

2023 AAR WR Regional Board Meeting

UC Davis

3/24/2023

Attendance: President John Erickson, Conference Manager Jacob Perez, Vice President and Program Chair Marie Cartier, Arizona Regional Representative Souad Ali, Vice President Elect Sakena Young Scaggs, Queer Advocate Anjeanette LeBoeuf, Women's Caucus Liaison Janice Poss, Regional Coordinator Jake Nagasawa, Past President Emily Silverman, Northern California Regional Rep Valerie Miles-Tribble

Zoom Attendance: Honorary Board Member Susan Maloney, Nevada Regional Rep Roberta Sabbath, Student Director James Berry, Webmaster Joey Alan Le

Missing: Hawaii Regional Rep Joseph Paxton, Diversity Advocate Purushottama Bilimoria, and Northern Californi Student RepWilliam Martin

Notes taken by Anjeanette LeBoeuf

Hybrid Meeting started at 1:17pm

1. Current President John Erickson -Welcomes all to the 2023 conference and opens introductory comments for all Board members.

Conference Manager Jacob Perez states that registration is currently at 100, though the number will likely rise over the next day. John Erickson states that the region has a full and robust program, and the keynote speaker is a faculty member from UC Davis. Commences ice breaker activity for board members.

John Erickson also shares gratitude towards Past President Anna Hennessey for having secured UC Davis as the 2023 conference location and Dr. Archana Venkatesan as the UC Davis faculty liaison. Erickson mentions the robust nature of UC Davis' financial support, which has been incredible.

Roberta Sabbath states that a lot of money was spent on zoom for unused panels. Susan Maloney states that she was unable to attend in person due to surgery. She requests an update on how things are going with AAR National regarding its commitment and relationship to the regions. Maloney emphasizes the strength of the Western Region and suggests that the Board document as much as possible on the data of its conferences, including attendance at sessions.

James Berry: apologizes for being unable to make it to the conference in person, but notes all of the positive changes being made with the region. Joey Alan Le: Discusses his happiness at being added to the Board as the current webmaster and part of the positive board of the AAR/WR. John Erickson: Thanks Joey for his services as Webmaster and makes note to the board that Joey has done good work with the website. Jake Nagasawa discusses travel constraints and also plans for the board dinner. Janice: Had the first session this morning – Women's Caucus. She is delighted to be in person and connect with people.

Anjeanette LeBoeuf gives an update on some of her work. Souad Ali discusses an update on a book project she is working on with Emily Silverman, which was a project stemming from a past conference of the AAR/WR. Emily Silverman also emphasizes the importance of being back in person in 2023. Jacob Perez updates the board on his learning process about the logistics and flexibility on panels. Sakena

Young-Scaggs discusses the Black Caucus and a new unit - Black Theology Session. Marie Cartier discusses changes in the country related to reproductive rights and women's health, as well as the interrelationship of these issues with religion. Valerie Miles-Tribble acknowledges the importance of supporting incoming leadership and each other.

2. John Erickson closes introductory statements. Overview: new business, dinner is at 5:30. Everything is fairly walkable at UC Davis.

Marie Cartier – While it does seem walkable, she has already noticed issues on walking and accessibility.

Jacob Perez – 2023 conference overview. 1st in person and hybrid.

- Overview for board. Lanyard with board member is your key. Keep it on you. The Olson building where the panels are at. You need to have it to access the building. (there was a break-in in that building during a weekend conference, so they are monitoring attendance)
- Challenge: pretty large footprint for walking. No cart shuttle – two registration tables (UCDAVIS students will be manning tables) They have been extremely helpful.
- Attendance – 5 caucus events, 34 panels, 94 presentations, 2 keynotes, Registration is 99/100. Majority is student and independent scholar – handful of faculty. As usual.
- New thing for 2023 – trying to adapt is HYBRID. Not really user friendly but we are working with it. John, Jake, Anjeanette, Jacob – Zoom facilitators. For hybrid panels. Best practices – in person go and then worry about tech stuff. To keep conference going. Refining the process in the future with help from universities and others.
- Keynote and presidential addresses will be recorded but not livestream through zoom. Will be uploaded later. Jacob is already starting to think of ways to make it better. And schedule is first and foremost. Structuring things.

Emily Silverman – questions on zoom for panels and sending out the information.

Jacob Perez – participants will receive a mass email from Eventbrite, and the list will include the zoom links.

Anjeanette LeBoeuf – Congratulates Jacob Perez on all of his work, with full board in agreement.

Jacob Perez – the region is receiving help from students and people in the building for its 2023 conference. Janice Poss states that student help for women's caucus was particularly good, though attendance was low.

