American Academy of Religion, Western Region

National Meeting Annual Board Meeting

11/18/2022

Meeting Started: 2:00pm PST

Attendance: John Erickson, Roberta, JP, Marie, Susan, Emily, Souad, Jacob Perez, Purush Bilimo, Sakena, William, Jake, Anjeanette

Introduction of Board Member and New Members - Purshottama Bilimoria, the new member to the board as the Diversity and Inclusion Advocate.

Start of Items on the Agenda.

1. Update to Policy – The status of the policy and what is included and needs to be updated. Harassing and Bullying policy is what needs to be added but the only thing for this agenda item. Will be making a group to take charge of this item.

* Susan – “behooves all members to acquaint themselves with the policy and operating agreement.”
* John will email the full file to the board. Asked for who was interested in creating “The Subcommitte”
  + Marie, Emily, Anna, Susan, Anjeanette were all mentioned/volunteered to be on this committee.
* Emily – Had a question for Jake regarding updates on the role and position of Our Western Regional Board as it is unique in the landscape of the regions in AAR. Not just with the amount of members, those that participate, and our budget. Emily’s question “Where is National going with the Regions?”
* John – Clarification is that the Only person with Authority to take action to the policy with National is Jake Nagasawa as the Regional Coordinator.
* Jake – was able to attend meeting. No big announcement regarding regional agreements. Budget reports are submitted for the year. This is the first time, Jake was asks to submit copies of policy files and operating agreement. Jake has noted that National is quite slow in responding.
  + For clarification, AAR National, Nicole Franklin (employee of AAR), point person for Regional.
  + We should begin the process now to review all regional policy files and operating agreement. We are a robust region. The National Review has an eye towards revising the operating agreements across the board.
  + Emily – Is concerned regarding this National review and potential movement. Emily brings up that it is still concerning that Jake as the regional coordinator is not covered in the AAR National insurance.
  + Jake – individual conversations with National have become aware of our concerns and is possible for them to tackle it. But slow process.
  + John – National is slow so it most likely be two other presidents
  + Susan – would not be surprised if national would use our agreement as a template. Asks clarification from Jake to confirm who is the Current Worker of the Regional. Which is Nicole Franklin. Brian Pennington is the current Regions Director
  + Nichole Franklin, Chief Finance Officer/Chief Operating Officer – She has a vote on the National board
  + Brian Pennington – National Regional Coordinator who has a vote on the National Board.
  + Souad – asks Jake about the annual fees. if there is any way for National to increase our allotted budget due to our numbers, our robustness.
  + Susan – The allotted budget given by AAR hasn’t changed in years.
  + Jake – answered Souad that he doesn’t see AAR increasing our budget as he is seeing AAR National is struggling in more ways.

1. Jake as Regional Coordinator presents Board the Annual Regional Budget. Slides and overview. Current bank account $20234.22. Has already paid Conference manager and for board members lunch. Proposal to Board for the 2023 conference fee.

* Last Fall Meeting – suggested fee structure – Associate/Full/Emeriturs : Assist: Conti/Admi/Indep: Student: Other
* Suggestion: To bring back early bird, regular, and late fee schedules
* Proposed New Fee Schedule
  + Early Bird -$65,55,45,35, don’t offer ‘other’ in the Early Bird Time period.
  + March Fee - $70,60,50,40,30
  + Weekend of Conference - $75,65,55,45,35
* Expected Upcoming Expenditures – don’t have a full view on what the costs due to not knowing the amount of participants.
  + Projected costs $7925 and revenue $9000
* Jacob Perez has done outstanding work in regards to projections and budgets and fee schedules.

(Valerie Miles-Tribble, Thien Huong Ninh, James Berry entered the meeting)

* John asks boards to focus on the new projected fee schedule and get consensus.
* Emily – wanted to also get info on the projected units for the March conference
* Jacob – showing his work as Conference Manager to present 2023 Conference projections – most likely trending towards are numbers of the 2014-2015 participant numbers
* Jake – is the one with the purse strings but Jacob is doing all the hard work.
* Sakena motions for acceptance of new Fee Schedule for 2023 Conference. Marie Seconds.
* Vote Called – Passes with no opposition. New Fee Schedule for the 2023 Conference passes.
* Valerie wants to make sure we are all encouraging students and faculty to push the Regional Meeting. When the students come, the faculty comes.
* Marie asks question regarding money for the queer caucus, and other caucus – in the budget.
  + Jake – did not factor that it but will make sure to include those money items.
* John has a question regarding University sponsorship.
  + Sponsorship is $500.
* Clarification on Pre Caucus Events like that of Queer and Women’s Caucus
  + Jake asks if those events have their own registration fees?
  + Marie and Anjeanette shared info regarding Queer View Event and the money and free events. Queer Event is free and open to all conference attendees and the public.
  + Jake and Jacob will make sure to factor that in

