BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Hilton
San Diego, CA
Saturday-Sunday, April 12, 2014

Present: Jack Fitzmier, Warren Frisina, Melanie Harris, Serene Jones, Susan Hill, Greg Johnson, Linda Moody, Jin Park, Mayra Rivera, Roberto Lint Sagarena, Kristy Slominski, Thomas Tweed, Laurie Zoloth

Staff: Deborah Minor, Steve Herrick

1. Call to order: President Laurie Zoloth, 9:00AM

2. Motion 1: to Approve Minutes - Unanimous

3. Executive Director Report: Jack Fitzmier

   a. Annual Meeting – All signs point to an excellent meeting in 2015
   b. Board Corner Board Corner is now up and running on the AAR’s Web Portal.
   c. Communicating with Committee Chairs about Board actions. We are working on improving communication with committee chairs.
   d. Wi Fi available throughout the Convention Center in San Diego.
   e. Joint AAR/SBL Member’s Welcome Reception is in development.

   Task: AAR staff to prepare list of things AAR Board Members are expected to attend early enough that it helps Board Members plan their meeting schedule.

   f. Joint AAR Board/SBL Council Reception is in development.
   g. AAR Awards – reviewed awardee list.
   h. AAR Participating in Academy of Arts and Sciences National Humanities Departmental Survey
   i. Press Relations at the Annual Meeting We are increasing press support at AM.
   j. National Endowment for the Humanities We support the NEH in light of the House Budget proposal to reduce or zero out NEH funding.
   k. Annual Business Meeting The annual business meeting will return to its morning time slot.
   l. Employment Center Usage We continue to encourage all schools to use the Employment Center and to follow our best practices with respect to interviewing and other hiring related activities.
   m. Software Users Group Our hope is to create a Users Group interested in our open source association management software.
   n. JAAR Editor Search A new editor will be appointed in 2015. The search is ongoing.
   o. New “Supporting” and “Sustaining” Membership Categories To be discussed by the
new Membership Development Task Force.
p. *Papers Proposal Submission System* Proposals are increasing. The acceptance rate is below (i.e. more rigorous) than most of our peer institutions in the ACLS.

At this point Executive Director Jack Fitzmier yielded to Program Committee Chair Gregory Johnson for a report from the Program Committee

4. **Program Committee Report – Gregory Johnson**

   a. *Deep appreciation* was expressed for the work of Robert Puckett and the other AAR staff who put together the AAR program.
   b. *Program unit proliferation* remains a committee concern. Only 6 out of 20 program unity proposals were approved
   c. *Greater transparency regarding approval and appeals processes* is a committee goal;
   d. *New review guidelines are in development*
   e. *New Membership Survey regarding the AM is in development*
   f. *Review of program unit structure is in development*
   g. *Concern was expressed within the committee regarding the overall quality of submissions.*

5. **Executive Director Report – continued**

   q. *Membership Research Information Data* There is a new plan to structure the members’ research interest survey around the AAR’s Program Unit Structure.
   r. *Membership Development Task Force* To develop a comprehensive membership development program.
   s. *Attorney on Sexual Harassment policy* A review by legal counsel in response to request by the Status of Committees is underway.
   t. *Memo of Understanding with SBL* – This memo is close to completion. We are also exploring the creation of a joint venture structure for handling the AM.
   u. *Resources for Addressing Contingent Faculty Crisis* Special sessions at the AM addressing concerns of contingent faculty are in development; a review of access to electronic resources by adjunct and contingent faculty is also underway; and discussion of whether the AAR might adopt some version of the MLA’s Bill of Rights for adjuncts is being explored.
   v. *American Lectures in History of Religion* – A new location for this every other year program is being sought.
   w. *Committee Support Review and Evaluation* We are reviewing the policy regarding the support committees receive (e.g. face-to-face meetings; room nights) to determine whether the AAR is using its limited resources effectively
   x. Draft AAR Safety Policy – (see appendix 1).

**Motion 2: The AAR Board Approves the Draft AAR Safety Policy.**
Friendly Amendment 1: add “”; individual member may feel threatened or profiled.

Friendly Amendment 2: change: Leadership Team to Meeting Safety Committee

Vote: Aye – Unanimous

Motion 2 Passes

6. Finance Committee Report – Deborah Minor
   a. AAR’s balance sheet indicates a modest increase in the AAR’s position due to increases in marketable securities.
   b. Exhibit hall revenues look good this year.
   c. 2015 memberships have slipped a bit though that was anticipated in the budget
   d. 2015 membership revenue is close to predicted, but it’s less than in prior years;
   e. Employment center listings are a bright spot with modest increases indicating more hiring
   f. In sum: we are in stronger financial position this year than past the year though the membership numbers continue to be a long-term concern.

