

AAR/WR Board Meeting  
Arizona State University  
3/9/13

In attendance: Souad Ali (President), Jonathan Lee (Diversity Advocate), Franz Metcalf (Past President), Philip Boo Riley (VP/Program Director), Kristy Slominski (Student Representative, Southern CA), Emily Silverman (VP/Program Director Elect), John Tubera (Queer Advocate), Kahena Viale (Southern CA Regional Representative), Dirk Von der Host (Regional Coordinator), Theresa Yugar (Women's Caucus Liaison), Sara Frykenberg (Conference Coordinator). Excused: Regina Pfeiffer (Hawaii/Pacific Island Representative)

### Welcome

Souad opened the meeting at 12:35 p.m., noting that conference registrations were projected to be 148. She invited each board member to share where they are at personally and professionally with everyone. Outgoing past president Franz Metcalf was presented with a thank you card for his service to the region.

### 1. Board Positions to be Filled

Souad led a discussion of the positions on the board to be filled.

#### *Vice President-Elect*

Souad explained that the immediate need is to fill this position. The Board reviewed pertinent qualifications for this position—AAR experience, experienced scholars, individuals with institutional support—and possible nominations, including Regina Pfeiffer, with whom Souad had been in contact regarding the position, and the roster of unit chairs. Board members were assigned individuals to contact to see if they would accept a nomination and stand for election at the general membership meeting.

#### *Regional Representatives: Arizona/ Nevada representative.*

Souad explained this position is vacant and that she would be willing to fill this position, particularly since it would help with ASU hosting the regional conference again in 2015. The Board unanimously voted to recommend Souad for this position for a membership vote.

#### *Student Representatives*

Kristy explained that there are three student positions, and outlined the work she has done to recruit for the positions, including the Facebook page, a draft outlining responsibilities for this position, and a survey she drafted. She also explained her work on the Graduate Student Committee (CSG), which is a new working group of the AAR Board of Directors.

#### *Women's Caucus Liaison*

Theresa Yugar explained that she shared the position with Sara Frykenberg. There was some discussion of how having two individuals jointly fill one position worked on the Board. Theresa explained that she is stepping down, and that Sara would take on the board role, with Theresa volunteering to help out and mentor.

### 2. Financial Report and Budget Issues

Dirk reviewed the financial report that he had prepared for this meeting. The Board discussed several items. We reviewed the adjusted expenses and revenues for the 2013 conference. It was noted that although we no longer sponsor book displays, the revenue to AAR/WR from these had of late been negligible, especially since most participating publishers were SBL-related. A question was raised regarding support for guest speakers in units—is this something we should make a priority and add to our budget? This led to a discussion of what other items we should/could be doing for our membership, some budget-related, others not (e.g. set up a room for authors to display books they have published). It was noted that we currently allocate \$500 for Regional Coordinator expenses; outgoing RC Susan Maloney had argued this should be higher and/or include a stipend given the work load and time commitment for this position. We are now in a position where campus hosts are asked to donate \$1500 in support of the conference reception—SCU (2012), ASU (2013) and LMU (2014) committed to this. Can we seek support from other “sponsors,” e.g. in the form of grants? There was discussion of the fact that even with this institutional support, revenues from conference fees do not cover our expenses. This prompted discussion of how much AAR National expects regions to hold in reserve; past President Metcalf explained that the amount was what was necessary to run a conference for three successive years.

The Board returned to the topic of awards for papers by students and by independent scholars. Some members thought these should be reduced; others recalled earlier discussions of how important these were and argued to maintain them. What is the purpose of the awards—e.g. do they serve as incentives for people to attend and participate in the annual conference? Do they provide recognition and support for independent scholars? It was noted that not all regions have similar awards. A motion was made to reduce the awards this year: reduce the two Independent Scholars to \$500 to \$300, and the three student awards from \$300/200/100 to \$200/100/100. The motion was amended to make this a one year change, with a commitment to review it at a future board meeting. The motion passed with 11 in favor, 1 opposed.

The Board agreed that a smaller task force should pursue these and related budget questions, suggesting that the charge for the group Dirk had proposed (item 11 below) be expanded and they take this up.

The discussion closed with a motion to approve the 2013 budget, noting that some items were still to be finalized. The motion was approved unanimously.

### 3. 2014 AAR/WR Meeting

Souad explained that LMU in Los Angeles has committed to host next year’s conference and has committed \$1500 to support the conference.

### 4. Suggestions for 2015 Meeting.

The Board discussed possible locations in the northern California region for the 2015 meeting. It was pointed out that the Board had decided to stay with the same campuses if possible. A motion was made to charge Vice President Riley to approach SCU

administration to host the 2015 conference. It was approved by a majority of the Board (PBR abstained).

