

MINUTES
Annual Business Meeting
American Academy of Religion
Boston, Mass.
Nov. 20, 2016

1. Call to Order

A quorum of 25 having been established, Pres. Glaude called the meeting to order at 7:35 a.m.

2. Approval of 2017 Minutes

Motion I: to approve the Minutes of the 2016 Annual Meeting

Unanimously approved

3. Memorial List

A standing moment of silence was held in the memory of the following members who passed away in 2016:

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Kalman P. Bland | June Elizabeth O'Connor |
| John J. Carey | Charles H. Reynolds |
| William G. Doty | Andrew Rippin |
| Kathleen M. Erndl | Huston Smith |
| Darrell J. Fashing | Maureen A. Tilley |
| Peter Foley | James B. Wiggins |
| Jacob Neusner | |

4. President's Report

President Glaude related key accomplishments of the past year. The Board has engaged in a sustained **Strategic Plan** process that has produced a thoughtful, far reaching, and manageable plan to help the AAR thrive in the 21st Century. Terri Theisen of Theisen Consulting served as a consultant to that process. Theisen Consulting is also retained to consult with the AAR's **Executive Director Search**, which also is well underway, currently sourcing candidates and building a pool with an eye toward identifying finalists for interviews in late Winter and early Spring and toward an anticipated start date in midsummer. To clarify roles and tasks, the Board of Directors has also approved a **Transition Plan** for senior leadership. The 2017 Annual Meeting, with its theme of *Religion and the Vulnerable*, thus far has been a considerable success in terms of program and attendance.

5. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Jack Fitzmier presented a brief report, beginning with **Staff Changes** introductions of new staff members Amy Parker, *Director of Communications* and Matt Vieson, *Director of Membership*. Also mentioned were the retirements of Susan Snider, and the anticipated retirements in the coming year of senior staff: *Chief Financial Officer* Deborah Minor, and Steve Herrick, who has for 24 years served the AAR in various capacities, most recently as *Chief Technology Officer* and the staff lead for Public Understanding of Religion. Staff will soon complete a public rollout of the **Strategic Plan**. Jack Fitzmier then identified a number of proud accomplishments. In terms of **Governance**, the membership had amended the by-laws to designate a Board of Directors seat for a **Contingent Faculty** Director, making AAR the first of ACLS's 75 members to do so. AAR's **Professional Conduct Task Force** has assembled a draft document that will be publicly aired and discussed in an Annual Meeting session and that will bring together related AAR policies and best practices for Professional Conduct. A **Publications Task Force** is revisiting AAR publications strategy in light of the new publishing landscape. There is a new editorial team based out of Claremont, California for

J.A.A.R. and Reading Religion. Finally there had been a panel concerning the nearly 20 years since the Branch Davidian tragedy in Waco, Texas, and AAR's collaboration with the F.B.I. to inform policy and prevent such tragedies in the future. Jack Fitzmier indicated he will serve as Executive Director through July 1, 2018, and thereafter for a year in a senior consultant role. The meeting erupted in an applause of gratitude.

5. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Jonathan Sarna presented the Treasurer's Report, making reference to the financial statements circulated at the meeting. Membership numbers are declining, but at a slightly slower pace. The bottom line is demonstrably healthy, however, given that expenses, too, are down and that the market has been strong. A clean audit by an independent firm was received in September, 2018. There were no questions/.

6. 2018 Election Results

New Board Members

Jose Cabezon, Vice President
Kimberly Rae Conner, Secretary
Kerry Danner, Contingent Director
Katherine Downey, Regions Director
Rachel Tooms, Student Director

Outgoing Board Members

Eddie Glaude, Jr. *President*
Asma Afsaruddin, *At Large Director*
Michael McNally, *Secretary*

7. New Business

Rising AAR President David Gushee took a moment to address two matters.

A) Executive Director Search

The Executive Directors search process continues in its sourcing stage and members were invited to make nominations, including self-nominations. In late Winter, the search committee, which is comprised of David Gushee, Chair, Laurie Patton, Jonathan Sarna, Kecia Ali, Eddie Glaude, Jr., and Michael McNally, expects to begin interviews with an eye toward having a new director in place by late June, 2018.

B) Policy on Cancellation/Postponement/Modification of Sessions

In light of the Executive Committee's difficult decision to postpone a 2017 Annual Meeting session on the Boycott, Divest Sanction movement because "the original aims proposed for the panel were no longer viable" at the 2017 meeting, the Board of Directors voted to charge the Program Committee to draft a policy to guide decisions involving cancellations, postponements, and modifications to sessions it has approved on the program. Gushee reiterated the AAR's commitment to its stated values and its "big tent" ethos in all decision making.

8. Adjournment

The gavel was passed and the meeting was adjourned at 6:54

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael D. McNally
Outgoing Secretary