Policy File

American Academy of Religion, Western Region (AAR/WR)

(Revised and updated November 18, 2017, AAR/WR Board)
(Revised and updated March 22, 2017, AAR/WR Board)
(Revised and updated April 13, 2016, AAR/WR Board)
(Version 6, March 8, 2014, AAR/WR Board)

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this Document

The Policy File functions as the historical record or institutional memory of the AAR/WR leadership—primarily the Executive Committee (EC) of the Board of Directors (Board) as they address and resolve questions and issues over time. The appendices to the Policy File function primarily as a repository of records and forms related to the annual conference.

The Policy File is intended to serve as a "living" document, and is expected to be revised annually, as members of the Board address new issues or decide to revise past policies and procedures, and to update the historical records included in the text.

The Policy File will be available to members of the AAR/WR region through our website. Content for portions of that website—e.g. guidelines and policies related to the annual conference planning—will be drawn from this document.

Relationship to AAR/WR Operating Agreement

The AAR/WR Operating Agreement is a legally binding document that outlines the governance of AAR/WR, including its relationship to AAR National, lists the titles (and in the case of the EC, job descriptions) for all members of the Board, lays out procedures for elections, discusses the restrictions and responsibilities AAR/WR has as a non-profit entity, and the like. The Operating Agreement references the creation of a "Policy File" in Article 1, Definitions.

By contrast, this Policy File is more operational, covering the details of managing the work associated with our primary responsibility, putting on the annual regional conference. The Operating Agreement is something like our constitution, and is revised or amended infrequently; the Policy File is an evolving document we expect will be revised regularly.

The Policy File will reference pertinent sections of the Operating Agreement when laying out policies, and will include dates for policies, and who formulated them.

Responsibility for Maintaining and Publishing this Document

This document should be reviewed annually by the Board. The President is responsible for making sure this review happens, and will work with the Board to incorporate changes, publish a revised version, and update relevant sections of the website. The president should send an e-version of the revised Policy File to each member of the Board as well as to the region's liaison in the AAR National Office.

AAR/WR REGION

The Operating Agreement, Article 1, specifies the states that comprise this region. For the purposes of electing directors to Board positions, AAR/WR groups these as four geographical areas: Northern California, Southern California, Arizona and Nevada, and Hawaii and the Pacific Islands.

AAR/WR Mission

The AAR/WR Operating Agreement, Section 3.01 a, delineates "the general purposes" of the AAR National and the regional organizations, stipulating that the latter's mission should be "no different" from those purposes.

The Mission of the AAR/WR is:

- To promote the academic study of religion in California, Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii, and the Pacific Islands;
- To mentor students in the profession of religious studies;
- To create opportunities for research, dialogue, and engagement for religious studies scholars, primarily by holding an annual regional meeting; and
- To foster awareness of the importance of religious studies for understanding contemporary issues.
  (*revised November, 2013 by the AAR/WR Board*)

HISTORY OF AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION/WESTERN REGION CONFERENCE

(*Adapted from a report prepared by Rebecca Moore, Past President AAR/WR and Susan Maloney, Regionally Elected Coordinator AAR/WR, 1 April 2011*)

In 1992, AAR/WR and SBL/PCR, established the Western Commission for the Study of Religion (WECSOR) as a non-profit organization to coordinate their annual meetings. An Executive Secretary, serving a five-year term, was hired by both organizations to identify the site for meetings, plan logistics, handle registration, and coordinate numerous other duties associated with running an annual meeting. The WECSOR Executive Secretary was also responsible for publishing the Call for Papers for both organizations. An Executive Committee, or Board, for WECSOR was established, comprised of elected leaders of each organization: namely, the Vice President and Program Chair, the President, and the Past President, along with the regionally-elected director of each organization. The presidency of the WECSOR Board rotated on a three-year term between the two groups. This Executive Board had financial responsibility for WECSOR, and was responsible for recruiting a member to function as the WECSOR Executive Secretary.

The AAR/WR ran its annual meetings within this structure up to 2012. Discussions between the leadership of the two regional organizations led them to conclude that the interests and the needs of their respective national organizations were better served if they ran their annual conferences independently. To that end WESCOR was dissolved and the two organizations became separate organizations through their national offices. 2013 was the first year SBL/PCR and AAR/WR ran separate conferences in different venues.

The AAR/WR maintains a record of its past conferences, including conference themes, plenary speakers, and attendances. At this point our records go back to 2009. See the Appendices for this information.

AAR/WR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Composition of the Board and Responsibilities and Powers

The AAR/WR Board of Directors is addressed in the Operating Agreement, Article IV, Rights and Duties of the Board and Officers. The OA indicates the Board is comprised of at least 13, and up to 15, individuals, and in Section 4.2.f explains the responsibilities and powers of the *Executive Committee of the Board (EC), which is comprised of the Past President, President, Vice President, Regional Coordinator, and Graduate Student Representative elected to AAR National Graduate Student Committee*. The OA does not include detail for the responsibilities and powers of the remaining board positions. Those will be added to this section of this document as they are completed.

Regional Student Representatives (there may be up to three, each from a different geographical area) Responsibilities for Regional Student Representatives include:
- representing student concerns within the region;
- attending the two regional Board of Directors' meetings (one at the regional conference and one at the national Annual Meeting);
- communicating with student members of the region and managing the regional Student Members' Facebook Page;
- facilitating student involvement in the region, which may include helping to coordinate student events for the regional conference.

The AAR-WR must have one student elected to serve the dual role of regional Student Representative and national AAR Graduate Student Committee member (See job description below).

Diversity Advocate
Queer Advocate
Women's Caucus Liaison
Regional representatives:
- Northern California Regional Representative
- Southern California Regional Representative
- Arizona Regional Representative
- Nevada Regional Representative
- Hawaii/Pacific Islands Regional Representative

The AAR/WR Conference Manager (described in the next section) attends Board meetings as an *ex officio* (non-voting) member.

Although not currently specified in the OA, the President is responsible for maintaining records of Board elections, appointments and terms, and, in consultation with the Executive Committee, for filling vacant unit chair positions.

Board Members whose Office includes AAR/National Responsibilities

Regional Coordinator (RC)
The RC has several responsibilities at the level of the national AAR, including producing annual reports on regional activities, attending meetings (virtual and in person) of the Regions Committee, and managing the regional grants process. Detailed descriptions of these responsibilities are included in the Regional Officer's Handbook, published on the AAR national website (http://www.aarweb.org/node/183).

As of January 2016, the Regional Coordinator, is elected by the general membership at the annual regional Business Meeting.

RC travel expenses to the National and Regional AAR conferences are reimbursed at no more than $500/each. The RC must utilize institutional support for conference travel before accessing this funding from the region. AAR National provides two nights of lodging at the national conference to facilitate attendance at the Regions Committee meeting.

The RC shall be responsible to biannually verify and confirm that this policy file has been updated.

Student Director: Regional Student Representative who is elected to the AAR National Graduate Student Committee (GSC)
GSC is part of the Working Group of the AAR Board of Directors; the student serving this role has these additional responsibilities at the national level:
- representing student concerns and helping to coordinate student involvement at the national level of the AAR participate in GSC meetings during their term (one at the National Annual Meeting and approximately five online meetings per year);
- and to inform their region of the work of the GSC Committee work includes planning student events for the Annual Meeting, reporting to the GSC on student concerns and events of the region, and, occasionally, developing student initiatives and resources for the AAR. For further details, see the GSC Handbook;
- As of 2016, the Regional Student Representative elected to the AAR National Graduate Student Committee will also be a member of the AAR/WR Executive committee.

As of 2012, the AAR national office pays for GSC members' AAR membership, Annual Meeting registration, and two nights at the Annual Meeting conference hotel. NOTE: These benefits may vary by year.