3. John Erickson opens up New business – Looking to 2024 UNLV

Jacob Perez states that the contract with UNLV is signed and that he has already done his site visit to UNLV. He adds that the conference at UNLV will be held in one building, and even on one floor of the building. Accessibility will be great. Jacob wants to make a shift in certain conference procedures and asks for clarification on how to proceed – regarding certain scheduling and days.

Sakena Young-Scaggs – motion for discussion

Souad Ali- seconds the motion

Anjeanette LeBeouf – nuanced and needs to be discussed. Might need additional meeting for all of the moving parts of the conference and set up. The region's agenda is packed, and this is quite important.

Marie Cartier - as we think about rescheduling we also need to look at establishing New policy. New sessions get one session on Saturday. To give them publicity. Business mtg should be the last thing.

Jacob Perez – mentions that at this conference, the region has 6 to 8 sessions in one time slot. Hybrid logistically means running 2 conferences at the same time.

John Erickson – longer conversations on new units and feasibility. Sikh studies is an example. Emily Silverman – at the time of acceptance, Sikh studies was largely attended. Sakena Young-Scaggs – emphasizes Sikh relevance right now. Anjeanette LeBoeuf - Giving context to the low attendance of the Sikh Session. Some presenters could not come due to outlaw from India in the Punjab

John Erickson - Likes where the region has been going and continues to go. There is a potential and problems in having the Business meeting is the last thing. The region should look at it.

Emily Silverman notes that as a past president, she wants the board to be prudent in its judgement and having grace for this conference.

John Erickson – Conference surveys will be crucial for us to see where we can do quick fixes and where are problem areas. We are just starting the process. Which ideally will be a 3-year process.

Valerie Miles-Tribble – Wants to voice a need to keep the conferences hybrid. Students are coming to this conference.

Jacob Perez – the region also needs to be aware of the physical space of future conferences. The accessibility of transportation, airports, and the ease of walking around.

Sakena Young-Scaggs – mentions she is already thinking about where the conference will be when she takes the lead. Even though she is at Stanford, she believes that Arizona State University is the better candidate. Costs, airports, transportation, and tech.

Anjeanette LeBoeuf – we need to make sure that we are always looking to ensure that all of the region is represented, and all types can be present from online and in-person.

Souad Ali – emphasizes ASU as an excellent location for the AAR/WR's conference.

Janice Poss – Asks if the region should make a list of the units in the past and what we current are having this conference for Assessment. Is there possible room for a schedule rotation or are certain things locked in?

Jacob Perez – Planning Sessions and Panels are more of a template.

Sakena Young-Scaggs – call for a vote to Reevaluate, new trip unlv, schedule assessment.

Marie – seconds the vote.

Motion passings unanimously. We will reevaluate, authorize Jacob Perez to take another trip to UNLV and schedule for assessment.

John Erickson – Just wanting to clarify. Jacob is good to go for a new trip, reevaluation, and schedule reassessment.

Roberta Sabbath – Gives a heads up about what is happening at UNLV, with the recent political action. Very strong interfaith group present at UNLV. Suggests and recognizes the site and the Process. Religious inclusion. Opportunities that are being made here. Both academically and community. State of Nevada robust indigenous population. Tuition free for indigenous. Bringing in interfaith and indigenous. So grateful for institutional help and grateful for us to be there.

Emily Silverman - Is really hoping for more attendance, 2 years in a row in person. Airport is more accessible. Roberta Sabbath – Things are changing on the UNLV campus with some new people in admin so the new visit with Jacob is necessary. Sakena Young-Scaggs asks for clarification on duties as Vice President Elect and when to write theme for 2024. John Erickson states that he will share the procedures on Presidential line. Sakena would like to see the 2025 conference at ASU, it will be costly at Stanford. Concerned about the attendance, costs, and footprint.

John Erickson asks about the timeframe and when the board should confirm its decision to make the 2025 conference at ASU. As it is crucial, the region must lock these locations in as soon as possible. We have been lucky in the last few years as we had UNLV put on hold due to COVID.

John Erickson – Makes a motion to formally ask ASU in conjunction with Stanford to hold the 2025 conference. Valerie Miles-Tribble seconds the motion. Souad has agreed to work with ASU, Sakena will bring a Stanford contingent. Vote Passes Unanimously – 2025 will be at ASU with conjunction with Stanford.

John Erickson – Wants to remind the board to keep an eye on the budget. Every dollar we are making this conference is coming back to us. So that we can start to do more. So, let's give it to Jake to go over the Budget Report.

