the people who happen to be in this room. It doesn't become NCTE policy, unless by some other means it becomes NCTE policy in the future. What we are doing right now is not a resolution in the same way that we voted on some resolutions earlier in this meeting, and so this won't be published as NCTE policy. It doesn't become NCTE policy.

President Jago corrected the confusion, agreeing with Bomer that the discussion concerns a sense-of-the-house motion, an expression of those who vote on the matter, not a resolution, which can establish NCTE policy on educational issues.

Jennifer Ochoa, NY: I am a nineteen-year teacher of kids in poverty. They are the only kids I have ever taught, and I am concerned with this sense-of-the-house motion for a couple of reasons. I absolutely agree with everything about testing being horrible for kids. I have to do that to kids every year for several hours, for several days, for a whole month. I have to do that to kids who are impoverished, to kids who can't pass the test the first time or the second time or the third time. In New York state the ELA Regents' Exam is six hours long. However, I'm just a regular teacher of regular kids. By some extraordinary circumstance of being voted onto the NCTE Executive Committee I was able to go to Washington, DC, not one time, not two times, not three times, but five times and speak directly to the writers of the Common Core. I told them stories about Hector, who sat and cried through the whole test last year because he just got back from the Dominican Republic but still had to take it. Of standing outside our school with John Rodriguez, on his fourth try of the six-hour exam and saying maybe this time, maybe this time it will happen. It will be ok. Because they don't have a choice, and I don't have a choice. But I had these extraordinary opportunities to go DC and have those conversations. As we start to look at this, I'm worrying that we might put into policy a way that will shut down my voice, which will shutdown the voice for the kids, in saying that

we are going to be against the Common Core State Standards. Of course we are; of course they're not good; of course we don't age with tests. But the people who are not in the trenches but in joyful classrooms where learning and hard work take place, they don't really have any choices about participating. They can participate or they cannot have a job. We need to make sure that our voices are heard in a way that is welcome in Washington, DC, because we have the name of NCTE behind us. I think if we pass this motion then sometimes those voices are not listened to very closely.

President Jago mentioned that the 10 minutes allowed for discussion of the sense-of-the-house motion was up, but as chair, she was extending the time for what she believed was an important conversation.

Susan Ohanion, VT: I speak for the resolution. As a longtime NCTE member who has always come to this meeting for comfort, for solace, for inspiration, I think it is unconscionable or cowardly for NCTE to waffle [on the Common Core State Standards]. Come out for them, come out against them, but say your principle instead of waffling. I think that is absolutely the wrong thing to do, and if you think that anybody in Washington, DC, is listening, I'm sorry. The standards ignore the diversity of students, and if we keep putting our diverse students through these torturous regimes that are damaging to their lives and don't give them any hope for a successful life, I just can't tell you how upset I am about this. I looked at the exam of a high school student in Vermont who planned to be a lumberjack, and he was so frustrated, that he wrote through his whole exam, "FU, FU, FU," and then he wrote, "You know I can't spell, I know I can't spell, why do you put me through this every year?" I am with him. I have taken a very careful look at the grant proposals for the people who are going to supply the assessments. I would invite you to take a look at Appendix A of the *Achieve Group Grant* and look around page 640 and you will see what their vision of literacy is. If you want a deconstruction of that problem, you can go to my website. I implore NCTE to stand-up tall and voice a real opinion on the Common Core.

Walter Brown, LA: I am not speaking against the sense-of-the-house motion as much as I am speaking against what we could possibly perceive as a negative slight against the need to set standards for our children. Yes, standards are important. I disagree with the spirit of the national core standards; however, I do realize, as I am sure that you all do, we live in a fishbowl, where every educator and educators' group has seen some left-wing, nut-job organization out to dismantle the beliefs of the American society. I definitely agree with the spirit of the motion; however, I think we need to be cognizant of the power we wield as a national organization. NCTE has been respected and listened to in many quarters. As we have seen recently with the national election results, as we have seen with the preponderance of both and right- and left-wing

pundits, are we expressing everything that we have? Those who got a chance to see "Waiting for Superman" saw the almost national attack against public education as a whole, against teachers as individuals and teachers unions and organizations as being some left-wing conspiracy. I think we need to be cognizant of the power we wield, even in just a sense-of-the-house motion. Those with great power must wield it responsibly. I do agree with the spirit and idea, but I would like to see those actions taken in a more positive and, if possible, collaborative way.