OTHER POSITIONS IN AAR/WR
The Operating Agreement, Article IV, 4.02 specifies that the Executive Committee of the Board may hire positions deemed necessary by the Board. As of March 2013 other positions include: conference manager, student assistants, web master, and campus liaison. Not all are compensated.

Conference Manager
In fall 2012 the AAR/WR Executive Committee hired a **Conference Manager** through an Independent Contractor agreement signed by the Regional Coordinator with this job description:

Description of Responsibilities, Qualifications, Compensation, and Term of Office (last modified August 8, 2012):
The Annual Regional Conference Manager shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, shall usually have a term of office of three years, and may serve one additional consecutive term. The Annual Regional Conference Manager shall receive an annual stipend to be determined by the AAR-WR Board of Directors after the annual budget has been reviewed and approved.

Duties of the Annual Regional Conference Manager include:
- working with the Vice President/Program Director and the President;
- working with host institutions of the annual regional conference regarding logistical matters, including accommodations, on-site registration, room scheduling, parking, common meals, and so on;
- working with AAR National to set up online conference registration; managing all facets of the registration process producing, printing, and distributing digitally a program for the annual regional conference arriving on site before the annual regional conference begins to set up and meet with representatives of the host institution;
- supervising, if necessary and the budget allows, student assistants at the annual regional conference working on the AAR-WR website with the Executive Committee and webmaster providing to the Executive Committee, within 30 days of the conclusion of the annual regional conference, a report of all aspects of the annual regional conference, including registration and session attendance, expenses and revenues, etc., and making recommendations for managing future conferences ongoing and timely email communication with the AAR-WR Executive Committee throughout the year.
- The Annual Regional Conference Manager shall report to the AAR-WR Executive Committee, with the primary contact being the Vice President/Program Director. The Annual Regional Conference Manager shall also remain in close communication with the host campus liaison and/or other campus representatives. The AAR-WR Executive Committee shall evaluate the performance of the Annual Regional Conference Manager, following the conference. The Executive Committee shall report to the full AAR-WR Board of Directors on the performance of the Annual Regional Conference Manager within 60 days of the conference's conclusion.

The Conference Manager shall be authorized to hire **student assistants** for the conference up to the amount specified in the annual conference budget. Their role shall be to assist the conference manager during the annual conference. Typically, the campus liaison will identify students for the conference manager, who will then take responsibility for hiring, scheduling and paying them out of AAR/WR funds.

Webmaster
The AAR/WR created a webmaster position around 2009. The AAR/WR Board suspended this position effective March 2014 with the adoption of a new website and model for website maintenance. The Webmaster's duties include:
- maintaining and updating the regional website in a timely manner;

- working with the VP/Program Director to post in a timely manner the theme and call for papers for the annual conference, the lists of the Board of Directors and the Unit Chairs, and guidelines related to the annual meeting;
- working with the Conference Manager and Vice President to post in a timely manner the program for the annual conference and registration information.

To ensure clear communication, the webmaster reports to the Vice President, and with the exception of the Conference Manager, receives all materials to be posted from the Vice President. As of July 2013 the webmaster position was not compensated.

Campus Liaison
The Campus Liaison is typically a faculty member in the religious studies department at the institution hosting the annual conference. His/her duties include:
- Securing confirmation from campus officials, 16 months in advance of the date, that the institution will host the annual conference, including a commitment to provide classrooms and other facilities at no charge, and commitment to the tradition of host institutions contributing toward the cost of the conference reception (in 2012 and 2013 that contribution was $1,500);
- In consultation with the Conference Manager, reserving meeting spaces for the annual conference (typically 6 "smart" classrooms for concurrent unit panels, a space for the plenary lecture, a space for the reception, and a space for registration);
- Introducing the Conference Manager to campus offices supporting the conference— e.g., Event Planning, Catering, Media Services, Public Safety (parking), Public Relations, etc., and directing the Conference Manager to relevant portions of the host institution website for logistics (maps, hotels, restaurants, information about the university and region);
- Working with Conference Manager to draft a press release with appropriate office on campus;
- Securing a campus official to welcome the AAR/WR membership to their campus, typically during the reception.

This position is not compensated, but the President is encouraged to include a commendation in the thank you note he/she will send to the department chair and other university officials.
(*AAR/WR Board, March 2014*)

Elected Positions Extension
The AARWR Board may not vote to extend elected positions. Individuals interested in extending their term for elected position must get approval from AARWR general membership at the annual Business Meeting.
(*AAR/WR Board,* November 2017)

UNITS AND UNIT CHAIRS
The Operating Agreement, Article 4, 4.05, references units and unit chairs, specifying a chair term of three years, renewable. All other information regarding units is included in this Policy File.

This section is divided into three parts: Units (purpose, procedures for forming new units, dissolution of units, and special topic/wild card sessions), Unit Chairs (process for election, qualifications, other considerations, job descriptions) and Guidelines (something of a job description, or best practices from effective unit chairs).

Units
Purpose
Units are key to the annual conference realizing the mission of the region. They represent what members in the region think are important fields and trends in the discipline, and their sessions are where members present their papers.

Proposing and Approving New Units
As of March 2016 the AAR/WR region had 24 units. Because adoption of new program units affects existing program units, it is important to follow established procedures of review and evaluation. The following procedure for establishing new units was adopted in March 2012:

Proposal Submission: Individuals proposing new units should submit the following information to the Vice President, who will present it to the EC for discussion as to whether or not to recommend the proposal to the Board for review and final decision.

Regional Business Meeting and Elections
The Regional Director presides over the Regional Business Meeting and will hold elections for open leadership positions, except for the position of Regional Director, which is managed by the President.

On March 20, 2015, at the Regional Board Meeting at Santa Clara University, the Board voted that candidates interested in running for leadership positions are not required to be present at the Business Meeting to stand for election, but candidates are strongly encouraged to attend the general meeting at the annual regional conference, to demonstrate the seriousness of their commitment.

On November 21, 2015, at the AAR National Meeting at Atlanta, Georgia, the Board voted that only members in good standing who are current on membership to AAR, registered and paid for the AARWR conference can run for open positions, or vote during the regional business meeting, or serve in leadership positions. Effective immediately. The vote result are: 8 Yes; 0 No, and 1 abstain.

Candidates wishing to stand for election should communicate with the Regionally Elected Coordinator and submit a short statement of interest and CV as required by the call for open board positions posted on the AARWR webpage. The deadline to express interest to stand for election is two business days before the Friday Board Meeting each Spring (i.e. Wednesday night at 11:59 pm) If a position has a candidate who expressed interest before the deadline for candidacy, no other candidate will be accepted for the position. If a position has no candidate, interested candidates may stand for election during the Business Meeting.

Form for new Unit Proposals:

Proposal for a New AAR/WR Program Unit

Name	
Address	
Email address	
Institution or Affiliation	
Unit Name	
Justification	*(provide the academic justification for such a unit)*
Impact Statement	*(provide an assessment of the impact this unit will have on other existing unit)*
Interest Statement	*(provide names of persons expressing interest in adding this unit)*

Approval Process for New Unit Proposals. The Board is responsible for approving all new units, typically in the form of a vote at one of its two meetings on a recommendation from the EC.

Time Line for New Unit Proposals. The process from submission to permission to participate as a unit in the annual conference can take up to 19 months. A time line for planning purposes is included here:
- March 15-October 1: Proposal for new unit is submitted to Vice President, who submits to EC for review.
- November 1: EC decides on recommendation to the Board at its next meeting. December 1: Vice President notifies submitter of the Board's decision.
- June 1: New unit's char/co-chairs is included in invitation to prepare call for proposals for the next annual conference.