Task: Preparation of 5 year projections regarding membership trends with an analysis of when a continuation of recent reductions might result in serious constraints on AAR operations.

MOTION 3: To Approve the Finance Committee Report including the 2014-15 budget with a friendly amendment to provide an additional $3,000 to cover the expenses associated with the Mentor/Mentee Pilot Program. These funds will be added to the 2014-15 budget line: Emory Services, Fees and Waivers.

Vote: Aye – Unanimous

Motion Approved

7. New Member Annual Meeting Guide – Kristi Slominski

   Task: Kristi Slominski working with an AAR Staff member will post a draft list of topics. Board members will give feedback and volunteer to make or solicit contributions.

8. Vice President’s Digest of Working Groups – Serene Jones
   a. There are four areas of overlap in the committee reports this year. These tell us something about the state of organization in general and might guide the work of the board in terms of priority setting.
      i. All speak about the need for and have developed programs addressing professional development/career development –
      ii. All include requests for greater transparency regarding procedures.
      iii. All address contingent faculty concerns. Is this an area where the board needs to take the lead to create a more structured conversation, one that is perhaps tied to conversations about tenure?
      iv. All spoke about the way their work involves collaboration with other
committees Mapping these partnerships might give us a snapshot of who we really are.

Motion 4: That the Vice President, President-Elect and President attend as many working group and committee meetings at the Annual Meeting as possible. Vote: Aye – Unanimous
Motion 4 Approved

Motion 5: That the Executive Director communicates Board Actions to the relevant Working Groups and Committees within 2 weeks of a Board Meeting.
Vote: Aye – Unanimous
Motion 5: Approved.

Adjourn till Sunday

SUNDAY APRIL 13, 2014 MORNING

9. AAR Branding and Web-based Discussion Groups. – Jack Fitzmier
   Concerns were raised about groups using the AAR name (including AAR AM branding elements) in ways that might create a liability problem for the AAR. When asked, the ED will relay that we prefer that our name be removed from any non-official discussion groups.

    a. Reducing Papers and Oasis downtime – the goal is to make these unnoticeable. To that end we doubled the number of servers and sought ways to reduce the number of times we have simultaneous operators.
    b. After first year for new systems we discover new things. There are a few functionality issues, some having to do with disability access that are being addressed
    c. Continued work on security We are ½ way through and will finish in early June migrating to in house servers and switching to more modern equipment run cooler; improving how passwords are handled;
    d. Reduce our infrastructure costs – We are looking for ways to reduce our maintenance costs.

11. Member Advocate Position Discussion – Melanie Harris

   To clarify and render more visible the role of the Member Advocate it was suggested that the Member Advocate:

b. Consider attending some regional meetings

12. Letter to the Deans – Laurie Zoloth

A draft letter to advocating on behalf of religion scholars to Deans and Presidents was considered.

Motion 6: That we delay sending a letter from the AAR President to University and College Dean’s advocating for the academic study of religion until it can be coordinated with the work of the newly forming Membership Development Task Force.
Vote: Aye – Unanimous
Motion 6 Approved

13. Committee on the Public Understanding of Religion Proposal to join with PRRI Institute to conduct a co-branded survey on religion, values and climate change.

Motion 7: To accept the PUR recommendation that we partner with the PRRI in the production of this study.
Vote: Aye: X Nay: 0; Abstention: 1
Motion 7 Approved

15. Related Scholarly Organization Proposals

Motions 8 & 9 that the following RSO new applications be approved:

Motion 8: The Adventist Society for the Study of Religion
Vote: Aye – Unanimous
Motion 8 Approved

Motion 9: The Society for the Study of Japanese Religion
Vote: Aye – Unanimous
Motion 9 Approved

Motion 10: The College Theological Society
Vote: Aye – Unanimous
Motion 10 Approved

Motions 11 – 17 Related Scholarly Organizations Renewal Application

Motion 11: The Karl Barth Society of North America
Vote: Aye – Unanimous
Motion 11 Approved
La Comunidad of Hispanic Scholars
Vote: Aye – Unanimous
Motion 11 Approved

Motion 12: Institute for American Religious and Philosophical Thought
Vote: Aye – Unanimous
Motion 12 Approved

Motion 13: North American Paul Tillich Society
Vote: Aye – Unanimous
Motion 13 Approved

Motion 14: Søren Kierkegaard Society
Vote: Aye – Unanimous
Motion 14 Approved

Motion 15: Psychology, Culture, and Religion
Vote: Aye – Unanimous
Motion 15 Approved

Motion 16: Society for Comparative Research on Iconic and Performative Texts
Vote: Aye – Unanimous
Motion 16 Approved

Motion 17: International Bonhoeffer Society – English Language Section
Vote: Aye – Unanimous
Motion 17 Approved

Meeting Adjourned: 11:00 AM.