

**American Academy of Religion, Western Region**

**Board Meeting Minutes**

**Friday, March 23, 2018**

**Time: 12-5 pm**

**Location: Institute of Buddhist Studies**

**2140 Durant Ave.**

**Berkeley, CA 94704**

**Attendees:**

Jonathan Lee, President; Abdullahi Gallab, VP/Program Chair; Dorothea Kahena Viale, Past-President; Brian Clearwater, Regionally Elected Coordinator; Jason Sexton, VP-elect; Zayin Cabot; Marie Cartier; Sarah Robinson-Bertoni; Joseph Paxton; Souad T. Ali; Sakena Young-Scaggs; Kimberly Carefore

**A quorum was present. There are 15 board members, to have quorum we must have 8 board members present at the meeting (a simple majority of the board).**

**Excused:**

Anjeanette LeBoeuf; Greg Yanke

1. Call to Order 12:15 pm
2. Welcome from Jonathan Lee
3. Ice-breaker/Introductions
  - What is your intention for being here and what do you want to improve in yourself?
  - Abdullahi reported that ASU is ready to host our conference next year.
4. Updates from the President
  - Everything on this agenda is submitted with good intentions to make this conference happen and try to improve things.
  - Chase Way, our student rep to AAR resigned yesterday, in protest. Some background on Chase's experience running for national student rep to serve on the national board.
  - Joseph Paxton will now serve as interim Student Director until a new one is elected on Sunday.
5. Action items:
  - a. Vote on approval of Board Meeting Minutes at AAR Boston on November 18, 2017;
    - some corrections to the minutes
    - Zayin moved to approve, seconded by Abdullahi, approved unanimously
  - b. Vote on approval of updated Policy File.

Concerning policies about elections regarding having a clear protocol that is fair and transparent, a standard process for vetting candidates that applies to everyone.

Deadline will be Wednesday, two days before the Friday board meeting each Spring.

note: We need more outreach to recruit more qualified candidates.

Marie moved to approve update, Souad seconded, approved 11-1

- c. Approve language about not extending any elected positions.  
Motioned by Marie, seconded by Abdullahi, approved unanimously
  
6. Report from Joseph Paxton re: AARWR 2018 IBS conference.  
160 ppl pre-registered this year, more than last year.  
50 panels, received over 150 papers, last year it was 184.
  
7. Report from Brian Clearwater re: AARWR Financial Report  
regarding outreach:  
Region is in sound financial condition.  
Reminder that each caucus is awarded \$150 per year from the general fund.
  
8. Report from Brian Clearwater re: Elections
  - a. Jonathan emphasized that Presidential line candidate must be able to secure a host institution free of charge during their year as President!  
Souad noted that the \$1500 donation from host institution is not mandatory.  
Approved candidates for Presidential line:  
Enrico Beltramini, from Notre Dame de Namur University  
Anna Hennessey, Institute of Buddhist Studies
  
  - b. Reminder: Per policy, there must be 8 members present, in person, at the Business Meeting to have quorum (Per Georgia law).
  
9. Report from Abdullahi Gallab, VP/Program Chair re: AARWR 2019 at Arizona State University  
March 1-3 at ASU for 2019, rooms will be reserved,  
Up to President to invite and secure a keynote speaker  
Sakena Young-Skaggs asked what prominent scholars have invested energy in the region?  
Jason Sexton noted that many scholars would relish the opportunity to travel to our region to give a keynote.

10. Reports from Caucus liaisons (Women and Queer)

Caucus budgets are \$150, Sarah reached out to local scholars and none were available So instead created a writing retreat for the Friday women's caucus event this morning which was a great success.

Marie reporting for Queer Caucus: set up to ensure an active LGBTQ+ presence in the region and on the board. Queer liaison position designed to work together with unit chairs to secure content in the program and for the pre-conference program.

Invited everyone to Queer View event.

Open to rotating Friday slots with Women's caucus: Friday time slots are shared between the board meeting, Women's caucus and Queer caucus

Sakena expressed interest in proposing a Black Caucus. Jonathan encouraged her to write up and submit a proposal. And several members also voiced support for a new unit to explore Black Studies in Religion broadly conceived.

11. Jonathan Lee: Reminders for incoming President Abdullahi Gallab and VP/Program Chair Jason Sexton.

- a. List of Unit Chairs must be updated by VP/Program Chair. VP/Program Chair is responsible for leading the Unit Chairs meeting on Saturday.
- b. President presides over Board meetings and develops agenda and communicates with all board members. Invites/selects keynote speaker for 2019 annual meeting. Secures conference venue 1 year in advance! This includes free use of facilities and donation of \$1500 or more for catering.
- c. VP/Program Chair comes up with conference theme and is responsible for getting units to submit specific CFP. See recommended timeline in the Policy File. Must have preliminary program by AAR national at Denver, CO. Works closely with Conference Manager to develop the final schedule for the program right after AAR national meeting.
- d. For more details about duties and responsibilities, see the Policy File.