Proposals for new units can be submitted at any time during the year; but the EC will need at least one month prior to the next Board meeting to review it and make its recommendations.

Dissolution of Units
If any of the following occurs for two consecutive years a unit will be dissolved by the E.C.
- a unit goes without generating a call for proposals;
- the unit does not receive a sufficient number of proposals to contribute one session to the annual conference;
- the unit does not have an individual willing to serve as unit chair.

When a unit is dissolved the EC will notify the most recent chair of the unit of this action, and invite an appeal of the action to the EC within 30 days of the notice. (*AAR/WR Board, March 2014)*

Unit Chairs
The following sections were drafted at different points in time by different individuals to help Unit Chairs understand their responsibilities and to provide detailed information about preparing for the annual conference. The next section of this document covers this information briefly in the Conference Planning timeline.

Process for appointment
Unit Chairs serve a three-year term. Nominations are made to or by the Vice-President, who is responsible for arranging a vote by the Executive Committee in a timely manner. Nominations should include a statement of the individual's willingness to serve a three-year term and a current resume or CV.

Renewals are handled by the VP.

Qualifications
The unit chair, or at least one of the unit co-chairs, shall be a scholar with a faculty appointment that brings institutional support, or be an individual with comparable experience (e.g. an established record of teaching, publications, or leadership experience within a comparable organization), and they shall have participated in previous AAR/WR conferences. The AAR/WR encourages units to include doctoral students as co-chairs in order to provide them leadership opportunities and to bring new energy and perspective to the units. (*AAR/WR Board, March 2014)*

Job description
Unit chairs provide leadership for their unit. The duties and responsibilities of the unit chair include:
* write the unit's call for proposals and submit it to the VP;
* make sure that those proposing papers have provided their AAR membership number on the Participant Form;
* review paper (and panel) proposals for the unit they convene;
* organize separate paper proposals into thematically coherent panels for their unit's session at the annual conference, and convey that information to the VP as part of the process of developing the conference program;
* arrange for panel moderators and assisting with finding respondents, if appropriate inform those who have submitted proposals whether or not their proposal has been accepted;
* attend unit panels during the annual meeting;
* attend the Unit Chairs meeting at the annual regional meeting;
* provide the Conference Manager with statistics on those attending their sessions during the annual conference;
* provide additional information to the Board of Directors of AAR/WR as requested
* identify future co-chairs from among individuals in the region, mentor them, and make a nomination to the VP for their successor.

See the Guidelines in this section below and the Conference Planning Time Line in the next section for detail on these responsibilities.

Regional Unit Chair Meetings
Unit chairs meet formally as a group during the annual conference, at a session chaired by the Vice President. The Vice President will circulate a call for agenda items and then publish an agenda with materials prior to the conference. The purpose of these meetings is to review and discuss policies, procedures, problems and questions related to their work as unit chairs. For

some items an advisory vote will be taken, the results of which will be shared with EC and the unit chairs.

Guidelines for Unit Chair work Prior to the Conference
It is suggested that chairs look at both this section and the timeline in the next section.

Unit Description
Chairs should develop and maintain a 2-3 sentence description of their unit's focus and purpose. With the new website unit chairs will be asked to include this in material they develop for their unit's page. (See the national AAR website for ideas on how to write short unit descriptions.)

Call for Proposals for Annual Conference
Soon after the annual conference the new VP will prompt you to submit your unit's call for proposals for the next conference; these typically are due around the beginning of May. The VP will provide a conference theme. While chairs are not required to build their call around the theme, that is encouraged and at the very least, chairs should refer to it in the calls they develop for their unit (*Unit Chairs meeting, 2013 annual conference*). Be sure to provide the contact information for sending proposals to your unit. The VP will combine the calls from all our units and distribute it to membership via the website, along with general information about the process, a participant form, and dates for the conference. Calls for joint sessions with other units should be made at this time; and if their proposal for a new unit is approved by the EC, individuals should develop a call for proposals.

Receiving Proposals
Starting in late summer through to the region's deadline (typically early October) individuals will submit proposals for papers directly to unit chairs. If they do not include a participant form, request that they do so; this is necessary to ascertain IT needs and to allow you to verify the individual has provided the ID number for their AAR membership. Chairs should record all submissions in order to provide statistics to VP. (Note, the pilot for the 2014 conference by which individuals were allowed to submit two proposals to different units, was suspended upon the recommendation of the VP responsible for administering the process.)

Organizing Sessions
Each unit is allotted two sessions at the annual conference. (Joint sessions with other units are usually in addition to these two. Try to organize coherent sessions of three to four papers. The deadline for submitting your sessions to the VP is typically mid-October; be sure to include the individuals' names, institutional affiliation, and paper titles. (See Appendix for template and a sample). Should they receive a large number of high quality proposals, you may request additional sessions; depending on what other units are doing, the VP may be able to make room in the program for these.

Joint Sessions
In addition to the two allotted sessions, each unit is allowed to submit one joint session; or more in consultation with the VP/Program Chair.

Session Moderators and Respondents
Each session should have a moderator. Unit chairs can serve moderators for their unit's sessions, but they are encouraged to invite others to do so. You are encouraged to consider inviting a senior or established scholar from the area where the meeting will be held to serve as a respondent for the session. (Currently, we waive the registration fee for senior scholars who serve as respondents.)

Pool Process
You may have one or more good proposals than you can use. Some may be particularly oriented to the conference theme or could fit within another unit. When they submit their sessions in late October chairs should include these proposals. The VP will then create a pool of proposals (absent the author's name) from which other units can draw should they need more papers. Should no other units pick up a paper, the VP may consider accepting those proposals for a special session or wild card session for the conference.

If you need more proposals
If you did not receive enough proposals to create two sessions for your unit, and the pool does not contain proposals you can use, consider organizing a panel of experts on an important topic or a recent publication in your unit's area, especially by a scholar in the region.

Submit Proposed Sessions
Unit chairs should use the template provided by the VP to submit the session they have prepared— typically no later than Oct. 31. They should include proposals they are not using, and note any special considerations (e.g. joint sessions, requests for additional sessions).

Preliminary Program
In November, typically before the AAR national meeting, the VP will contact chairs with a preliminary and partial (scheduling will not be completed until later in the process) program, work resolve issues related to individuals submitting more than one proposal, work with chairs on the pool process, respond to requests for special sessions, and begin to identify special requirements that would affect scheduling sessions by the conference manager. Note, it is AAR/WR policy that each presenter may present only a single paper (and present a single response) at the regional conference. If a presenter has two proposals accepted, one must be dismissed (except when one is to the Graduate Student Professional Development Unit). This can be a time -consuming process; unit chairs need to be prompt and patient in their work with the VP at this stage.

Notifications re Accepted Proposals
Once the VP has resolved issues and completed a revised preliminary program—ideally soon after the national AAR meeting, but no later than the first week in December-- she/he will circulate it to chairs for review. Once that review is completed the VP will notify all chairs that it is ok to notify participants of acceptance and to request and receive their confirmations that they will be presenting their papers at the conference. Chairs should send them the "Guidelines for Presenting Papers at the AAR/WR." Stress the importance of 1) following through on their commitment to present papers; 2) making sure their national AAR membership is current

before they present at the regional conference; and 3) reminding them that all presenters must pre-register online for the conference in order to be included in the final program.

Notification re Rejected Proposals
Chairs do not inform writers of rejected proposals of their rejections until all individuals whose proposals have been accepted have conformed their participation in the conference and the VP has completed the pool process. Be as positive as you can; e. g., encourage them to attend the conference anyway, to submit proposals again next year, serve as a respondent, and so on. Notifications should be sent by December 15.

