

**2014 Great Plains Chapter of The College Music Society
William Jewell College, Liberty, MO
Annual Meeting Report**

As opposed to the conference and Common Topic discussion, only a handful of participants/members attended the annual meeting. Really the sole agenda item revolved around the decreasing number of active, dues-paying members of CMS at our regional chapter. The Great Plains chapter has long been one of the most active, but in recent years participation has steadily decreased at the chapter meeting. For instance, one issue with which we continually grapple is the aging/health problems of some of our most visible members.

A more central idea that is perpetually considered at our annual meetings is how to better instill and develop student interest. While we offer monetary awards for outstanding paper (Paul Revitt award) and composition (Chappell White award), this year's conference did not yield a winner in either category. Given the number of talented students at institutions in our chapter like the Universities of Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, and Missouri, as well as the prominent public "satellite" colleges and private institutions, raising student awareness of CMS and the regional chapter should be more attainable and must be a top priority for our survival. We discussed ways to promote student participation during the meeting and in our Common Topic conversation, and noted the egregious lack of attention CMS gives towards compositions in the jazz idiom. For instance, in the last five years the University of Nebraska, Lincoln has produced at least three *DownBeat* award winners (a national award given by jazz's most visible publication) for best student composition and one year in which the jazz orchestra was named best collegiate ensemble in the United States. Yet, what is the incentive for these talented musicians to participate in CMS if their compositions are deemed ineligible or unworthy of inclusion in calls for composition? Such ignorance of composition in more vernacular idioms is something CMS at all levels will have to consider more thoughtfully going forward.

Logistics and planning have also caused problems in that at least two of the last four years, the Great Plains chapter conference coincided with the Society for American Music national conference. The concurrence of these conferences is especially problematic for our chapter because many of our most prominent voices (e.g., Paul Laird, Craig Parker, and Bill Everett) and some of our "rising stars" (Andrew Granade and Sarah Tyrell) are perhaps even more prominent at the annual SAM meetings.

In addition, and arguably the most crucial reason for the chapter's recent decline, has been a dearth of leadership in the past few years. The two most recent presidents—Andrew Houchins and Christine Beard—each resigned before the first year of their term had expired. Those of us at the meeting who had been attending conferences going back to the 1990s (e.g. Ian Coleman, Dave Moskowitz, Tony Bushard, and Houchins) noted that a change of leadership needed to be made, at the very least on an interim basis through the fall election. To that end, Bushard agreed to be the interim president of the chapter until the following spring meeting (2015) and he would also put his name on the ballot for the regular fall election. In addition, Dave Moskowitz agreed to host the 2015 chapter meeting at the University of South Dakota. While no concrete plans were made for 2016, tentatively Tony Bushard will host at UNL in 2016.

Beyond these discussions, there were no further business items discussed other than that in addition to Bushard's acceptance of the interim president position, the other officers (Moskowitz, Treasurer and Dawn McConkie, Secretary [not present at the meeting]) would remain in their current positions until the 2015 meeting when the newly elected officers would take over.

Respectfully submitted,

Tony Bushard, interim President, Great Plains Chapter, College Music Society