

Commission on Literature

Charge: *The Commission on Literature is a deliberative and advisory body which each year identifies and reports to the [NCTE Executive Committee](#):*

- *on key issues in the teaching of literature*
- *reviews what the Council has done concerning literature during the year*
- *recommends new projects and persons who might undertake them*

The Commission:

- *monitors current and projected [NCTE publications](#) (other than journals)*
- *suggests topics for future NCTE publications on literature*
- *performs a similar role of review and recommendation for the [NCTE Annual Convention](#) program*

Occasionally, the Commission undertakes further tasks and projects as approved by the NCTE Executive Committee.

What major actions or projects have been completed by your group since July 1, 2008?

- The Commission on Literature sponsored a double session at the NCTE Annual Convention, 2008 focused on Politics of Literature: Negotiating Shifting Values. As part of the session, attendees were given a set of children's and young adult books that were discussed during the presentations. The session was not as well-attended as we anticipated. A check of other sessions running concurrently in the same location also indicated low attendance rates. In response to this, the Commission on Literature decided to offer two regular sessions instead of a double-session at the 2009 Annual Meetings.
- Commission members have been active during 2009 pursuing projects that address the teaching and role of literature in k-12 schooling. Judith Franzak published "Social Upheaval and Psychological Scarring: Exploring the Future in Meg Rosoff's *How I Live Now*" in *The ALAN Review*, 36, 34-39. Judi Franzak and Joyce Herbeck are co-authoring an article on pre-service teachers' preparation to teach multicultural British children's and young adult literature. Elizabeth Primas facilitated a project in which U.S. high school students read African literature and contextualized their study through distance-education interaction with African youth.
- Upon receipt of the Executive Committee's decision to phase out the Commissions, considerable time was devoted to by the Literature Commission to discussing this decision. The Literature Commission drafted a letter to Kylene Beers and Kathleen Blake Yancey outlining our concerns about the implications of this decision on leadership in the teaching of literature. Paramount among our concerns was the question of how NCTE members would be able to participate in processes related to developing policy, position statements, and advancing pedagogy through focused group work. A second concern focused on accessibility to meeting times and support—as a group, we questioned how the shift to ning-based communities could foster the kind of focused discussion that happens during our face-to-face meetings at the annual convention. After extensive discussion of these issues as a group and with Kathleen Blake Yancey, we drafted a letter to Kylene Beers and Kathleen Blake Yancey detailing our concerns.

What projects, initiatives, or studies are "in progress" at this time?

- Given the prospect of ending our work together, we discussed our program sessions for the 2009 Annual Meeting and how we might continue our work beyond the formal organization of the Commission. We selected the theme of "Teaching International

Literature” for 2009 and proposed two sessions, one a hands-on session from the k-12 classroom perspective and the other a panel session presenting research and literary criticism on international texts currently taught in the English language arts classroom.

- We developed an outline for a book prospectus that members will work on as individuals rather than as a group representing the Literature Commission since the Commission will have been disbanded by the time the prospectus is finished. The book explores how Batchelor Award-winning literature can be incorporated into teaching for literature standards. Several members of the Commission to continue to work on this project.

Strategic Governance: Over the past few years, the NCTE Executive Committee has established outcomes and priorities relating to these key topics in our field: Multimodal Literacy and Technology, Research and Teaching , English Language Learners, Professional Development, Closing the Achievement Gap, Reading Research, 21st Century Literacies, Meeting the Needs of Audiences Currently Unserved/Underserved by NCTE, Attracting, Supporting, and Advancing Early Career Educators, and International Involvement, “Global English”, and NCTE. Does your group have research findings or suggestions to contribute that are relevant to on-going work on these strategic governance topics?

- Our group has not developed research or findings specifically addressing these areas, though members of the group are interested in developing a policy paper on the role of international literature in 21st Century Literacies. We will be pursuing this project at the 2009 Annual Meeting.

Judi Franzak, Director