Report Statistics on this stage of the process
Chairs send the VP figures on how many proposals you received, how many you accepted, and how many you rejected. It will be helpful for future conference planning if you briefly indicate reasons for rejection, e.g., too many proposals, the proposal was sub-par, proposal did not fit into a coherent session, etc.

VP Handoff to Conference Manager
At this point the VP conveys the conference program draft to Conference Manager for the purposes of scheduling and preparing the complete final program.

Review of Schedule for Conference Program
In early January the Conference Manager will provide a tentative schedule and text for the conference program; this will be your last opportunity to request specific accommodations regarding the scheduling of sessions. The Conference Manager has a number of constraints in developing the schedule (See Appendix), so not all requests can be met.

Cancellations
Let the Conference Manager and VP know about any cancellations you receive as soon as you hear about them. This has implications for registration as well as for the final program.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE PLANNING AND PREPARATION

This section includes a comprehensive timeline, processes, templates and policies for planning the annual meeting.

Timeline for Conference Planning
Our main task is to put on a two-day conference in the spring. To accomplish that task a large number of individuals need to come together at various points prior to the conference—for instance, in developing the call for proposals, in scheduling presentations by over 130 individuals across 24 units, in making onsite arrangements. To help individuals involved in the process—especially the unit chairs—the following timeline has been developed. The dates are targets; when individuals complete tasks later than the target date they should be prepared to make adjustments on processes for other related items. For all intents and purposes, this is a recommended timeline for planning the conference, which the VP/Program Chair will communicate.

Note, we have created a separate timeline for items not directly tied to the conference (e.g. board meetings, grants, evaluations) and largely for the EC. That timeline is in the next section.

March 1-April 1	Vice President/New President communicates with contact at host institution for following year to confirm that the university can host (and can provide subsidy), and communicates with contact at institution identified to host the conference *two years down the line* to obtain a formal commitment.
April 1-30	VP circulates the roster of unit chairs that includes the unit title and contact information (typically institutional mailing address and e-mail address) for review by chairs. VP makes corrections as need be, identifies remaining vacancies, and prepares a version for posting on the website.
	Conference Manager arranges to post the dates and location for the next year's conference on the website.
	VP consults with EC on a theme for the next year's conference.
May 1-30	VP circulates conference theme to unit chairs and asks them to submit unit calls for proposals. VP discusses possible joint sessions with chairs, etc. President works to fill vacancies among unit chairs.
May 1-June 15	VP collates all unit calls, and develops the regional conference call for proposals. After circulating for final review by unit chairs and EC, VP arranges to post this on website and works through RC to submit it to Religious Studies News (RSN), where a version will be posted on the national website and published in the print version of RSN in October.
June 15-30	RC arranges for national AAR to send out email blast to regional members announcing location and dates for next year's conference and how to access the CFP and participant form on our website (this e-mail can also announce the regional grant process)
July 1	Campus Liaison consults with Conference Manager and completes facilities reservations at host institution.
Sept 1	RC requests AAR national send email blast to AAR/WR members reminding them of paper proposal deadline.
Sept 30 / Oct 15	Deadline for paper proposals and participant forms to unit chairs.
Oct 30	(See Guidelines for unit chairs.) Unit Chairs organize sessions for conference and submit them to VP, along with statistics on submissions and the proposals and participant forms for any they have not accepted so VP can organize pool, special sessions and/or wild card session.

	Conference Manager checks in with Campus Liaison re facilities reservations and obtains website links re university, local area, accommodations, etc. Campus Liaison sends "special thanks" draft and campus welcome arrangements to Conference Manager for inclusion in conference program.
Nov 15	(See Guidelines for unit chairs) VP develops and distributes a preliminary and partial program and a pool of papers not selected by units. VP works with chairs to resolve outstanding issues (e.g. multiple submissions by one individual) and coordinate chairs' selection of proposals in the pool process (Note, pool proposals are distributed without names of authors.). This can be a time-consuming process; unit chairs need to be prompt and patient in their work with the VP.
Nov 22-Dec 1	VP revises the preliminary and partial program one last time and circulates it to unit chairs for final review. VP instructs unit Chairs to notify individuals whose proposals they have accepted, including those selected from pool, and requests immediate confirmation of intent to register for the conference. requesting revisions and/or scheduling constraints they may know about. Unit chairs respond with confirmations and further information as necessary.
Dec 8	VP makes decision regarding special or wild card session for the proposals remaining in the pool and extends invitations to individuals whose proposals were accepted to participate in the session, requesting confirmation.
Dec 15.	Unit Chairs notifies individuals whose proposals were not accepted and were not used in the pool.
	VP conveys the conference program draft to Conference Manager for the purposes of scheduling and preparing the complete final program.
	Conference Manager begins to prepare registration materials and process with AAR national in preparation of opening registration Jan 15.
Jan 8	Conference Manager e-mails penultimate draft of conference program with scheduled session to EC and Unit Chairs for final revisions and requests Unit Chairs remind presenters of date, time, and place of conference, their commitment to attend, and their requirement to pre-register for the conference online in order to remain in the program.
Jan 15	Conference Manager finalizes registration process and asks RC to send pre-registration information to members through email blast via AAR national
	Conference Manager prepares first iteration of program to upload to the website
	Online Pre-Registration begins and remains open until one week before the conference.
Feb 1	Conference Manager confers with Campus Liaison re final plans re catering, technology, student assistants, "Special Thanks" updates, materials for a

	Conference Press Release by host institution, etc. A site visit may be necessary to accomplish this.
Feb 7 (one month prior to conf.)	Deadline for papers to be submitted to AAR/WR President for consideration for Awards (Student, Independent Scholar, S. Ali Progressive Islam Award)
Feb 15	Unit Chairs remind individuals presenting of the conference dates, registration process, presenter guidelines, etc. Unit Chairs notify Conference Manager of any changes to program. Final copy of program readied by Conference Manager.
Mar 1	Conference Manager completes "official copy" of final program and arranges to post it on website. Pre-registration closes one week before conference.
Mar TBD	The Annual Regional Conference, accompanied by AAR/WR Board Meeting, AAR/WR General Membership Meeting, and Unit Chair Meeting. Unit Chairs provide Conference Manager and VP with statistics on attendance at sections during the conference. (If student helpers are hired, they can keep a headcount by circulating.)
April 1	RC writes on behalf of AAR/WR Board thank you notes to individuals at host institution. Typically the campus liaison identifies these people, and arranges for them to be listed in conference program as well.

Annual Conference Budget and Budget Template

Based on its review of the Conference Manager's Conference Report the RC will work with the EC to develop a budget for the following year's annual conference. This budget will set anticipated expenses and project revenues, set the fees for the annual conference, and will include ongoing non-conference-related (administrative) expenses already approved by the Board (as of 2013, the Conference Manager stipend and expenses and a portion of RC's expenses). The Board will review and approve this budget at its meeting during the November AAR national meeting. The conference manager will be charged to work within this budget. The budget will then be administered by the RC as our fiscal agent and the conference manager. Adjustments to the conference expenses in the budget less than $300 can be approved by the RC; larger adjustments will require EC discussion and approval.

The conference budget should be developed using this template:

Item	Amount
AAR/WR (Direct) Conference Expenses	
Awards	
Catering: Reception	
Catering other	
Student workers	

Plenary Speaker	
AAR/WR Administration Expenses	
Conf Mngr stipend	
Conf Mngr expenses	
RC expenses	
AAR/WR Conference Revenues	
AAR National Regional Subvention	
Host Institution Subsidy	
Conference Fees and Projections	
Full/Associate Professor	
Assistant Professor	
Adjunct Prof/Lecturer	
Independent Scholar	
Guests	

Host Institutions
The Operating Agreement, 4.03, states that the annual conference rotates between three geographical areas: Southern California, Northern California, and Arizona. The EC is responsible for securing a commitment from an institution to host the next year's annual conference. The president (in consultation with the EC) shall take the lead in approaching potential host institutions. The commitment should specify dates (typically during a spring break), access to space (classrooms for panel sessions and suitable spaces for plenary talk(s), reception and registration venues), a campus liaison, and a pledge of financial support (traditionally $1,500 towards the cost of the reception). Ideally this process is completed two years in advance of the conference, with confirmation regarding the following year obtained in the early spring, ideally in time so that the following year's dates and venue can be announced at the annual conference and/or included in the call for proposals.

