

## **Minutes of the Pacific Northwest AAR/SBL/ASOR Annual Meeting May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012, 12:49 pm**

Concordia University, Portland Oregon

The Meeting was called to order by President Heidi Szpek at 12:49

### Welcome and Announcements

a. Norm Metzler welcomed the participants to Concordia. He also invited all assembled to take advantage of Concordia's facilities, and to look at the Torah Scrolls and the folio of the King James Bible on display in the library. He gave information on the shuttle service to the Clarion and Shiloh hotels. He also announced that the banquet and keynote address would be held in the library lobby, after which participants were invited to partake of refreshments in St. Michael's Church.

b. Nick Gier announced that the Asian and Comparative Studies panel for Sunday morning had "collapsed," and was no longer on the program. The sole remaining participant, Eric Cunningham, would be added to the Asian and Comparative Studies panel on Saturday afternoon.

c. Norm Metzler asked Douglas McGaughey to come forward and receive a gift in recognition of his past service the PNW AAR, SBL & ASOR

d. Attendance Figures

Total Attendance: 161

AAR: 60

SBL: 31

ASOR: 2

AAR/SBL: 12

SBL/ASOR: 3

No affiliation: 55

Pre-Registered: 130

Late Registration: 31

### Old Business

a. the Minutes from 2011 were approved and entered into the record

b. Eric Cunningham presented the financial report and provided an update on the status of the regional treasury.

c. Ardy Bass (standing in for Rob Hauck) reported news of the student paper competition, and called upon members to encourage their students to submit papers. There were few submissions this year.

For the AAR there were two graduate papers and one undergraduate paper. For SBL there was one undergraduate paper and three graduate papers. The winners would be announced at the Banquet.

### SBL Report

Ardy Bass announced that our region's SBL Regional Scholar Award nominee, Andrew Davis of Seattle University, won with his paper "Mixed Blessings in the Book of Ruth," and he will be honored at the SBL Scholar's Dinner in Chicago in November. Ardy Bass extended her thanks to the committee, and encouraged submissions.

Richard Steele asked how students could be invited to submit papers and asked if we were making personal appeals to Department Chairs. Ardy Bass explained that we use an online submission system and said she would pass on any recommendations to Rob Hauck.

### AAR Report

Steve Herrick, Chief Information Officer of the National Chapter of AAR announced the coming national meeting of the AAR (held in conjunction with SBL) in Chicago this November, and predicted an attendance of close to 10,000 people.

He then introduced and explained the changes with the new Operating Agreement (OA) the creation of which was triggered by ambiguous relationships between the national organization and the various regions.

The OA spells out clear legal relationships between the national chapter and the regions. The OA represents no real changes to the obligations of individual members—only the governance and structuring would change somewhat.

The OA calls for a regional AAR entity consisting of four officers, one of whom is the Regional Coordinator (RC). The RC belongs to a ten-person body at the national level made up of other RCs that meets at the annual national meeting to exchange ideas from region to region such as recommendations for best practices on conference organization, etc.

The OA calls for a student director in addition to the four officers. The student director will also be part of a national body.

Norm Metzler raised the question of whether the student needs to be a graduate student or not.

Steve Herrick suggested that most student directors would be grad students, but that it was not necessarily a requirement.

He then asked the PNW AAR to deliberate on the OA and vote to ratify it.

Douglas McGaughey spoke up on behalf of the many benefits involved with being members in good standing of AAR, support, subventions, etc.

Steve Herrick emphasized that each AAR region could run its organization its own way, and recommended at least a structure of president, and vice president, and could choose any other two officers it wanted.

Heidi Szpek asked about the problem of regions rotating officers between SBL and AAR, and wondered how this would affect our compliance with the OA.

Steve Herrick re-emphasized that for AAR compliance, there had to be a separate AAR entity, irrespective of what arrangements the region makes with regard rotating offices between SBL and AAR.

Douglas McGaughey observed that the AAR entity would be like a dual arrangement, and that it would not affect our local governing.

