

AAR/WR MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EC)
5 March 2021, 2-3:30pm
Online Zoom Meeting

Present: James Berry (Southern California & Western Region Student Director), John Erickson (Vice President Elect), Anna Hennessey (President), Susan Maloney (Honorary Board Member, Advisor, and Facilitator, non-voting), Hester Oberman (Interim Regional Coordinator), Emily Silverman (Interim Vice President and Program Chair)

Notes: Hester Oberman arrived at 2:30pm. John Erickson left at 3:30pm. Zoom recording of the meeting is available. Meeting time went to approximately 4pm.

Minutes compiled by Anna Hennessey

1. President Anna Hennessey begins the meeting with greetings and welcome, then introduces the main topic for the EC meeting, which is for the EC to approve new changes to AAR/WR's Policy File. In 2020-2021, significant changes have been made to the Policy File in specific areas of the file. Anna Hennessey and Susan Maloney (Honorary Board Member and 2020-2021 Mediator for the EC) worked extensively on pages 1-13 of the Policy File for the EC and Board to approve. The rest of the document has not been revised and will need to be worked on in 2021-2022.

2. The full EC received the latest draft of the AAR/WR Policy File via email from Anna Hennessey on March 1, 2021 for review before the March 5, 2021 meeting of the EC.

3. Sharing her screen, Anna Hennessey showed the EC the full Policy File document and the EC members then went over revisions page by page. Significant attention was paid to new descriptions of the roles of the EC and Board members. In the previous Policy File, little information was provided for these roles. In conducting their revisions, Hennessey and Maloney utilized AAR/WR's Operating Agreement as the main source for outlining the roles of the EC and Board Members. However, they did make adjustments in some areas where there was either little information about a given role or confusing statements about the role.

4. Susan Maloney discussed the importance of collaboration of the EC. The new version of the Policy File emphasizes the communal way in which the Executive Committee should work together. Based on major confusions that occurred between March-June 2020 about the role of the Regional Coordinator (RC), members of the EC realized that there needed to be language in the Policy File to define the role of the RC and make it clear that this member acts communally with the other members of the EC. Although the RC acts as a liaison between the region and AAR National, he/she/they must share important correspondences with the rest of the RC. For example, if an EC member resigns, which happened in March 2020, all EC members should have the right to view the resignation letter. At the time, the RC did not make the EC member's letter of resignation available to the rest of the EC and communicated the information to AAR National without including any other EC members in the communications.

5. All EC members agreed that there were deep problems with communication on the EC between March-June 2020 in large part due to the RC's misunderstanding of his role. New

language in the Policy File helps to remedy this problem by emphasizing the collaborative nature of the EC and the RC's dedication to maintaining that element of collaboration. Although all agreed that the circumstances with the previous RC were not normal and probably would not occur again, Hester Oberman stated that the same problem could theoretically happen with other EC roles. Therefore, all EC members should always understand the need for collaboration and teamwork. Anna Hennessey showed the EC a new paragraph listed in the Policy File (page 9) that emphasizes the importance of collaboration within the EC.

6. Anna Hennessey explained that revisions to the role of the Past President include that the Past President should be responsible for the meeting minutes and also judge the paper competition awards. Emily Silverman discussed the possibility of hiring a secretary to take notes for the meeting minutes and all members agreed that the previous version of the Policy File in which the duty of writing the minutes was allotted to the president was not a good policy. The president already manages the Board and EC meetings and has many duties. The EC agreed that for the time being, the minutes will be listed as the duty of the Past President but that members will explore with the Board the possibility of hiring a secretary or notetaker for the AAR/WR Board and EC meetings.

7. James Berry discussed the role of the Regional Student Director and the EC clarified the new language for that role. For the role of the VP Elect, the full EC agreed that the language for the role should indicate that the VP Elect is a member of the EC Committee but that he/she/they does not have a vote on the EC (while still maintaining a vote on the Board).

8. For the other positions of the AAR/WR Board, Anna Hennessey stated that she and Susan Maloney utilized much of the same language in the Operating Agreement to describe these positions in the Policy File. Hester Oberman stated that for the Regional Student Board Member positions, the file should state that the students need to attend conferences in person. Emily Silverman added that the file should state that all representatives attend in person. Anna Hennessey added the language that Board member attendance to conferences should be in person. Hester Oberman and Susan Maloney also discussed issues in the past with students who submitted papers that were accepted, did not attend the conference and did not notify the region that they would not be coming. Oberman and Maloney discussed how to address this issue and whether there should be consequences related to student representatives, other representatives or student participants who do not attend. Maloney, Oberman and John Erickson suggested new language about in-person attendance and Anna Hennessey added this to the file. The full EC agreed that there are always emergencies and exceptions to this rule. James Berry added that student reps should receive more information about the positions before they are voted in so that they understand the requirements and duties.

9. Emily Silverman stated that the EC should start looking for a new Conference Manager right away since Joseph Paxton would be leaving the position. Hester Oberman and Emily Silverman discussed how the Board had previously found conference managers. John Erickson mentioned a possible candidate for the position. Anna Hennessey stated that the position is voted on by the EC, not by the Board, so it would be ok to wait until after the 2021 conference to find someone if there were no candidates by the time of the conference. Hester Oberman agreed but emphasized the importance of the Conference Manager and the need to fill that position soon.

10. Regarding the Webmaster role, Anna Hennessey pointed to new material that she and Susan Maloney added about how the website should be accessible to three people: the Webmaster, President and Past President. Due to the actions of the March-June 2020 RC who took control of the website and did not share the username and password with the EC, and also did not initially return that information to the EC when he resigned in June 2020, it was decided that at least three people on the Board should have access to the information.

11. For the Campus Liaison position, Anna Hennessey explained that the new Policy File defines the subsidy from the host institution as \$1500-\$5000. The old Policy File listed the number at \$1500. Susan Maloney added that the Conference Manager should work with the Campus Liaison to reserve at least six to ten smart rooms for the days of the conference. Anna Hennessey, Emily Silverman and Hester Oberman discussed the Campus Liaisons and fundraising at the University of Arizona, the Graduate Theological Union and the forthcoming location of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

12. Anna Hennessey explained that the material on elections from the old Policy File was scattered and that when she and Susan Maloney revised the file, they brought the material together in one concise area of the document. James Berry asked whether the Policy File should still include a listing of the US Postal Service as the mailing method through which candidates should submit their application materials. The EC members agreed that the applications should be sent through email and Anna Hennessey changed this language in the new draft of the Policy File.

13. Emily Silverman brought up an ethical argument for allowing a session at the upcoming 2021 conference to allow for the unit chair to send out the link to his session to scholars. Anna Hennessey mentioned that this could bring up conflict between units since another unit chair had asked about allowing student participants for whom costs are difficult to attend the unit without charge and she had responded that the protocol was for participants to pay the entrance fee, which the AAR/WR had lowered this year to \$15 for accessibility. Susan Maloney said that a possible solution could be for donations to be made to cover the cost of the attendees. Maloney said that there are always exceptions to the rules but that there should also be accountability and justification for those exceptions as well. Hester Oberman brought up the mission of the AAR/WR and said that we should also keep the mission of our region in mind when making exceptions. The EC agreed that donations could be made to cover costs of attendees for the unit.

14. EC members make closing remarks and agree that the Policy File is ready for the AAR/WR Board to review and approve it.