Days for the Conference
In fall 2012, the AAR/WR Board voted to move the conference days from the traditional Sunday/Monday format to a Saturday/Sunday format, starting with the 2014 annual meeting at Loyola Marymount University. The EC is working with the Conference Manager to make that adjustment (e.g., pre-conference meeting schedules, scheduling in relationship to worship days for participants) and to address related scheduling opportunities presented by this new format. The EC will monitor the effect of the scheduling change on participation in the annual conference.

Guidelines for Presenters at Annual Conference
Unit chairs are asked to refer presenters to this section of the Policy File.

AAR Membership
You must be a member of the American Academy of Religion in order to present papers or serve as a respondent during the annual conference. When you submit a proposal for a paper you complete a participant form that asks you to provide your membership ID number.

On November 21, 2015, at the AAR National Meeting at Atlanta, Georgia, the Board voted that

only members in good standing who are current on membership to AAR, registered and paid for the AARWR conference can run for open positions, or vote during the regional business meeting, in addition to serve in leadership positions. Effective immediately. The vote result are: 8 Yes; 0 No, and 1 abstain.

Limits on Number of Papers
Individuals may present only one paper or participate in one panel per conference. We have set this limit in order to make limited participant spaces available to as many individuals as possible. In 2013 the Board approved one exception to this policy: individuals making a presentation to the Graduate Student Professional Development Unit may also present a paper to another unit.

Follow through on your commitment
Submitting a proposal means you commit to register for and attend the annual conference. Once your paper has been officially accepted, and you have confirmed your presence in a session, please maintain professional integrity by following through on your commitment to participate. Should you cancel at the last moment, or possibly even in the months preceding the conference, you will have denied another scholar the opportunity to present.

Length of Presentation
Paper slots in a session with three participants are typically 20 minutes in length. For most presenters this comes to only about nine typed double-spaced pages (in 12 point Times Roman). Please be considerate of other participants by editing your paper to fit within your allotted time slot.

Time Management during Session
The session moderator will usually give you time cues, commonly with five minutes to go, two minutes to go, and "Wrap Up!" These are to help you keep track of the time, and finish promptly, so that all participants may be heard, and that discussions may occur. Remember that you have heard your paper, already. It is in your own interest that you leave as much time for discussion as possible.

Pre-Conference Distribution of Paper
If your session includes a respondent, you should send your paper to the unit chair and the respondent at least one week prior to the conference. Individuals are invited to send a copy to the unit chair even if there is no respondent. Note, students and independent scholars need to send their paper to the AAR/WR President one month prior to the conference to be eligible for those prizes.

Best Practice Presentation Tips
Try to use your time to teach your paper, rather than simply read it. This means you try to treat the session's attendees as what they are: an audience, people with whom you want to connect and whose response to your ideas you want. Look them in the eye and speak to them from your heart. This is good teaching. And teaching other teachers is good scholarship. For a detailed guidelines on how one AAR/WR unit does this, see Person, Culture and Religion Presenter Guidelines (http://pcr.revdak.com/presenters.htm).

Time
Here is one more good guideline: be considerate of other people's time and effort—it is just as valuable as your own.

Program Participant Form
Available on the AAR/WR website along with the call for proposals, this form serves several purposes: individuals verify AAR membership, identify IT needs, notify chairs and VP of interests in more than one unit, and provide initial text for the conference program.

The text of the most recent version of this form (revised August 2013) is included in the Appendix.

Plenary Address
It is a tradition to include a plenary address in the annual conference, dedicating one-time slot to that session on the first day of the conference to encourage maximum attendance. The plenary speaker receives a $500 honorarium and the conference registration fee is waived. The President is charged with securing the plenary speaker—ideally with a commitment by the time the call for proposals is circulated.

Normally the plenary speaker is a scholar of some renown who is located in our region and has been active in the AAR national. Since the primary audience of the plenary address consists of religious studies faculty and graduate students attending the conference, scholars invited to give this address should be able to speak to something relevant to the discipline broadly conceived. If the person has the ability to also speak to a broader non-academic audience, that is good, but not essential. Plenary speakers are encouraged to address the conference theme, but that is not a requirement. The modest honorarium suggests a colleague with a record of service to the profession, particularly in advancing the mission of the AAR national and regional. (E.C., May, 2013)

Conference Registration and Conference Fees
All individuals who attend the annual conference are required to register and pay a conference fee. The text of the most recent versions of the online and onsite registration forms are included in the appendix. Individuals presenting papers are required to pre-register online prior to the conference; for a variety of reasons, all participants are encouraged to register online prior to the conference.

Online registration typically opens in January and closes one week prior to the conference.

Conference registration fees are the primary source of revenue for covering the expenses of the annual meeting; the other two sources are the AAR National subvention of $2,500 and the $1,500 subsidy host institutions traditionally provide. When it proposes the budget for the annual conference, the EC will include any fee changes. Over two years, 2011-2013, the EC and Board reviewed our fee structure and categories, debating and analyzing various models and options. At its November 2012 meeting the Board approved a proposal to raise the registration fees for the 2013 conference 20%-60% over the previous year, depending on the individual's

status as a student, independent scholar or faculty member. Key considerations leading to the increase included the shift from the WESCOR executive secretary position to the AAR/WR conference manager and the fact that the number of people attending the AAR/WR annual conference is declining slightly, particularly at the faculty level. As of 2013 our registration fees were in the middle of the range of fees charged by other AAR regions.

Much of our budget is fixed, and is not tied to the number of individuals attending the annual conference. Should conference attendance increase in the coming years, the Board will be able to return to the fee question and quite possibly adjust our rates down.

This table will be used to keep a record of our fees so we can track when and how much we raise them. We will need to record both the online and onsite fee.

Participant	2012 fee	2013 fee	2014 fee
Faculty: Associate, Full Professor	45	65	65
Faculty: Assistant Professor	35	55	55
Lecturer, Independent Scholar	30	45	45
Student	25	30	30
General Public (Guests)	25	35	35
General Public for Plenary		20	20

AAR/WR Paper Competitions
It has long been a tradition in the AAR/WR to award prizes to students and to independent scholars for the best papers presented at the annual conference. The prizes (for students, the top three; for independent scholars, the top two) include cash honoraria. For the purposes of this competition, "student" includes graduate and undergraduates enrolled in a degree program at a university in the region, and "independent scholar" includes individuals who have completed a PhD or the equivalent and do not hold a full time academic appointment.

The process is relatively simple: one month prior to the conference individuals who qualify and want to be considered must e-mail their paper to the President, whose responsibility it is to select the winners. A scoring rubric developed in 2013 based on the criteria for the awards is

included in the appendix. Winners are announced during the conference reception. The text of the awards (revised August 2013) and eligibility requirements are included in the Appendix. It is also published on the website, along with past winners.

For the 2014 conference past president Prof. Souad Ali (Arizona State) initiated and sponsored a third category for awards: the "Dr. Souad T. Ali Award for the best progressive research paper in Islamic Studies." The Islamic Studies unit co-chairs adjudicated this award in 2014.

On March 20, 2015 at the AARWR annual meeting, the Board voted to approve a paper award for senior tenured track scholars that is non-monetary.