Roger Henderson asked if this would require us to have separate meetings of AAR and SBL at each regional meeting.

Ardy Bass assured the membership that this would not be the case—that all of our local practices would remain the same.

Douglas McGaughey reiterated that there would be no change to our procedures, and that the “bottom line” was clarifying our legal responsibilities.

Eric Cunningham asked if it was a good time to move to ratify the agreement

Ardy Bass, in support of the OA, reiterated the benefits of belonging to AAR for our local operations

Eric Cunningham formally moved that AAR members should vote to ratify the Operating Agreement.

The motion was seconded and passed.

f. Ardy Bass introduced two new possible structures for SBL administration, including a plan that provides liability insurance for regions, as well as tax-filing services and banking services. She emphasized the benefits of the regional SBL to keep a strong affiliation with the national organization. She recommended that we vote for status under the Annual Regional Meetings (ARM) provision as opposed to the Independent Regional Organization (IRO), an LLC arrangement.

Roger Henderson moved that SBL members accept the ARM option for structuring.

Norm Metzler asked about how the banking services work given the fact that AAR and ASOR is also attached to the region.

Ardy Bass explained that regional assets are split according to the proportion of membership of AAR, SBL and ASOR. She said that we were able to make local arrangements on asset distribution according to our regional preferences.

The motion was seconded and passed

### Program Chair Reports

Ardy Bass spoke on behalf of the Executive committee concerning questions that had been raised on our fee structures. Problems such as late registration, no-shows, and presenters who don't register has led to some thoughts on fee changes. She said that more than a third of our presenters did not register online prior to the conference. She wondered about late registration fees, student rates, etc., and said that proposals had been made to raise fees to \$45 or \$50 dollars, and that other proposals had been made to waive student fees. She invited discussion on the matter.

In response to a question from the floor about the timing of acceptance of papers and the opening of registration (with submission of papers occurring before registration) Ardy Bass observed that the submission system with Oxford Abstracts had introduced some administrating problems. She suggested that we could open registration earlier, and that we might not use Oxford Abstracts in 2013.

Steve Herrick observed that "we would try to do something different" next year, but said we would use Oxford abstracts.

Nick Gier asked why we needed to raise fees.

Ardy Bass pointed out how critical fees were to the funding the operations of conferences, and how inconvenient late registration was for planning.

Louise Pare suggested that raising fees was

Katherine Breazille asked if we actually needed more revenues

Logan Greene said we should raise fees, but place students and underemployed scholars in a separate category

Richard Steele asked what some of the specific costs were.

Ardy mentioned site visits, program printing, rooms, technology, and catering and suggested that these costs vary from school to school, placing us in a position where keeping revenues predictable was critical.

A question was raised from the floor about the timing of the Call for Papers and submission deadlines, suggesting that by the time our deadline arrived, many departments were out of travel and conference money

Ardy wondered if we should move our Call to prior to January, when it is normally announced.

Anne Moore made reference to the challenge of a new funding model, or “funding formula” in which state schools were charging for everything from space to technology in order to maximize their revenues. The new model places pressure on conference planning, and we need to be ready for this

Heidi Szpek asked for a motion on raising registration fees from \$35 to \$40.

Philip Tite pointed out the problems of independent scholars who have no institutional sources of funding, observing that this category was growing.

Norm Metzler proposed that we raise the registration fee to \$45 for general registration, \$65 for late registration, and waive the fee for students and under-employed scholars, adjunct faculty, and other special considerations. We should “raise the fee for those of us who can pay” and lower it for those who cannot.

It was proposed that we appoint a committee to look at this structure and make a recommendation next year.

Douglas McGaughey responded by asking what else needs to be considered, and urged that we vote this year.

Eric Cunningham asked for clarification on the lower number.

Norm Metzler reiterated the “45, 65, and waive” model, observing that all our participants had to pay for travel and food, and that the waived fee would be an incentive to get good scholars to come to the Regional Meeting.

