Serves a one-year term. The current Vice President will automatically become President-Elect next year and President the following year without additional elections. During their tenure, the Vice President will have the opportunity to affect AAR policy in powerful ways; in particular, during the presidential year, the incumbent may make many of the appointments to committees on working groups. In addition to serving on the Board of Directors, the Vice President also serves on the Executive, Audit, and Program Committees.

Marla Frederick

Marla Frederick is professor of African and African American Studies (AAAS) and of the study of religion at Harvard University. She has served, but as president of the American Anthropological Association, she serves on the editorial review board of two academic journals. She is a recipient of Harvard University teaching awards and grants, including those funded by the NSF and Harvard’s Weatherhead Center.

Frederick has authored or coauthored four books and several articles. Her first ethnography, Between Sundays: Black Women and Everyday Struggles of Faith (NYU Press, 2007), which won the Best Book Award for the Society for the Anthropology of North America. Her most recent works, Colored Television: American Religion Gone Global (Stanford University Press, 2016) and Televienced Redemptive: Black Religious Media and Racial Empowerment (NYU Press, 2016), examine the global influence of American mediated religion.

Marla Frederick - Statement

The AAR’s mission to “foster excellence in the academic study of religion and enhance the public understanding of religion,” seems never more timely than today. As a consortium of scholars who approach religion from various fields of expertise, our capacity to responsibly preserve Harvard University’s heritage and as association to expand the horizons of deeper public understandings of religion, is critical. My training as an anthropologist has centered on the social and cultural influence and outcomes of religious belief and practice. This work has kept me ever abreast of changing socio-political climates in the U.S. and abroad and the significant role of religion in shaping our world. Just as W.E.B. DuBois and Franz Boas’ perspectives on “race” and “culture” transformed not only the disciplines of sociology and anthropology but also the political landscape of America, so too, our work as scholars of religion has tremendous transformative power.

Strong leaders help organizations identify and reach their goals. They inspire and develop roadmaps to success. Through feedback from the membership, the AAR has already identified its Long Range Plan. My vision for implementation is to:

1) Elevate best practices both within our ranks and within other guilds for ensuring diversity. Over the years, the AAR has done a tremendous job of developing Committees to ensure that groups historically on the margins find a place at the center. This is critically important not only because rich diversity makes for a better scholarship, but also to ensure our long-term viability and relevance as the leading organization for the study of religion. By promoting just practices within the guild, we reinforce our integrity as an organization.

2) Continue to explore innovative routes for public engagement. We must take into consideration the various ways members understand their agency and help them navigate those spaces. Some find voice in large national publics, while others find their voice in more local spaces, like writing curriculum for local religious organizations that permit them to think more deeply and critically on matters of faith: The American Anthropological Association encourages public engagement by taking a day of their annual conference and sending anthropologists into local schools to talk with students about their research. What might it look like for us to enter local schools, community centers or religious spaces and help foster community dialogue about the tapestry of religious traditions that form our society?

3) Advocate for contingent faculty and graduate students who are increasingly displaced by the systematic affront to Liberal Arts education and declining enrollment across theological education. In so doing, I will support the work of AAR’s contingent faculty initiative and promote interdisciplinary and collaboration between guilds to expand the places for doing scholarship on religion.

These are critical times within which we live. Our work as scholars is more important than ever. If honored to serve you, I will be committed to working alongside you to fortify our internal work and beyond.

Tracy E. Hucks

Tracey E. Hucks was born in the city where Father Divine received letters in the 1930s simply addressed, “God, Harlem, U.S.A.” Her early experiences were formulated in Harlem, New York-world saturated with the multiplicity of America’s religious heritages, which included Christianity, her grandmother’s Native American spiritualities, and African, Latin American, and American constructions. Harlem was the foundation of her formation as a historian of American religion, earning an MA and PhD from Harvard University specializing in religions of the Americas.

Hucks is currently the provost and dean of the faculty and the James A. Storing Professor of Religion and African Studies & Latin American Studies at Colgate University. Previously the chair of Africana studies and the Vail Professor of Africana Studies at Davidson College, Hucks was also the chair of the Department of Religion and professor of religion at Haverford College. She is the author of Yorùbá Traditions and African American Religious Nationalism (University of New Mexico Press, 2012), a forthcoming coauthored work. Beyond and Beyond Colonial Imaginations: Obeah, Oria and Religious Identity in Trinidad, and numerous journal articles on Africana religious studies as researched in North and South America, West Africa, Europe, and the Caribbean.

Tracy E. Hucks - Statement

The AAR has been central to my professional development as a scholar of religion. I became a member of the AAR while a graduate student at Harvard University and have been a committed member for more than two decades. My commitment to the AAR has been further strengthened by my service with what I believe is the premier space for religious studies scholars to gather for disciplinary and interdisciplinary conversations. In more recent years, it has become a more intentional space committed to disrupting privileged epistemologies and advocating social justice in the academy and the world. As the academy prepares to address the geo-religious politics of place and space resulting from the 2040 demographic shifts on the horizon, it is my desire to help move the AAR to meet with consensus on the best ways for continued diversity, inclusivity, and intersectionality. As AAR seeks to be sensitive to the thoughts and expectations of our membership, there remain opportunities for expanding how we address the holistic needs of scholars. If elected, my re-elected commitments and priorities will be to:

1) Uphold AAR’s mission statement of providing a space of free inquiry. At a time when national discourses on academic freedom abound, AAR must continue to be a protected space for the free exchange of ideas spanning the range of its privileged to more vulnerable membership.

2) Increase resources to AAR annual and regional meetings for those with financial challenges both in the U.S. and abroad as a demonstrated priority of access and full inclusivity.

3) Cultivate structured spaces of recognition and remembrance. Each year the AAR loses valuable members to death such as Katie G. Cannon or James H. Cone. I will encourage a flexible set of sessions embedded in our program to honor the intellectual achievements of lost or aging members.

4) AAR fosters dialogue across social, political, generational, and global spaces of our shared discourses, diaspors, and difference. My commitment will be to enhance best practices at the Executive level on ways to support deep dialogues, bring together communities across difference, and avoid potential fractures within our membership.

5) Improve the efficiency and use of technology that support the presentation of new knowledge, cutting-edge pedagogical mentorship, and the bridging of global intellectual partners. For example, last year’s Quaker Studies Unit was a model in their use of technology and the showcasing of multi-sited international panels through Zoom.

6) Support efforts to maintain strong financial stewardship and donor cultivation. AAR has a long tradition of supporting African cosmologies and Afro- transcormative to the completion of my own international research and published scholarship.

7) Maintain an attentiveness to age and physical ability by providing increased inter-panel transport for our emeriti and disabled membership.