Travel Grants
The region awards $300 in travel grants to the regional conference each year. Awards shall be limited in the following ways: based on need/lack of institutional support and applicants must not have received a travel grant from the region in the last three years.

Undergraduate Students Registration for Annual Conference
Undergraduate students are encouraged to attend the annual conference, and they are eligible to present papers. They are expected to register and pay the student conference registration fee. In February 2012 the EC determined that any undergraduate presenting a paper at the AAR/WR regional conference needed to also be a member of the AAR. The rationale included that part of their introduction to the discipline should include the importance of membership in professional societies.

Visas for International Participants
From time to time internationals contact the AAR/WR and request a personal invitation to attend the conference, which they present as a necessary step in order to obtain a visa. In February 2013 the Board decided that we do not have the resources to support requests that involve visas, and so we adopted a formal policy that we do not get involved in visa issues.

Note, our policy at the regional level differs from the national policy and so such inquirers are encouraged to investigate possibilities for attending the national conference and are referred to the AAR national website (http://www.aarweb.org/).

On March 20, 2015 at the Board Meeting at Santa Clara University, the Board agreed by acclaim (no vote) to keep the existing visa policy in the AAR/WR policy file. This language will be added to the introductory material in the Call for Papers for the AARWR annual meeting.

Unit Chairs Submit Proposals for Papers in their Units
Unit chairs may submit proposals to deliver papers in their units at the annual conference. However, this creates a potential conflict of interest when a unit receives more proposals than they can accommodate in their sessions. Should that be the case, the unit chair should consult with the VP prior to evaluating proposals to determine the fairest way to proceed. (EC, February 2013)

Guest Registration
In the past individuals who are not members of the AAR have attended the conference, e.g. to attend the plenary lecture. Practice on how to accommodate them and collect registration fees varied until the 2011 conference, at which point the EC determined that guests interested in attending any part of the conference can register for the conference at the student rate. The EC affirmed that decision in February 2012. The rationale for keeping the guest rate low is to encourage individuals from the local community to become more aware of the religious studies profession in the region and to develop a new source of revenue.

"Pool" Process and Wildcard Session
For the 2013 AAR/WR conference the executive committee decided to continue to "pool" papers that were not adopted by the units to which they were submitted and make them available to other units. Subsequent discussion led us to consider an additional option: authors of those proposals would be invited to present their papers at a "wildcard" session, per the executive board's interest in providing individuals forums in which to present their work and to build attendance at the conference. Documentation of that process and a report of how it worked is included in the VP files. Following the conference the process was updated with lessons learned—e.g. the importance of concluding the pool process in early December at the latest, and circulating proposals without the name of the individual who submitted them—from feedback from unit chairs. This process is also described in the Unit Chair guidelines and time line.

Publisher Book displays at annual conference
In the past the annual conference had several publishers represented at the annual conference to display books, and publisher's fees were a modest source of revenue for AAR/WR. That number declined over time—at the last joint AAR/SBL Wescor conference, at Santa Clara in 2012, only a few publishers participated by sending books, and they paid no fees, donating their books instead. Most of the books were related to SBL areas of interest, and there were some logistical challenges related to receiving, storing, monitoring during the conference, and dispersing the books after the conference. The AAR/WR executive committee judged there was little return on the time and effort expended, and subsequently decided to drop publisher book displays, which decision took effect at the 2013 conference.

OTHER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES RELATED TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE AAR/WR

This section of the Policy File contains materials related to the administration of our region and pertains mostly to EC and/or Board.

EC Time line for items other than the conference (Calendar year)

Jan 15	President circulates call for agenda items for Board meeting to be held at the annual AAR/WR conference
	OA, 6.01 outlines the purpose of the annual membership meeting, and stipulates that the President or RC should send notice to members 30-50 days prior to the

	meeting. That communique should reference OA, 6.01 and notify members that they can propose resolutions for consideration at that meeting.
Feb 1	RC works with national office to schedule Board meeting and list it in the program for the national AAR conference in November.
	President circulates agenda for the next Board meeting and posts it on the website.
March TBD	Board Meeting, typically the day prior to the conference.
April 15-30	New President circulates the roster of Board members that includes their term and contact information (typically institutional mailing address, phone number and e-mail address) for review by board. Once revisions are made, the full roster is circulated to board and an abbreviated version (minus phone contact) is posted on the website.
May 1-15	Conference Manager submits report on annual conference to EC within 60 days of conclusion of conference. EC reviews the report and responds to recommendations and questions. RC sends conference manager second check.
May 15-30	EC completes evaluation of conference manager and makes decision about contract for the following year. President sends review to Conference Manager and works with RC to prepare contract.
	EC reviews website and make decisions about modifications that have been proposed or they see as necessary. President ensures all minutes from previous year's meetings (two board meetings, EC meetings, unit chair and general membership) have been approved and are posted on website.
June 30	RC e-mail via national AAR to members re regional grant process. (can be sent along with announcement of CFP posting)
Aug 1	AAR Regional Development Grants: deadline for submission to Regional Coordinator
Aug 15	President contacts Board about meeting during national AAR, requests rsvp and calls for agenda items. At that time President also sends on fyi basis copies of the conference manager report and annual evaluation.
Sept 1	AAR Regional Development Grants: deadline for Regional Coordinator to forward grants to Regions Committee http://www.aarweb.org/programs/grants/Regional/default.asp
Oct 15	AAR/WR President sends Board of Directors agenda for Board meeting at National meeting and posts it on the website

Nov tbd	Board Meeting, typically the day prior to the conference.

Revisions to the Operating Agreement Procedure

The current version of the OA does not include a procedure for its revision. So we have located that procedure in the Policy File: the EC will review proposed changes, including the exact text to be used, and will make recommendations to the Board for adoption. Prior to submitting its recommendations, the EC will inform national AAR of the changes, should they require review or approval by the AAR National Office. A majority vote by the Board is required to make any changes to the OA.

Budget Reserve

For several years the AAR/WR Board and EC operated on the assumption that the national AAR required regions to maintain a reserve. In 2013 the EC verified that the national AAR in fact recommended this practice, and suggested the amount be sufficient to cover expenses for the annual conference in the event that for some reason we are not able to collect revenue that year. For instance, if an earthquake requires us to cancel the annual conference and refund registration fees, we would use the reserve to cover fixed costs like the conference manager stipend and expenses. The National AAR recommendation has not yet been formally communicated, but it will eventually be included in the Regional Officer's Handbook. (http://www.aarweb.org/node/183#VI3) The EC recommended that we establish $5,000 for the reserve figure, and develop a policy to the effect that the reserve is funded by surplus revenues from the annual conferences. The EC further decided that should the annual conference operate without a deficit for two years in a row, we could develop a policy by which funds in excess of the $5,000 figure could be used for other purposes. (*EC Meeting, 9/13/13*)

Document Retention/Repository

The OA, 7.02, stipulates that we need to "keep at its principal place of business" a number of documents, including financial reports and tax forms for the past three years. That falls within the purview of the RC. However, we do not have a policy regarding other documents we may wish to keep—e.g. programs for annual conferences, reports, minutes, etc.

External Grants

This is a placeholder for a policy the AAR/WR needs to develop for instances where individuals in the region seek grant money to support AAR/WR programs and/or use the AAR/WR for the grant application and administration of the grant. We have a description of the process used by the Queer Caucus for the grant they applied for and received and that will be administered through AAR/WR. Both AAR National and AAR/WR EC recognize we need a policy and procedure for this. It could be as simple as setting deadlines for EC to review grant proposals before individuals submit them, and some detail about how to obtain RC sign off.

APPENDICES
The appendices include items that are important to keep track of—e.g. historical record of past conferences, or standard communications by unit chairs, forms —but are not policies. Generally this content will come from members of the EC and will also be posted in different sections of the website.