12. Discuss increasing funds from \$100 to \$150 or \$200 for Caucuses.

Increase funding for caucuses to \$250

Motion by Jason, seconded by Brian, passed unanimously

13. Discuss increasing Regional Coordinator travel reimbursement increase from \$500 to \$1000.

- a. \$500 not enough to cover cost for attending two mandatory meetings (national and regional); will help retain longer term RC, which we need for stability. Jonathan made motion to increase RC travel: seconded by Sakena  
Straw poll yielded: 4 voted to increase to \$1000

8 voted to increase to \$1500

Kahena: focus on increasing outreach and funding before we go above \$1000.  
Brian agreed that \$1,000 is enough at this time and recommend stipulating that, if available, RC's must utilize institutional support before they access the region's funding.

**11 voted yes, 1 abstain to increase to \$1,000**

14. Discuss management of Policy Files

- a. Currently, responsibility lies with the President
- b. Recommendation: Regional Coordinator should be responsible for this.

**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.

Add line to RC job description to biannually verify and confirm that policy file has been updated.

Explore ways to share access to the policy file to make sure it gets updated.

Jonathan made motion to Transfer primary responsibility for updating the policy file to RC:

Seconded by Joe, motion passed 10-2

15. Discuss and update Policy language re: host institutions and Presidential line

- a. Recommend removing this in the Policy File:  
“ In 2011 the AAR/WR Board decided it was desirable to stay with the same institutions in the three year cycle. As of March, 2015, the Board has identified Loyola Marymount University for the Southern California meeting (2017); Santa Clara University for the Northern California meeting (2017) and Arizona State University for the Arizona meeting (2018).” (page. 19).
- b. Replace with:  
Ensuring that a host institution is secured is the duty of the President. Candidates running for the Presidential line must be able to secure a host institution that volunteers to host the AARWR regional conference preferably free of charge to the AARWR.

Jonathan made motion, Seconded by Sarah, passed unanimous

16. Discuss Graduate Student and Professional Development unit

- a. Over the last several years, GSPD has made a concerted effort to provide practical, relevant training and open discussion spaces for AARWR student

members. Particularly in light of the fact that GSPD leadership will be turning over this year, what concerns would the Board advise new GSPD leadership to focus on? Likewise, what new and/or innovative methods and presentation styles could be used to convey professional advice to AARWR student members? May be conduct a survey before AAR Denver and plan session for AARWR 2019 based on graduate student feedback? Make it a Mentor-Mentee session(s)?

Keep GSPD unit session and add the mentor-mentee session.  
Table until November.

Honoring the work of Chase Way for all the work she did on the GSPD.

17. Brian Clearwater presented idea to the board to consider ways to garner participation by national AAR leaders in our regional conference. This has been a point of discussion in the Regions Committee as part of broader initiative to draw attention to the work being done in the regions.
18. Brian Clearwater led a discussion on the upcoming visit from the newly elected chair of the Regions Committee, Kathy Downey, to our conference. She is gathering information from the regions in effort to improve national's understanding and support of its regions.
19. AARWR sponsored session at AAR national meeting
  - a. Is this still possible for AAR Denver 2018?  
Recommend unit chairs to submit best presentations  
Marie, Sarah, and Brian will co-chair the committee to organize
20. Discuss setting aside funds for Pacific Islander/Hawaii panelist or representative to attend regional meeting.
  - a. Do we want to do this? How much should be allocated?  
Sakena will put together a proposal to submit in Denver.
21. Gender neutral options in registration AND name tags
  - a. Was this matter resolved?  
Marie reports that this is handled.
22. Re-discuss elections and recruitment procedures (Sarah Robinson-Bertoni to lead discussion)  
Done.
23. Open discussion: things to bring-up or table for meeting at AAR Denver, CO on Nov. 2018?  
Travel grants allocation is \$300 that we split up 3 ways.  
Jonathan proposes that we limit people to receive this only once every 4 years.  
To be based on need, must disclose institutional support, prioritize need/distance

Set up guidelines: must be based on need, must have no institutional support, cannot have received a travel grant from the region in the last 3 years.

Sakena made Motion to accept language guidelines above and add this to the policy file.

Jonathan seconded

Passed unanimously

SRB motion to add \$ to paper award amount.

Also increase travel award could be considered at Denver.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.