#### 5. Website

Souad opened a discussion of what we could do to improve our website and make it easier to manage. Board members spoke of their experience setting up websites with other organizations, their review of the google page format used by other AAR regions, and ways to enlist more than one person to maintain a website. A task force was suggested to review this issues, with a deadline of June 1 for a draft of a plan to revisit the website. Four Board members agreed to serve on the task force: Kristy, Jonathan, Franz and Sara (convener).

#### 6. Conference Registration Fees

The Board briefly reviewed the fees for the 2013 conference that were approved by the Board at its November 2012 meeting. No further action was taken. One board member suggested fees should be added to the items taken up by the proposed budget ask force.

#### 7) Review of Policies and Procedures Document

Boo reported on progress he and Franz have made on a policy and procedures document, which in the Operating Agreement is called a "Policy File." There followed a discussion of what goes into the document, its purpose, its audience, how it relates to the Operating Agreement, how it relates to our minutes (which are public). An example of something in the draft document was given: the executive committee voted to not sponsor visa applications by international participants. Emily introduced an idea she would like AAR/WR to pursue, a blog in which AAR/WR members could publish short pieces (several people expressed interest in this, and working on it in relationship to the website task force). These examples led to a discussion of capacity and scope, how many initiatives and projects the Board wants to and can support. It was agreed that the Policy File should somehow reflect these questions, interests, and commitments the Board makes beyond what is in the Operating Agreement.

The Board formed a task force to complete this document in time for them to review and approve it at the 2013 Board meeting in Baltimore. Franz, Boo (convener) and Kristy volunteered for this task force.

#### 8. AAR/WR Mission Statement

Boo led a review of the AAR/WR mission statement that is found on the web, proposing that it be revised to reflect the idea that our main work is holding an annual conference. The ensuing discussion included suggestions on how to revise the text to include this idea, and whether or not there were other items in the mission statement that needed to be revised (e.g. apparent focus on contemporary issues). Some members argued that mission statements should not include specifics like conferences; others felt it necessary to include our primary function or activity. It was suggested that maybe what we needed was a new statement, perhaps a vision statement that explains the primary way in which we fulfill our mission is to hold an annual conference. The discussion concluded with a motion that this item be referred to the Policy and Procedures/Policy File task force, that

in their work they review this discussion and make a recommendation for review by the EC and vote by the full Board. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### 9) Unit Issues and Call for Papers

Boo introduced this topic by referring the Board to the material he had e-mailed to the Board that included data (our region has the largest number of units, over 20; the average is 8) and a question he is also taking to the unit chairs, about the optimal number of units for our region. He noted that we have a prior issue for the Board to consider, Jonathan Lee's proposal to add a new unit, on Asian American Religion. Regarding the latter, Souad explained that the EC had dropped the ball and made a motion that the Board approve this new unit. That motion was approved by a majority of the Board (Jonathan abstained).

Regarding the broader issue of how many units we should have, the processes by which new ones are created, inactive ones dropped, the Board had a lively discussion. Souad suggested we might follow the model of National AAR, where new proposals become groups and then, depending on the degree of success, the Board makes them sessions or units. She noted that some just remain groups; there are a large number of active groups. It was suggested the key is the number of sessions the group or unit is given in conference planning. It was asked whether we needed such a complicated system for our conference with 150 participants. It was noted that some units have not had leadership and/or papers for one or two years. The Board expressed interest in formulating a policy on this matter, and a few suggestions were made: if a unit does not have papers in one year, they can only have a maximum of one session the next year; or, if a unit does not have papers in one year, they have one additional year to issue a call, and if there are no responses, the unit will be dropped. Several board members said that the key was whether a unit has a chair who is able to work on building it up, e.g., recruiting papers each year. It was determined that we have a policy issue here-- how we understand the creation and deletion of Units within the scope of the AAR/WR mission—and the task force working on policy and procedures could again take that up and formulate a recommendation.

In the course of the discussion Board members agreed to work together to resurrect the Womanist Pan/African group.

Kahena introduced a proposal that we reverse a policy adopted previously and allow individuals to submit two paper proposals. In the discussion it was noted that the primary reason for the policy was logistic, that the prospect of individuals being accepted in more than one unit added a level of complexity that delayed the process of building the program. Some board members worried that as appealing as this idea was in theory, in practice we may be putting too much on the unit chairs with this. The current scheduling system is already complex and hard to execute; one board member cited the difficulties of completing the pilot to pool papers, which in one case took over one month to complete. Other board members thought it was a reasonable expectation for chairs and the vice president/program director. The Board eventually voted (8 in favor, 3 opposed) to take this question to the Unit Chairs meeting for an advisory vote.