AAR/WR ANNUAL CONFERENCES: ATTENDANCE, THEMES AND PLENARY SPEAKERS

2014 (Loyola Marymount University)

Attendance
194

Conference Theme

"Retrieving the Subjugated Voices and histories of the marginalized, the colonized, the out of place" As Religious studies scholars we have used many different methodologies to create space for subjugated and subaltern voices. We have used many tools and theories from queer, feminist, marxist and literary theory, to tools of the social sciences such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, material science, and archeology to retrieve voices. Are these tools that we use to open the spaces within our field of religious studies in themselves colonizing or liberating? Where, when and how do we create the space for these voices?

Plenary Speaker(s)
Rosemary Radford Ruether, Claremont Graduate University

Amir Hussain, Loyola Marymount University

2013 (Arizona State University)
Attendance

149

Conference Theme
"Religion in Public Life"

For this year's conference theme we take a cue from the 2008 AAR publication, "The Religion Major and Liberal Education." That white paper tied its vision of a robust future for religious studies to the recognition on many fronts that religion is "an inescapable part" of public life around the globe. How do we in the discipline of religious studies represent that public dimension of religion?

The calls for papers from the 20+ units making up the western regional AAR take up this question in a variety of ways. Some focus on controversies related to religion and politics in the western United States (e.g. same sex marriage or immigration reform), others turn to other

regions of the world (e.g. the "Arab Spring") or to historical antecedents (e.g. the Jesuits' entry into China). Topics raised are richly diverse, including ecology, pluralism, the current "Mormon moment," terrorism, popular culture, among others.

The units are asking scholars and teachers of religion to reflect on how we frame questions and analyses about the ways religion plays out in various public settings. Do we, for instance, tend to privilege particular public expressions of religion as normative or paradigmatic, or even problematic? How is our work shaped by the institutions in which we teach and their calls to, for example, cultivate a critical tolerance of diverse religions or to help students form a religiously informed public voice? By what criteria do we select among traditions, texts, histories, institutions, events, and figures to develop analyses of religion's intersection with politics? And perhaps location does matter; how do distinctive features of our region (California, Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii, and the Pacific Islands) inform how we approach this theme, and how should it be different from the approach developed by colleagues in other parts of this country and/or other regions in the world?

Plenary Speaker
Amina Wadud, Starr King School for the Ministry

2012 (Santa Clara University)

Attendance
144 (estimate; incomplete data)

Conference Theme

"Sacred Texts, Sacred Communities"
We invite members to explore sacred texts, both oral and written, as repositories for the "voice" of the sacred in religious communities around the world. Particular attention should be given to how community institutions, in their many forms and roles, exercise authority over those texts, negotiate access to those texts, and ultimately shape the interpretation of oral or written sacred texts among adherents and outsiders alike.

In religious traditions and institutions, priest, imams, rabbis, monks, shamans, theologians and judges, among others, are all charged as interpreters of sacred texts, be they God's eternal Word, the oral wisdom of the ancestors, or the transcribed sermons of an enlightened Master. How such institutions and figures take shape and claim special authority, distinct from other members of their religious communities, is a source of ongoing tensions; especially in the age of the internet.

The growing availability of sacred texts, via the internet or affordable printing technologies in multiple translations, has also meant that communities must deal with the interpretations of outsiders, which may be hostile to the community's claims. How communities and their institutions maintain their authoritative positions in response to those challenges is an important area of study. In many cases, such interactions have proved to be catalysts for reform, sectarianism, or even violence.

Plenary Speaker
Bruce Grelle, California State University, Chico

2011 (Whittier College)

Attendance
136 (estimate; incomplete data)

Conference Theme
"Current Religious Thinking"

Previous annual meeting themes have taught us what happens when we see our field through spatial and geographic metaphors. This year we invite members to conceive of religion and its study as complex and ongoing flows. Our substantive areas are not cut -and -dried; look closely and they dissolve into each other. And our methodologies, likewise, are not merely contiguous, but constantly interfuse, blend, and add their own cross-currents to others without end. Like Heraclitus's ever-new river, religion is the living water of life. This year we encourage proposals that celebrate and critique religion's myriad and ever-changing currents — that trace them to their sources and plumb their mixed and maybe muddied depths. We hope to receive proposals that address questions like "How do religions flow from region to region" "How have theology or ritual deepened when new tributaries flow into traditions?" or "How do we dive into the waves caused when scholarly disciplines clash and trouble the waters of academe?" Similarly, we hope this call opens you to new confluences in your own work. We encourage the outflowing of new studies, where your disciplinary thought streams into new channels or where you invite new disciplinary streams into your ancient streambeds. And, simultaneously, we encourage the inflowing of collaboration, where two or more scholarly streams combine — in panels, book celebrations, symposia, etc. — to nourish the same ground in concourse. Similarly, we hope this call opens you to new confluences in your own work. We encourage the outflowing of new studies, where your disciplinary thought streams into new channels or where you invite new disciplinary streams into your ancient streambeds.

And, simultaneously, we encourage the inflowing of collaboration, where two or more scholarly streams combine—in panels, book celebrations, symposia, etc.—to nourish the same ground in concourse.

Plenary Speaker
Pierrette Hongagneu-Sotelo, University of Southern California

2010 (Arizona State University)

Attendance
126

Conference Theme

"La Frontera"
This year's theme, La Frontera, calls for analyses of the various borders that exist in our world and in our lives: geographical, chronological, theological, and transformational. While La Frontera can be translated as border or boundary, it can also indicate a frontier, and in that sense the conference theme invites participants to pursue undeveloped fields of study and other topics needing research and investigation. The borderlands — social, cultural, spiritual, as well as geographical — that exist between multiple social identities can be examined. Stepping across theoretical and disciplinary boundaries is encouraged. Identifying limits and limitations, transgressing boundaries of all kinds, and exploring new frontiers — that is, what La Frontera is intended to evoke and provoke.

2009 (Santa Clara University)
Attendance

122

Conference Theme

Plenary Speaker

PARTICIPANT FORM

This form will be posted on the website when the call for proposals is posted. This is the form drafted for the 2014 conference (with the sections reflecting a pilot we did not continue crossed out).

Program participant form

American Academy of Religion, Western Region
Annual Conference

Loyola Marymount University
March 7-9, 2014

Please send this form to the appropriate UNIT CHAIR(s) along with your paper proposal. ~~(N/B. as a pilot this year, you may submit proposals to two different units for the conference.)~~

NAME:_____

INSTITUTION:_____

STREET ADDRESS:_____

CITY:_____ STATE:_____ ZIP:_____

PHONE:_____ EMAIL:_____

Membership in the National AAR is required of **ALL presenters** in order to present at the conference

AAR # _____ For AAR membership information click here.

Proposal Title:_____

Program Unit (to which you are submitting):_____

~~If you are submitting a second proposal:~~

~~**Proposal Title**:_____~~

~~**Program Unit** (to which you are submitting):_____~~

If the unit~~/s~~ you are proposing to is~~/are~~ not able to use that proposal, are you willing for your proposal/s to enter a general pool so that it can be considered by other units? **Y/N**

_____

Would you be willing to serve as a panel moderator at a future conference?   **Y/N**
_____

If you have any questions, please contact the relevant Unit Chair(s) or the Vice President/Program Chair. Click here to download a pdf file with current contact information.