4. Regional Coordinator Jake Nagasawa gives the 2023 budget report:

- November 20,234.22
- Already awarded 3 travel grants awarded \$750 (4th will be paid at conference)
- National 2800 subvention
- March 21443.29 –
- 1200 more than in November
- Conference budget in the fall projection was 7000.
- Estimated revenue \$4200 (after Eventbrite deduction)
- Costs still needing to be paid - \$3700 – Conference Manager stipend, paper awards, \$500 honorarium, RC reimbursement.
- Net revenue \$500 or breaking even.

Souad Ali asks: What has been the history on the subvention that we get from National? Has it changed or do we get more due to us being a more robust region? Jake responds that the region receives \$2800. It will not change. Emily Silverman asks whether there are any opportunities for the region to receive grants? What about Research grants?

Jake Nagasawa suggests discussing some of the struggles of AAR National. The region must use some of AAR National's operating systems, including how we disperse our regional grants, but sometimes those systems lag.

Marie – Adds what she experienced when attending the regional meeting at national in November 2022. It was all very confusing. Marie went to get information. Marie expressed to the session how robust we are and that we have a Women and a Black Caucus. Western is the only region with not only a Queer Caucus but a Queer Advocate. Also astonished how many people are on the board and how long we meet. Other regionals are not getting help. We didn't even get information.

Emily Silverman states that she has been involved with Regional and National for 10 years now and underlines the strength of the regional conferences. Marie Cartier mentions that the Western Region has done a good job and is making model/template that could be used with other regions.

Valerie Miles-Tribble is interested in understanding the National relationship with all of the regions. Does National recognize and reward the Western Region for the fact that this region has done a robust conference every year, for example?

Sakena Young-Scaggs states that we are having multiple threads of discourse here. Inclusion with National and other regions, our role within the AAR community, the conferences we put on every year and our influence as a board.

Jake Nagasawa – Also wants to stress that other regions in Society of Biblical Literature have been dissolved. That the lack of participation in certain regions are a huge factor. The region does have a contract with National so there are certain obligations and procedures that everyone needs to follow.

John Erickson and Roberta Sabbath – both brought up the amount of money that was fundraised and put up by UNLV. Roberta was able to secure \$7400 and the projected costs for 2024 conferences is \$2576.40. Roberta states that she will probably raise more to cover more costs.

The board collectively thanks Roberta for her excellent fundraising.

Roberta Sabbath states that a good portion of this was done for the 2021 Conference where we had to go completely virtual. So, it was a collective work and collaboration between the board and UNLV to see this finally start to happen. She also emphasizes thanking Jake Nagasawa for his work as Regional Coordinator.

5. John Erickson brings up the next 2 items on the agenda: Website and email.

Jake Nagasawa updates the board to say that he had a meeting with Marketing and Communications at the National Level, and there is some talk about national hosting regional material on their website. The stated intention of doing this would be to make sure AAR branding is uniform. The regions remain in control of their intellectual property.

John Erickson- thanks Jake Nagasawa for bringing this to the whole board. John helped initially as the webmaster before coming to board. Just a reminder that all EC all have access to website, and we have a webmaster position. Valerie Miles-Tribble asks whether the region is being forced to comply regarding the website, to which Jake Nagasawa responds that no, not currently.

John Erickson states that he is happy to work with AAR while protecting the region. Marie Cartier agrees.

Valerie – Wants to talk about the benefits to being separate, for students and faculty, and is in the field – there is benefit in the mind of regional of connections to national. Not fully tied to national but great for guild work. Having some association with national.

Jake Nagasawa outlines certain benefits and also losses with the region's connection to AAR National. Suggests that a post-conference survey could help understand how members feel about the AAR National Brand? Thinks Valerie point of branding is important.

Sakena – Point of Clarification. What are the pros and cons under branding? What were the issues that National did bring up? Jacob Perez states that there is a visible disconnect with logos – design of images, coloring. There should be more streamline imagery and cohesive connection between our website and National's.

Sakena – Is there a compromise? Saying yes to changing our logos but keeping our autonomy?

Janice Poss – updates the Board on her work with AAR National's Women's Caucus. Jacob Perez– Explains some ways in which the website can be updated and more user friendly.

Marie Cartier discusses a need to negotiate with AAR National. And clear projections on what to do what we want and how to do it. Before we go to national. Steer clear but also be connection to the brand.

Anjeanette LeBoeuf– If the website and handing over processes link to the National Paper Submission then she wants to voice her concern. National policy for paper submission demands membership before you can even submit a paper proposal. This is extremely exclusionary and not par for our region. Especially our region specifically has quite a large participation of students and independent scholars. We need to be extremely cautious. Warning for potential policy on national making us adopt that policy for paper submissions and I am extremely against this potential, so I understand the importance of the brand but also our brand as western region.