A related issue was whether we should allow people to present twice if one of their papers was more “applied” than research-focused, and the new graduate student professional development was cited as an example of the former. It was noted that the new conference schedule now has one slot at the end of the second day (or, with slight adjustments, at the beginning) for things like workshops. A motion was made to make an exception to the 1 paper presentation rule for those presenting in pre-conference sections, graduate student professional development, and other workshops. There was considerable discussion about this, and the timing of approving it. The motion was revised to make an exception to the 1 paper presentation rule for the graduate professional development unit. It was passed by a majority vote (3 abstentions: Sara, Souad, Theresa)

#### 10) Reflections for Conference Manager’s First Year Experience

Sara gave a brief report on her first year in this new position. She found it to be a fun and interesting year, and enjoyed working with the executive committee, all of whom were supportive, treating her more like a colleague than an employee. She indicated that the biggest challenges related to deadlines for the myriad steps in building the conference schedule (“What, when, where?”) and determining whose direction was definitive when she received confusing or inconsistent directions from the E.C. She recommends that the VP/Program Director take the lead. It was noted that this past year the EC ended up voting to resolve logistical questions; they probably could have been resolved more efficiently by the Coordinator alone, or the VP/Program director. Another issue Sara reported was time commitment to the job, including a sense she needed to be “on call,” and how she needs to set better boundaries in the future. She agrees the Board needs to continue to ask, “what is our capacity?”

Sara was thanked for her hard work this year. It was noted that the Board needs to support one another in their work, including the CM, Regional Coordinator, and Graduate Student representative to the National, all of which are labor intensive.

#### 11) Proposal form ad hoc committee to investigate sources of revenue to replace loss of sponsors.

Dirk indicated that prior discussion (Item 2) indicated people were in support for forming such a task force. It was noted that the charge of the group had been expanded, to something like, to explore our budget in light of our mission and vision. Three board members volunteered for this task force: John, Dirk, Kahena.

During the discussion it was suggested non-AAR members be allowed to participate in our annual conference; the current prohibition is our region’s policy, not one from the national AAR. Since it related to revenues, this proposal was referred to this task force.

#### 12) Proposal to add a bibliography of AAR/WR members’ publications to AAR/WR website.

Dirk introduced his idea to create a bibliography of AAR/WR members’ publications and asked the Board to support this initiative. He would like to send an e-mail blast to the

membership, to ask people to send a list of their publications, which he would then edit into a list and eventually put it on our website. The Board responded favorably.

The meeting adjourned 5:49 p.m. and people planned to re-convene later that evening for the Board dinner.

#### Review of Decisions Made by the Board of Directors:

- The Board unanimously approved to recommend, for a membership vote, that Souad T. Ali serve as the Regional Representative for Arizona/ Nevada.
- By majority vote, 11 in favor, 1 opposed, the Board approved a one-year change to reduce the two Independent Scholars's award to \$500 to \$300, and the three student awards from \$300/200/100 to \$200/100/100. The Board committed to review this change at a future board meeting.
- The board unanimously approved of the 2013 budget, noting that some items were still to be finalized.
- A motion was made to charge Vice President Riley to approach SCU administration to host the 2015 conference. It was approved by a majority of the Board (PBR abstained).
- A Website task force was formed to update the AAR/WR Website, with a draft to be reviewed by June 1. Four Board members agreed to serve on the task force: Kristy, Jonathan, Franz and Sara (convener).
- The Board formed a task force to complete the Policies and Procedures document in time for them to review and approve it at the 2013 Board meeting in Baltimore. Franz, Boo (convener) and Kristy volunteered for this task force.
- A motion was made to refer the issue of a new vision statement or revised mission statement to the Policy File Task force for discussion, and to make recommendations for review by the EC and vote by the full Board. The motion was unanimously approved.
- The Board approved Jonathan Lee's proposal to add an Asian American Religion Unit by majority vote (Lee abstained).
- The Board voted (8 in favor, 3 opposed) to take the question of allowing for the individual submission of two paper proposals to the Unit Chairs meeting for an advisory vote.
- By majority (Sara, Souad and Theresa abstained), the Board voted to make an exception to the one paper presentation rule for the Graduate Student/ Professional Development Unit.
- The Board voted to create a task force to explore our budget in light of our mission and vision. Three board members volunteered for this task force: John, Dirk and Kahena.