1. Jacob as Conference Manager presenting the Conference Survey. (Survey given out to 2022 Conference Attendees.)

* Majority that the audio/video quality was good 96%
* 79% Very Satisfied (5 Star) 28% (4 Star) of the overall experience
* When did attendees register for conference - 50% - a few weeks before the conference. 25% - as soon as registration started (this is what we wanted to encourage more)
* Word of mouth, Brand of AAR does still carry weight
* Improve – hybrid conference, In-Person Meeting is a high priority. Less overlap of panels so folks can attend more sessions.
* Split on to attend conference if fully virtual and fully in-person.
* Overwhelming respondents want a hybrid.
* On if attendees would recommend conference 62% (10 absolutely will recommend)
* Reality of Hybrid – is to run 2 conferences for it to be done well. Ideas for in-budget hybrid experiences.
* Recording Keynote and uploading later. Online registration to sign waivers for the recording sessions. Allocate for funding to buy quality equipment.
* In-Person Conference with online options. Or a conference that simultaneously runs both physical and online panels. This option requires a lot of support and moving parts. Not really feasible at this point.
* William – thank you for the chart and the date with the interpretations. Poses a question: Is it possible for certain panels have an archive for the uploaded panels. OWL technology – camera and microphone
* This is a concern about people being overloading online. So having an archive might be helpful.
* Jacob – archive capability – met with UC Davis AV team. Can record and do these things. It is costly. Doesn’t know if that is the first priority. And it might be quite pricey. Have to be strategic in our on boarding process. Keynote is huge.
* Marie – good job. Has a suggestion by using an example of the NWSA conference – one room dedicated to hybrid sessions. Go into the room and see it recording. Agreeing with staffing and technology. The staffing is key. One room a good idea. Record Keynotes and available after.
* Jacob –Does mention that UC Davis will have two rooms with tv with webcams. There are options already at UC Davis. We will learn that more once the conference gets closer. Need to present virtually. This next 30 days will be helpful. Not cheap for what UC Davis has. Exploring all those options. Learn more and being very upfront about our expectations.
* Marie – Asks if there is a deadline to decide who is designated Hybrid and OnLine. Option for moderating to read paper. Due to illness or emergency.
* Anjeanette – totally on board with recording keynote and making it available to viewing afterwards and an archive. Also wanted to have a recording of the student papers that are awarded from our conference. To showcast the robust scholarship that is being done at the conference and in our region. It could be highly impactful for publicity and going forward.
* Valerie – asking questions about panels especially panels that students are presenting.
* Jacob – March 2022 conference was the first time we used the regional account. Who maintains and owns the property. Lean to use regional zoom account and have to address who maintains and holds the virtual property.
* Susan – asked about Anna Hennessey. The first person in our region and national. San Antonio Conference, didn’t provide tech. Learn from what we have done previous.

1. John – asks for any other questions if not then proceeds to New Business.
2. Conference Update by Jacob Perez

* Site visit in August at UC Davis. Working with a different person so some are still in process. Hotel block – working with a few hotels down the street. 40 room block. Campus rate $189 a night. Do not have confirmation on our financial responsibilities and commitments. List of 6 other hotels for discounts but not blocks. Target date by this Wednesday 11/23. One concern – Sacramento Airport could pose a transportation problem.
* John – Question from Emily - can we rent out dorm rooms?
* There are some initial panels to be creating. Board Meeting will be in-person on Friday. Hotel or restaurant – meal for board members.
* Jake – William mentioned Amtrak as a possibility and quite efficient as a travel option.
* Susan – Asks board meeting time for Friday?
* Emily – mentioned it is usually a lunch for a 4-5 hour panel 12pm. And two meals. March 24th.
* John -is not giving a speech. Presidential Address is Mentorship between Marie and John. Changing roles. Keynote – UC Davis has offered to put out feelers for a speaker. Will met up with EC board to plan out.

1. John focuses on Future Conferences. In 2022 was suppose to be UNLV but did not occur. Roberta did an amazing job and the work. Suggests making UNLC the Official conference sitefor 2024.

* Sakena motion, Jake seconded.
* Vote - No opposition. Motion passed to start the process for UNLV for 2024. Sakena can start to work on Stanford for 2025.
  + Sakena needs potential dates to start conversation with Stanford.
* Marie asking if anyone is going to the Regional Meeting at National. Its more info gathering and feedback on virtual conferencing. ) Valerie and Marie is going.

1. John – Board needs to hear about a new proposed unit: Black Religion and Theology proposal. Sakena will talk to the Board about this new panel.

* Sakena – Aaron wrote the proposal. Modeled after National unit. “Black Religion and Theology” can be a unit for robust academic endeavor for current and future students. Listed scholars who are here in our region that would be interested in this unit/area. There is a need and opportunity. Agree that a unit can be a bumper crop from the pan-african and womanist units.
* Emily motion to vote on new unit. William second
* John asks for clarification before vote that this unit will be for next for next year’s conference 2024 and if there were any proposed unit chairs.
  + Sakena and Valeria will shepherd it for this new year.
  + Valerie talked to the board about her first involvement alongside Sakena. A creation of a Black Caucus and an event. This is a next level development of this initial work. Opportunity to get a credible mass.
  + Souad wanted to commend Sakena for her continual hard work.
* Voting is Called – No oppositions. A new unit “Black Religion and Theology” will be running for the 2024 Conference.

1. John calls an end to the board meeting. End of meeting at 3:55pm (PST).