

AAR/WR Board of Directors Meeting
21 March 2009
Santa Clara University • Santa Clara, California

Present: Souad T. Ali, Doe Daughtrey, Susan Maloney, Jean Molesky-Poz, Rebecca Moore, Norrie Palmer, Arisika Razak, Jason Smick (ex-officio), Jon R. Stone, Kahena Viale, Dirk von der Horst.

I MSP Minutes from the Board of Directors meeting from 1 October 2008 accepted.

II Susan Maloney gave the RED (Regionally-Elected Director) Report. She presented the financial report for March 2009, which showed an anticipated adjusted balance of \$2,179.38. She noted changes occurring at the national AAR level, listing 1) the profession; 2) technology; and 3) the economy as national concerns. She said that Cheryl Kirk Duggan is the new Chair of the AAR's Publications Standing Committee. She also encouraged people to apply for the \$5000 grants available for regional projects from the national AAR. She reported that no one applied for the Independent Scholar award by the March 1 deadline. She noted ongoing discussions at the national level regarding legal status of the regional organizations.

III The relationship between AAR/WR and WECSOR was discussed at length. The question at stake: is WECSOR working well for AAR/WR? Pros and cons were debated. Fiscal and legal accountability were raised as serious concerns.

MSP To rescind the motion of June 2008 that AAR/WR no longer meet with WECSOR.

MSP The AAR/WR Board recommends that the WECSOR AAR/WR representatives inform the WECSOR Board that they plan to recommend to the AAR/WR 2009 business meeting that AAR/WR continue to hold annual meetings in cooperation with SBL, ASOR, or other professional associations, but not through WECSOR. AAR/WR will explore with the national AAR the most appropriate way to disassociate with WECSOR. [1 abstention]

Compensation for the WECSOR Executive Secretary was discussed. An honorarium was proposed; if WECSOR did not pay for it, it was agreed that AAR/WR should pay \$500, plus a \$250 bonus.

IV Women's Caucus Report. A template for volunteers is being drafted, and ways to identify potential volunteers were discussed. The issue of how many papers can be presented at a single AAR/WR conference was discussed, and was to be raised at the Section Chairs meeting.

V Queer Advocate's Report. Dirk von der Horst discussed the Queer Caucus reception. He requested that the Board seek only queer-friendly venues for future meetings. He said that he read the online statement by Santa Clara University

regarding gays and said he appreciated the fact that ongoing discussion was welcomed at the Jesuit institution.

MSP The Board adopted a resolution to seek only those venues that have queer-friendly policies.

VI Board positions to be filled were discussed. The lack of a Minority Advocate Representative is a concern. Potential representatives are to be sought. Potential VP/Program Chair-elect nominees were suggested, and included: Doe Daughtrey, Boo Riley, Bob Hurteau, Ikea Param.

Regionally Elected Director Susan Maloney left the Board meeting while President Norrie Palmer led a discussion whether to re-nominate Susan for a second three-year term. The Board adopted a resolution to nominate Susan Maloney for a second three-year term as the AAR/WR RED.

MSP The Board adopted a resolution to nominate Susan Maloney for a second three-year term as the AAR/WR RED.

VII A range of issues relating to Section Chairs was discussed. Past problems were noted. Qualifications for leadership were discussed. It was agreed that a terminal degree might not always be required if a person were a recognized expert in their field of endeavor. The three primary qualifications identified were:

Terminal degree/doctoral candidate/recognized in the field
Scholarly, or other appropriate track record (as evidenced by C.V.)
Participation in AAR/WR

There may be times when all of these three criteria may not be met by Section Chairs, but it was agreed that we should seek scholars who meet this profile, and give first consideration to them. Regional representatives might be able to play a greater role, and should encourage senior scholars to get involved.

Selection of Section Chairs was also discussed. It was agreed that while nominations can come from the sections, the Executive Committee makes the final decision (as per current bylaws). Some current chairs may not meet the criteria specified above; they should be grandfathered in, since it was felt it is punitive to de-certify current chairs.

The need for some sort of orientation to Section Chair responsibilities is needed. A brochure, or online checklist, were suggested.

MSP The provisional form currently used for proposing new sections was approved on a permanent basis.

- VIII The role of the AAR/WR Board of Directors was discussed. The question of advocacy versus scholarship came up. The proposed Mission Statement clearly states the purpose of the organization, which is the promotion of the scholarly study of religion. Although the Board acts as a gatekeeper, the process needs to remain fair and transparent.
- IX Criteria for disqualifying and removing individuals from office were discussed. Three questions arose: 1) What is the basis for disqualification? 2) What is the process for removal? 3) Is there an appeals process? Criteria for disqualification include a demonstrated lack of good faith and integrity, and a failure to promote the interests of the section (and, an accompanying effort to promote the interest of particular individuals). Other reasons for removal would include sexual harassment, public intoxication, and failure to execute the duties of the office.

Language proposed for disqualification included: "failure to execute duties in a manner consistent with the highest professional practices and ethics. These best practices include, but are not limited to: transparency, honesty, inclusiveness, scholarship, and cooperation with officers and members of the AAR/WR." No motion was made for approval.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Notes compiled by Rebecca Moore, 9 April 2009.