Registration Forms

AAR/WR Pre-registration online 2013

AAR/WR On Site Registration 2013

Name: _____ Date: _____

Institution: _____ Department: _____

_____

Address:_____

City: _____ State: _____Country:

_____

Email Address: _____ Phone Number: _____

Memberships (AAR/ SBL/ Other): _____

Onsite Registration Tier (Circle One):   **Additional Event (Circle all that Apply):**

Associate/ Full Professor: $75.00   Women's Caucus Workshop: $10.00

Assistant Professor: $65.00   Queer Caucus Business Mtg/Lunch: $10.00

Adjunct Professor/ Lecturer/   AAR/WR Reception: Free

Independent Scholar: $55.00   AAR/WR Business Meeting: Free

Student: $40.00

General Public: $35.00

Payment Received By: _____

STUDENT AND INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR AWARDS

Student Awards
AAR-WR invites its student members—graduate as well as undergraduates-- to compete for its best student paper award. The award includes cash honoraria for the first, second, and third place papers. Eligible entries must be papers already accepted for presentation and listed in the AAR-WR conference program. Winning entrants must be registered for the annual conference; must present their papers in person; and must attend the conference reception (unless other arrangements are made ahead of time).

Awards will be given to original and unpublished papers that present the most intellectually sophisticated and rigorous treatment of a topic related to the conference theme. Awards will be announced and given at the AAR-WR reception at the conference. To be considered for this award, applicants should send digital copies of their finished papers to the President of the AAR/WR. Deadline for submissions is one month prior to the conference (for 2014 that will be February 9, 2014).

Independent Scholar Paper Competition

AAR-WR invites its independent scholar members to compete for its best independent scholar paper awards. The award includes cash honoraria for the first and second place papers. Eligible entries must be papers from scholars who are not graduate students and are not in a full time academic appointment and whose entry has already been accepted for presentation on the AAR-WR program. Winning entrants must be registered for the annual conference; must present their papers in person; and must attend the conference reception (unless other arrangements are made ahead of time).

Awards will be given to original and unpublished papers that present the most intellectually sophisticated and rigorous treatment of a topic related to the conference theme. Awards will be announced and given at the AAR-WR reception at the conference. To be considered for this award, applicants should send digital copies of their finished papers to the President of the AAR/WR. Deadline for submissions is one month prior to the conference (for 2014 that will be February 9, 2014).

Dr. Souad T. Ali Award for the best progressive research paper in Islamic Studies

AAR/WR invites members presenting a paper related to Islam to compete for this award. The award includes cash honoraria for the winner. Eligible entries must be papers from individuals whose entry has already been accepted for presentation on the AAR -WR program. Winning entrants must be registered for the annual conference; must present their papers in person; and must attend the conference reception (unless other arrangements are made ahead of time). The Islamic Studies unit co-chairs adjudicated this award in 2014.

To be considered for this award, applicants should send digital copies of their finished papers to the President of the AAR/WR. Deadline for submissions is one month prior to the conference (for 2014 that will be February 9, 2014).

Past Winners

<u>2014 Winners</u>
Student Paper Competition

First Place: Joel Stoker, Arizona State University, "The Renegade's Saint – Saint Expédit and the Peripheral Believer"
Second Place (tie): Michelle B Mueller, Graduate Theological Union, "Gender and the Gods: Queer

Challenges for Wicca and Feminist Neo-Paganism" and Veronica Wilson, California State University, Bakersfield, "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun: The Truth behind the Desiring Nun

Archetype and the Stereotypical use of the Convent as a Setting in the 18th Century Literature of Aphra Behn and Eliza Haywood."

Independent Scholar Paper Competition

Jay Atkinson, Starr King School for Ministry, "Poland as an Early Humanist Crucible for East-West Encounter"

Souad Ali Award

Hafsa Oubou, The School of Middle East & North African Studies, The University of Arizona, "Moroccan Shi'ites, Social Media, and Virtual Asylum."

<u>2013 Winners</u>

Student Paper Competition
First Place: Michael Crab, Graduate Theological Union, "William Desmond: Can Art Bear the Burden of Transcendence Alone?"
Second Place: Sara Sellers, University of Hawaii, Manoa, "Interpretive Feminism in 21st Century Saudi Arabia" and Michael Broyles, Arizona State University, "Sound Recording as Text and Expanding Hermeneutics: Learning from the Discourse on Religion and American Blues Music"

Independent Scholar Paper Competition

First Place: Ron Sanders, Fuller Theological Seminary, "Independence and the Art of Pluralism: Religion on the Edges of the Public Square"

Second Place: Melissa Jones, Brandman University,"'National Catholic Reporter': The Lay Catholic Community Wielding the Power of the Press"

<u>2012 Winners</u>

Student Paper Competition:

First Place: Torang Asadi, University of Kansas, "'Repristination': the Exegetical Ingenuity of the Twelve Tribes Community"

Second Place: Elizabeth Ritter-Conn, Graduate Theological Union, "Images of the Body as Sacred Text: Art, Athletes, and the Apophasis of Genitalia"

Independent Scholar Paper Competition:

First Place: Jeffrey Murico, "Expanding the Category of Religion: Political, Legal, and Moral Implications"

Rubric for Evaluating Papers for Awards

In 2013 and in 2014 the following rubric (based on the descriptions of the awards) was used to evaluate submissions.

Scores	
1	not good
2	Short of standards
3	meets standards
4	very good
5	outstanding

Indicator	Score	Note
Theoretically and intellectually sophisticated		
Innovative, creative		
Thorough Research, good use of sources		
Scholarly Quality of Sources		
Aligned with conference theme		
Quality of writing		

Format for Panels

UNIT CHAIR: PROGRAM SUBMISSION TEMPLATE

The following template was developed in fall 2013.
Template

Unit Title, Date Prepared
Unit title, Session or Panel 1: Title

Moderator Name, Institutional Affiliation
Author Name, Author Institutional Affiliation (1)
"Paper Title" (1)
Author Name, Author Institutional Affiliation (2)
"Paper Title" (2)
Author Name, Author Institutional Affiliation (3)
"Paper Title"(3)
Author Name, Author Institutional Affiliation (4)
"Paper Title" (4)

Unit title, Session or Panel 2: Title
Moderator Name, Institutional Affiliation

Author Name, Author Institutional Affiliation (1)
"Paper Title" (1)
Author Name, Author Institutional Affiliation (2)
"Paper Title" (2)
Author Name, Author Institutional Affiliation (3)

"Paper Title"(3)
Author Name, Author Institutional Affiliation (4)
"Paper Title" (4)

Sample (from 2011 Conference)
Religion in America (DRAFT), 11/3/10

Religion in America 1: Religion in America's Public Squares: Negotiating Various Intersections

Moderator: Philip Boo Riley, Santa Clara University
Jeffery Murico, Claremont Graduate University

"The Mount Soledad Cross Controversy as the Intersection of Faith, Identity, and Law"
Jeanette Solano, California State University, Fullerton

" 'It Broke My Heart a Little' The Disneyland Hijab Controversy and Muslim Accommodation in the U.S."

Ann Wertman, Arizona State University
"Gender, Sexuality, and the Boundaries of Religious Difference in America"

Religion in America 2: Religion in America's Public Squares: Spiritual, Political, Theological Trajectories

Moderator: Do Daugherty, Arizona State University

David McConeghy, University of California, Santa Barbara
"The Gospel of this Moment: "Thoreau's Theology of Walking"

Laurelle Chase Knowles, Claremont Graduate University
"God's 'Almost Chosen People': Abraham Lincoln and the Development of Apophatic Hope in American Civil Religious "Scripture""

William LaMaire, Arizona State University
"'God, please grant us a school': Religion, Truth, and Reconciliation"

OTHER ROUTINE CORRESPONDENCE
Members of the executive committee of the Board are expected to transmit their files to their successors each year, including e-mail correspondence that is fairly routine and whose content does not change from year to year—e.g. the vice president e-mail to chairs to initiate the call for proposals process or the regional coordinator's e-mail re AAR national grants. At some future point those might be included here.