Souad Ali- Definitely sees regional and national as two different entities. National needs to adopt a policy for diversity across regions. Emily Silverman states that this is where knowing the history and the relationship between regional and national is important. Valerie Miles-Tribble discusses the need to consider the public face and credibility of the regional organization of AAR. John Erickson questions the need for the region to give over autonomy to National. Is fine with partnership especially with having Jake/ Regional Manger working with National. We are most definitely willing to updating logo. Especially as branding is still important.

Jake Nagasawa – explains that email communication and e-blasts are sometimes difficult with AAR National. Certain notifications and correspondence have to go through National but National is behind with sending out correspondences from the regions.

John Erickson recommends looking at past conference data and put it on excel sheet. Google doc/mail chimp. Responsible use. Jake Nagasawa discusses the regional email system. Eventbrite date. Check this box to get an email. consent is key. Potential to do our own email. Recommendation. Its immediate.

Valerie Miles-Tribble discusses the importance of branding while also focusing on autonomy.

Marie Cartier suggests taking a 15 minute break (break taken)

John Erickson recommences the session.

Jake Nagasawa states that there will be a meeting with all RCs and national with 6th of April.

6. John Erickson – policy update.

Anjeanette – Here are the recommendations by the Ad Hoc Committee:

- A. Add New Policy Item to WR Policy
 1. To be added after the WR Mission and before “History of Region” in Policy and labeled “Professional Conduct Policy and Procedures”. (Using the same wordage and structure that National AAR and the US Government have in their policies and procedures)
 2. The subsections will include items listed as “Harassment, Sexual/Gender Harassment, Bullying and Zero Tolerance Policy, Retaliation, Discrimination and Other Harassment Conducts, and Confidentiality and Procedures Processes.”
 3. This process needs to include the President, the Regional Coordinator, and Queer Advocate, Diversity and Inclusion Advocate, and Women’s Caucus Liaison to work on language and paragraphs.
- B. Recommendation of creating an Ombudsperson position.
- C. Establishing the positions of Queer Advocate, Diversity and Inclusion Advocate, and Women’s Caucus Liaison as designated Members to receive reports and incidents of Misconduct, Harassing, and Bullying.
 1. This will need to have their roles altered, potential additional training in reporting and sensitivity training.
- D. Creating a worksheet/welcome packet for new members so they can read the policy, learn their roles, and understand the timeline.
 1. Also include Unit Chairs to understand policy and procedures if they receive reports, disclosures, and incidents.
 2. A worksheet on Codes of Conduct and Procedures will be helpful to combat the quick turn around of board members.
- E. Highly recommended Western Region purchase Insurance Policy for its board members.
- F. Create an Ad Hoc Committee with Susan Maloney to look at “Solidifying the Western Region and Stability) within our Policy and Operating Agreement.

Susan Maloney expresses that Board members understand their positions and responsibilities. Especially Jake who is in the role as Regional Coordinator and works directly for us with National. Transparency on his roles and items.

Sakena Young-Scaggs - Is it possible to have a different position? separation of treasurer (takes in money) and financial manager/secretary (gives out money) a team but delineates duties. Clear and financially sound. Can we even do this?

Susan Maloney response – offering insight into history with National. National office struggling and there is a massive reorganization that includes board members. Every region has vote that was equal to national president. Those positions help national work in tandem with the regions. She believes that national should hold the insurance. Regional created our own nonprofit. An entity to itself. WESCOR. If you get your own insurance, the insurance we have is for the activity. We get a meeting with the new ED. Top concerns. Report is great and serious issues.

John Erickson discusses Ad Hoc Committee waiting for filling of National ED. Looking over policy and meet with National. Brian Clearwater should be contacted. Policy Committee Bullying/sexual harassment should continue.

Sakena Young Scaggs – Motions to accept report from Ad Hoc Committee. Jake Nagasawa – seconds the motion. Vote unanimously passes. Report is accepted.

A new item. Move forward with recommendations 1 through 5. Now needs to be taken over by EC and new Ad Hoc Committee.

John Erickson motions for the vote. Sakena Young-Scaggs seconds the vote. Vote unanimously passes. EC and Ad Hoc Committee for goal review and implementation. Ad Hoc committee on solidifying policy will be tabled and engaged at a later date.

Marie Cartier asks whether the region should consider term limits. As this was not an item on the agenda, however, and time is limited, this will be a question for the next board meeting.

4:54 pm – board meeting adjourns.