AAR/WR 2014 Annual Meeting

Unit Chair Meeting

March 7, 2014

Emily Silverman opened the meeting at 1:05

Old business

Emily reviewed the process used this year for submissions with the unit chairs, acknowledged delays, and made two recommendations:

1. The Pilot dual submissions adopted by the unit chairs last year should be suspended. It had positive features, but it proved difficult to implement efficiently
2. We should streamline the process. This would include using templates, timelines, a better process for pooling papers not used to other units for consideration (including the possibility of some sort of waitlist if we can expedite confirmations from individuals whose papers have been accepted).

The unit chairs discussed these recommendations and related ideas.

* In addition to stand alone sessions, units, especially those who have few students, should partner with others to form joint sessions
* The policy regarding the one paper presentation restriction could have been better communicated. (It was noted that the restriction originally was due to time, space limitations (in part due to Wescor) but also to difficulty of managing (e.g. scheduling one person with two presentations)
* Make sure unit chairs know their responsibilities (e.g. come to 3 years of conferences)
* Chairs liked the idea of a process of pooled papers and, should they not be picked up by units, of creating a wild card session. But they also agreed that communication between unit chairs regarding papers proposed for different units works well (especially if participants complete a 1st, 2nd choice)
* A question was raised about the units that are growing beyond the two session restriction. A proposed solution was offered: follow model of National AAR and think of the unit as a group that would have sub-units. Islamic Studies will discuss whether or how they can do that.
* It was suggested that unit chairs should recruit replacements.

New business

1. Edited Volume: Emily Silverman and Souad Ali explained that Cambridge Scholars Publishing approached AAR/WR to submit proposal for an edited volume that includes papers from the 2014 annual conference. Emily and Souad will edit the volume. Chairs should send their papers and/or recommendations to Emily and Souad. They explained that twelve papers will be published. This project is still at the early stage; e.g. no book proposal yet. It was suggested that Emily and Souad send out guidelines.
2. Website (new). http://www.aarwr.com/

The unit chairs acknowledged Tim Helton’s good work on the previous AAR/WR website. On behalf of the website task force created at the 2013 Board meeting, Sara Frykenberg introduced to the unit chairs the new website’s provision for units to create their own pages, and referred the chairs to the page created by the Queer Caucus. Sara explained that the general stuff, e.g. call for papers, program, and guidelines, will be maintained by the conference manager and the relevant member of the executive committee, but that the units would be free to create their own materials.

Sara proposed that the unit chairs create a committee to draft guidelines and policy that would be discussed and adopted by the Board. The following individuals volunteered to serve on the Unit Chairs Website Committee: Charles Townsend (coordinator), Abdullah Gallab, Sakena Young-Scaggs, Lauren Griffin, and Sara Frykenberg, ex officio

1. Program Book: As we shift to greater use of online programs, investigate formats for the program book that would make it easier to navigate (vs. scrolling through a single PDF document.) The Conference manager will work on it
2. Emily asked unit chairs to please collect data on their unit (proposals, attendees, etc.), and encouraged them to find ways to bring more senior scholars into the conference.
3. Fundraising. Sakena Young-Scaggs volunteered that she has a prospect who may want to donate money to the region. Dirk von der Horst, who is chairing a group on finances, invited anyone with ideas for raising money from individuals to contact him. It was suggested that we add donation button to the website.

The meeting adjourned at 2:02.