



January 2019

Dear SSEMW Members:

Changes are underway in the Society for the Study of Early Modern Women. Past President Meredith Ray proposed that we investigate whether to add Gender to the name of our Society. In order to foster discussion regarding the possible name change, I organized roundtables at several key conferences during the past two years, at both 2017 and 2018 SCSC conferences as well as the 2018 RSA. All the sessions were entitled “What’s In a Name? Should the SSEMW Incorporate Gender into Its Name?” and hosted speakers from a variety of disciplines; contributors offered their thoughts and comments for ten to fifteen minutes, and then the audience was invited to engage in a collective discussion. Sincere thanks to all those speakers—Merry Wiesner-Hanks (History); Allyson Poska (History); Mihoko Suzuki (English); Patricia Simons (Art History); Helena Sanson (Italian); Suzanne Cusick (Music); Tracy Cooper; Emilie Bergmann (Spanish); Deanna Shemek (Italian); and Abby Zanger (French)—as well as to the audience participants. Susan Amussen also organized a lively roundtable at the 2018 ATW conference, and thanks to her and her participants. At the end of this process, in December 2018, current members voted, and the addition of Gender to our name won by 67.5%! Our new name is thus The Society for the Study of Early Modern Women & Gender, and our acronym becomes SSEMWG.

During the past year, thanks to the hard work of Webmistress Pia Jakobsson and Treasurer Deborah Uman, our membership management is now automated. This should provide added financial benefits as it can remind lapsed members to renew in a timely fashion and will keep our membership rolls automatically updated. Kudos to Pia and Deborah! Members are kindly reminded to update their profile on our website. The next step in this process will be to devise a procedure by which throughout the year members can propose candidates (themselves or others) for participation in SSEMWG committees or make suggestions for the SSEMWG Lifetime Achievement Award.

Many thanks are due to our Vice President Julie Eckerle who greatly increased our presence at conferences during the past two years and fielded a number of graduate student travel applications, whose funding was increased to \$400 per recipient. We now sponsor sessions at over thirteen conferences and discussions are underway to add more. Those interested in serving as liaisons for conferences that they regularly attend or graduate student travel applicants are invited to contact our new Vice President Susan Amussen.

In 2018, for the second year, we maintained our support for a jointly sponsored SSEMW short-term research fellowship at the Folger Shakespeare library in honor of Margaret Hannay. As we move forward we will need to reaffirm our intention to sponsor jointly the fellowship and work with the Folger as they begin the process of renovating their historic building, a process that will last through 2021.

Also, thanks to our Past President Meredith Ray and our Social Media Liaison Anna Wainwright for their wonderful work on the blog. During their first year they explored *Transnationalisms*, last year they considered *Intersectionalities and Activisms*, and this year their topic will be *Power, Authority and Early Modern Women's Voices*. In addition to the blog, Meredith and Anna will be creating a new page on our website entitled "Pedagogical Tools" that will be devoted to highlighting materials and methods to teach early modern women and welcome suggestions and entries from anyone interested in helping in those efforts.

The graduate student representative during my tenure was Joel Faber, who recreated the list of past presidents of the SSEMW which has been posted on our website. He also helped round up any missing Presidents letters in order to post it on our website in the archives of the Society. We are still missing those of Naomi Yavneh (2006) and Diane Wolfthal (2007). If anyone perchance has either of these letters among their files, please do forward it for our archives. Many thanks to Joel for his service and best wishes for his future endeavors.

At the 2017 SCSC conference we awarded the SSEMW Lifetime Achievement Award to Merry Wiesner-Hanks, which was conferred at the SSEMW reception held jointly with the *Sixteenth Century Journal*. Before this celebration, we were honored to have as our plenary speaker Bette Talvacchia, Director of the Oklahoma University School of Visual Arts, whose lecture was entitled "Portraying Early Modern Women in Europe, 15th to 17th Centuries: Identity Lost?" The following year, at the 2018 SCSC conference, our plenary speaker was Paula Findlen, Stanford University, who gave a talk entitled "Camilla's Ambition: Medicine, Knowledge, and Heresy in Sixteenth-Century Pharmacy." Both talks were excellent and well attended.

An ongoing discussion during my vice presidency and presidency has regarded whether to move the annual business meeting, executive committee meeting, and plenary lecture from the SCSC to the RSA, a much bigger conference that would allow us to reach more potential members, including international ones. To this end, we polled the membership in December 2018 and the response was clear: 73% preferred to meet at the RSA for two years in a row with every third meeting taking place at the ATW conference. It is now the task of the executive committee to consider this polling result as it moves forward in determining our future meeting venues.

In closing, I would like to extend my sincerest and warmest thanks to Past President Meredith Ray, Vice President Julie Eckerle, Secretary Abby Zanger, Treasurer Deborah Uman, Webmistress Pia Jakobsson, and Social Media Liaison Anna Wainwright, who have made these past two years fly by with their generous support and guidance. I also thank all the Committee Chairs and members and conference liaisons for their hard work for our organization. I am delighted to turn over the reins to the very competent Julie Eckerle and please join me in welcoming the new Vice President Susan Amussen. Happy New Year to all!

Best regards,



Julia L. Hairston
(President, Society for the Study of Early Modern Women 2017-2018)