Jesse Turner, CT: This summer I walked 400 miles from Connecticut to DC to protest NCLB. I don't know what we are afraid of, but I am looking at standards set by the governors. Have the governors talked to the teachers; have they come to them? Are they talking to the parents? Every time I look around and ask, "Have you been involved in this conversation?" they say, "No." When I ask my colleagues of academia they say, "No," they haven't been involved. When I ask students, they say, "No." We are going to turn over the public education system to a national curriculum. America's history is rooted in a public education system that was built hamlet by hamlet, town by town, city by city, state by state. Our educational system isn't a national system, isn't a national standard-ism. It is different from that in any other place in the world. It is a democratic system. What are we so afraid of, a sense-of-the-house motion? I'm ready for fighting. I'm ready for standing up. Call me left-wing; call me whatever you want, but I will not be silent. I will not walk in a world of apathy. Stephen, thank you for the sense-of-the-house motion. I am not turning over my public schools to governors. They have screwed them up for the past 10 years. Seven hundred and fifty billion dollars is what NCLB has spent. We have lower test scores for twelfth-graders since 1992. We have two impact studies that showed us that the Reading First junk didn't work; that showed us that the content-area stuff didn't work. This is ridiculous. I'm standing up with kids. I'm standing up with teachers. Guess what? I'm walking to DC again this summer.

Bess Altwerger, MD: I am a long-time member of NCTE. I think it is very important to support the sense-of-the-house motion as a statement against the continued corporate intrusion into our classrooms. The Common Core State Standards did not originate with educators; they did not originate with teachers; they did not originate with the people in this room. They originated with corporate conglomerates. The National Council on Education and Economy developed a subsidiary called America's Choice, a for-profit organization that sat on the development team and then developed materials to promote these standards. They have been bought by Pearson. This is about profit; this is about corporate intrusion. The group I just spoke about is developing all the supporting materials, professional development, everything. The other group in this is Achieve. Achieve is a corporate conglomerate, completely a corporate conglomerate, no educators on Achieve. Achieve

developed the PARCC, which is the consortium that will put out the materials on assessments. PARCC chose Achieve to help them produce the assessment materials. This is not what education in this country should be about. We need to take back education from the corporate executives and CEOs and put it in the hands of teachers, like us, who are sitting in this room. I urge everyone to support Dr. Krashen's sense-of-the-house motion.

President Jago called for a vote. The motion CARRIED.

President Jago asked if there were any declarations:

Leila Christenbury, VA: I want to remind everybody that next year is NCTE's centennial, and we are going to meet in the city where we were founded. Many of us in the Council have been working for seven years toward this celebration, and I think it is going to be a great blowout. Those of you who can stay after today's meeting are going to love the video. It is going to be something that we are going to be able to put in TV stations, on cable, and share with the affiliates. I also want to remind you that there is a fabulous history book out, *Reading the Past, Writing the Future*. Maybe not all of us want to sit down and read it from cover to cover—it's 500 pages long—but it is absolutely up to the minute. I urge you to go to the NCTE bookstore and buy yourself a copy. If you don't want to read it, give it to a new teacher, because our history is fascinating.

Please come to Chicago; please read the centennial book; please look at the video. We're 100. Times are still tough. They always have been, but we are still in the fight.

Bruce Novak, IL: I invite you all to the Assembly for Extended Perspectives on Learning's conference, taking place in the Rocky Mountains this summer. The theme is "Literacy for Love and Wisdom: Being the Book and Being the Change" and will include Jeff Wilhelm, Novak, and others. We have an agenda to re-center human education on the human person based upon science and philosophy. It is a life-affirming group started by James Moffet, Peter Elbow, Sandra Pearl, Gabriel Rico, and others. Please come. It is also the launching of our book published by Teachers College Press, which will be coming out at the same time.

Charleen Delfino, CA: I would like to congratulate Carol Jago, also from California, for a wonderful presidency. We've appreciated your leadership. I would like to invite you to come to CATE Convention, February 11-13, in California.

President Jago asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Cheryl Hogue Smith, NY, and seconded by Frank Chiki, NM.

The meeting was adjourned.