The proposal was made into a motion that we raise general fees to \$45, designate a late registration fee of \$65, and waive fees for students and scholars in strained financial circumstances. The motion was seconded, and passed.

### New Business

#### e. Election of Officers:

Dennis Jowers thanked the nominating committee for its hard work, and announced that Jim Wellman and John R. (Jack) Levison had been nominated as president and vice president, respectively, for the upcoming year.

Both Jim Wellman and Jack Levison were elected by the membership.

#### f. Status of Women in the Profession:

Ardy Bass commented on the status of women in the profession, and observed that the AAR was forming focus groups on women and gender in the field of Religious Studies. She asked those members interested in the status of women in the profession to contact her by email, and she would put them in contact with the AAR national chapter.

g. Next Year's Conference

Heidi Szpek opened discussion about the prospects of holding next year's conference at the University of Washington (UW).

Jim Wellman, who offered to host the Regional Conference at UW next year, took the floor to speak to the question of what may be unusually high costs at UW. He observed that rooms might cost a total of \$2,000 and suggested that participants could furnish their own laptops to reduce technology costs. He also said that he believed his Department Chair would be willing to compensate for reasonable cost over-runs.

Louise Paro asked how much rooms had cost in the past when we had actually been charged. [Gonzaga and Concordia were both essentially cost-free]

Ardy Bass answered that the University of Victoria conference in 2010 was close to \$10,000

Douglas McGaughey observed that our last visit to UW had been a "financial catastrophe," and urged caution in moving forward with the UW site. He urged the membership not to move ahead until we had a concrete number for the costs involved. Doug asked if anybody remembered how much the last UW meeting had cost, recollecting that it had "almost bankrupted" the region.

Nick Gier asked what IT (technology) costs actually were in the "smart rooms."

Jim Wellman said that he would check, and agreed with Doug that we should know the exact costs (to at least within \$1,000). He reiterated that his Department Chair at UW was committed to helping put on the conference and could be counted on to support it.

Mark L. Taylor remembered being at the UW meeting and observed that the problem was the surprise involved. He urged the Executive Committee to learn in advance how the fee categories for outside institutions were arranged.

Mike Williams explained certain facilities shortcomings at the UW site. He observed that hotels were expensive and that the student union (the Hub), now undergoing renovation, would be especially costly. The most likely candidate for a site (Thompson Hall) is not necessarily equipped with state-of-the-art technology, and that classes would still be in session.

Nick Gier asked if there were "smart rooms" and Jim Wellman repeated that it would be prudent for presenters to bring their laptops. The Thompson hall rooms have projectors, but they are not up to the level of Concordia rooms.

Roger Henderson asked about parking on the UW campus, and the possibility of getting designated spots for the conference

Jim Wellman promised to explore and report on the parking situation

Gary Jost proposed that we move ahead

Douglas McGaughey moved that we empower the Executive Committee to gather information and make a judgment on the feasibility of the UW conference site.

The motion was seconded and passed.

Ardy Bass promised to pursue the matter with her contacts in the UW administration

h. Student Expense Fund:

Logan Greene proposed a fund to cover student expenses (outside of registration) in future conferences.

Ardy Bass responded by saying we would table the issue until a future year.

i. Student Director Candidates:

Eric Cuningham asked the members to contact him or Ardy Bass if they knew of any good candidates for the position of Student Director so that we could be in compliance with the OA within a month or two.

Susan Carter asked for guidelines on what kind of students would be eligible.

Steve Herrick responded by saying they had to be 1) AAR members, 2) students in good standing, and 3) students matriculated at a college in the Region. He promised to find out if students could get their travel to the National Conference paid for by AAR

j. Future years meetings

Ardy Bass repeated the Executive Committee's desire to hold the 2014 meeting in Canada, possibly Calgary

### Adjournment

Heidi Szpek adjourned the meeting at 1:47

Approximately 75 people attended the Business Meeting

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric Cunningham

